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# Navigating between systems and opening doors of opportunities: Thai–English interpreters' experiences

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## Abstract

With economies becoming progressively integrated, and workers being mobilised around the globe, globalisation in Thailand has led to a burgeoning demand for Thai–English interpreters. These interpreters are needed to satisfy the growing number of multilingual/cultural tourists, expatriates, business professionals, migrants, and immigrants. In research, Thai interpreting literature acknowledges that interculturally mediated events are navigated by local interpreters to create mutual understandings between all parties. However, there appears to be a dearth of scholarly research on the skills interpreters utilise in mediating intercultural encounters. Filling this gap can bring academic and practical contributions to the interpreting community. Specifically, such a research endeavour could merge interpreting and intercultural communication (IC) studies and equip interpreters with the necessary skills for navigating intercultural interpretations. Therefore, taking up this challenge, and using an interdisciplinary qualitative enquiry, this PhD investigates intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in Thai–English interpreters. The study aims to answer two research questions: (1) What does intercultural communicative competence entail in the interpretation industry in Thailand? (2) What is the importance of intercultural communication in interpretation classrooms and training programmes? In terms of design, the findings for addressing research question 1 precipitate and complement the subsequent research question.

In respect of research tools, I triangulated multiple research instruments, encompassing document analysis and creative interview methods to acquire more fine-grained, high-quality data. The analysis employed a thematic analysis based on a tripartite analytical framework of translator visibility, ICC, and cultural dimensionality. The findings suggest that well-mediated conversations (i.e., meetings that reach objectives and cultural expectations) contribute to positive outcomes and, in turn, circumvent misunderstandings and adverse repercussions. As per knowledge contributions, the thesis provides a holistic understanding of the intercultural communication process that interpreters must go through in order to create satisfying results by employing the Intercultural Communication–Interpretation Venn diagram and IC translation strategies. By doing so, the thesis

contends that ICC is an essential component of the interpretation system (e.g., IC as visibility), while also elucidating the importance of implementing IC in the interpretation classroom to mitigate intercultural misunderstandings. Moreover, the study aims to inform the policies surrounding Thailand's interpreting industry, including the stakeholders, such as teachers, licensing committees, and training facilitators, to incorporate frequently disregarded intercultural mediation into future policies and curriculum development. Lastly, I would argue that this doctoral research serves as a catalyst for changing current professional practice in consideration of the intercultural communication process.

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## **Author's Declaration**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Natthaphon Tripornchaisak

Signature:

## Abbreviations

AIIC Association Internationale des Interprètes de Conférence or the International Association of Conference Interpreters

CI Consecutive interpretation

IC Intercultural communication

ICC Intercultural communicative competence

NAATI The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (Australia)

RoE River of Experience

SI Simultaneous interpretation

SL Source language

TIAT Translators and Interpreters Association of Thailand

TL Target language

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# 1 Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Personal Introduction

‘Did you **NOT** commit the crime?’ the interrogator asked.

‘Yes,’ the Thai employee in question replied.

‘Ummm... let’s try again. Did you **NOT** commit the crime?’ the interrogator asked again.

‘Yes, yes, yes,’ said the Thai employee in question.

Based on my professional experience in Thailand, it has recently become progressively common for interpreter clients to insist on holding the conversation in English themselves owing to their increasingly improved English aptitude. Their proficiency, although sufficiently conversational, at times needs further polishing and assistance. While the answer ‘yes’ came to all of us as a surprise of how easily one would admit to committing fraud, I, as the interpreter, quickly realised that his intention was the exact opposite and decided to intervene. While the English party was relieved to have put an end to the case, the employee was in obvious oblivion. This is because Thai speakers would either double negate or affirm negative questions, whereas English requires the opposite. From having to translate inappropriate jokes to having a fellow Thai person trying to confide in you, I have experienced many intercultural moments where intercultural communication marries the act of interpretation.

As an individual, I have always been a person who cherishes the differences between cultures. In hindsight, a year in Washington State as a 15-year-old exchange student signifies my first exposure and immersion in another culture. This experience instilled in me the love of seeing the world and, more importantly, of learning about people of diverse origins and weaving together cultural tapestries into my own. Upon returning to Thailand, I was given opportunities to represent my Thai High School in English contests. However, as a teenager in a traditionally monolingual and

homogenous school, the excitement to speak a foreign language and share freshly-lived experiences abroad with peers, unfortunately, led to me feel disoriented between the cultural cracks (i.e., being treated as a foreign-minded misfit). In turn, the enthusiasm swiftly became more of a heavy burden that largely contributed to an identity crisis.

It was not until years later that this void started filling with confidence, as I became more mature and understanding of both worlds. I then began to apply my skills as an inadvertent interpreter for my family whenever we had visitors from abroad and, eventually, I began work as a part-time professional interpreter. Coupled with a graduate degree in *Crosscultural Communication*, which I initially found academically engaging but irrelevant to my professional use, I began to observe practical links between the science of interpreting and the art of understanding cultural nuances.

These lived perspectives and puzzles over the years have gradually enthused me to pursue this PhD. Here, I will argue that when interpreters connect intercultural communication with interpretation, it can lead to culturally sound and better-informed decisions and agreements among interlocutors. While doing so, I hope to pioneer the interdisciplinary bridge between the two disciplines - interpreting and intercultural communication - as the first of its kind PhD study in Thailand.

## **1.2 Outline**

This chapter illustrates the rationale for the interdisciplinary research need between intercultural communication (IC) and interpreting studies.

By definition, intercultural communication involves studies of the communication process between people from two or more cultural backgrounds who come into contact with one another (Bowe & Martin, 2014). Interpretation, on the other hand, may be understood as an activity of prompt oral rendition from one language into another (Pöchhacker, 2004). In various interpreting types, the understanding of the interpreter's duty is to maintain the linguistic meaning and register of the original message, as scholars argue that there is simply a linguistic transfer involved, with

no cultural mediation, such as in medical interpreting (IMIA, 2007), migrant communities (Valdés, 2014), and legal interpreting (Mason, 2008). However, other scholarly works, including court interpreting, have shown that interpreters perform intercultural mediation (Bischoff et al., 2012; Marta Arumí & Vargas-Urpi, 2017; Morris, 2010; Piacentini et al., 2019; Vargas-Urpi, 2013; Wadensjö, 1999). In Thailand, however, there appear to be limited studies on IC and Thai–English interpreters, although existing studies seem to acknowledge that IC has a pivotal role in the interpreters’ work (Kosiyaporn et al, 2020; Nawong, 2017). The overall lack of scholarship on interpreting and intercultural communication suggests a gap between the interaction in these two fields, IC and interpreting studies, in a Thai context, despite the recognised importance of intercultural mediation in interpreting.

This thesis aims to identify the required characteristics of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in Thai–English interpreters and reflect on the current teaching approaches of IC education in interpretation classrooms. The introduction is composed of eight sections and accompanying sub-headings. I will begin by establishing the general and scholarly background. After that, I will introduce the research problems, aims, objectives, and the territory of previous work by briefly reviewing the relevant academic literature. This process will indicate a knowledge gap and justify how it has informed the two research questions. The subsequent section will then present the research significance and study scope. Lastly, this chapter will identify potential research limitations and explain the overall structure of the thesis.

## **1.3 Background of the Study**

### **1.3.1 General Background**

As an estimate for 2014, translation and interpretation jobs in Thailand made up 0.80 per cent of the global market. However, this equated to 19.65 per cent of nine Southeast Asian nations, excluding Myanmar (Parker, 2008). Another indicator of international interaction is the growing number of foreign language cases in Thai justice courts from 2010 to 2019 (Office of International Affairs, 2019). Moreover,

as a lingua franca among Southeast Asian nations (Jindapitak, 2019), the English language has permeated Thailand's national education, levitating it to a privileged and elite status (Hayes, 2016).

One of the contributors to the increased role of English in Thai education, as is the case with other countries, is globalisation, which has influenced Thailand's growth in numerous economic and social dimensions (Jongwanich, 2022). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) encapsulates globalisation as a two-step mechanism: when people or labour relocate and when knowledge or technology is disseminated (2002). In many parts of the world, increased globalisation has become an interregional agent for advancing economies, integrating and mobilising peoples, and increasing international interactions. Examples of globalisation in Thailand include the advent of the Eastern Seaboard masterplan in the late 1980s, which equipped the country with a lucrative automotive industry (Sermcheep & Chirathivat, 2015; Warr & Kohpaiboon, 2018). This change labelled the nation as the world's 11<sup>th</sup> largest automotive manufacturer according to OICA (2018). The resultant emergence of jobs was a contemporary contribution to the country's increasing number of foreign workers. It was also a significant economic improvement for the country, considering that Thailand is often said to be trapped in the middle-income bracket compared to other developed nations (Intarakumnerd, 2017).

Another significant moment occurred in 1997 when the Thai baht collapsed after the government floated the currency, placing Thailand at the epicentre of the Asian financial crisis and switching off a thriving local business scene (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2007). Despite the damage to the economy, Thailand relaxed its restrictions and welcomed overseas capital with open arms. The reduction of rules invited foreign capital and expatriates and inevitably urged the country to embrace foreign cultural values. Fast forward to 2015, the opening of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Economic Community integration ensured the free flow of services and skilled labour (Sermcheep & Chirathivat, 2015). This was followed closely by the Eastern Special Development Zone Act 2018 or the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC)—a blueprint to connect three eastern provinces and the capital as one investment utopia. Owing to these reasons, globalisation has arguably led to a

more interlinguistically and interculturally connected Thailand, particularly between Thai and English-speaking populations.

Third, globalisation has given rise to the country's growing tourism sector, as tourism has been implemented as one of the core industries in the EEC plan (OECD, 2018). Bloomberg and Forbes announced Bangkok, the capital of Thailand, as the most visited city in the world for four consecutive years, with nearly 23 million visitors in 2019 before the pandemic (Chuwiruch, 2019; Talty, 2019). Not only has such growth brought about socioeconomic opportunities, but its contribution has allowed for an influx of multilingual and multicultural tourists, expatriates, and migrants into the country. Greater multiculturalism leads to a higher chance of people who speak different languages coming into contact with businesses or services. This has led to a soaring demand for language mediation and conducive working conditions for interpreters to fill potential communicative gaps.

### **1.3.2 Scholarly Background**

Pioneering as the first study of its type at this level and scale in Thailand, this thesis is an interdisciplinary study of intercultural communication and interpreting research. Intercultural communication studies are interested in communication between two or more individuals from varying cultural backgrounds, focusing on culture and communication (Gudykunst, 2003). For clarification, I will use the abbreviations 'IC' for intercultural communication and 'ICC' for intercultural communicative competence throughout the thesis, which will be more fully defined and clarified in the following paragraphs.

Interpreting studies, regularly considered a sub-branch of translation studies (Valdeón, 2021), examine the performance of interpreting with a unique methodological and analytical approach, which results from the field's development and multidisciplinary origins (Pöchhacker, 2010). The term 'interpreting' will be used to refer to rendering an oral message from one language into another while maintaining the original message's linguistic meaning and cultural register (Pöchhacker, 2004), whereas 'translating' will refer to 'the replacement of textual



material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)' (Catford, 1965, p. 20).

Interpreters will be the subjects of the study, arguably owing to the intercultural characteristics and obligations of their work. With professional interpreters at the highest levels being in focus, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by 'conference interpreting.' It is a professional communication service with two modes, simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, and two modalities, spoken language and signed language (Pöchhacker, 2004). Interpreting can be demanding and requires comprehensive knowledge of source and target cultures to facilitate successful communication between interlocutors. The interpreter would usually be expected to ensure that the interpretation process is performed smoothly and transparently among the parties. Thus, interpreters arguably require ICC skills to mediate any intercultural gaps because the other interlocutor of another culture may be being judged based on another cultural framework. Moreover, when interpreters need to draw on IC during interpreting, it is arguably not a straight linguistic transfer from language A to B. Since they may deal with clients from many cultures, here I argue that IC can present tangible contributions to the interpreting profession.

On the other hand, despite the variety of definitions for the term, 'intercultural communicative competence' (ICC), I will use the definition suggested by Byram, who defined it as 'Knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others' values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing' (Cited in Deardorff, 2009, p. 34). It is the ability to understand and relate to others, to discover and/or engage in interaction, to know oneself, to honour others' principles, practices, and ways, and to connect. This definition was chosen by Deardorff (2009), who examined a number of definitions of intercultural competence prescribed by leading scholars, such as Bennett, Pusch, Spitzberg, and others. Among them was Byram, whose definition had obtained a top-rated score in Deardorff's study. This definition defines ICC as an individual's ability to communicate effectively and appropriately using intercultural knowledge and skills. In other contexts, scholars such as Davidson (2000), Farini (2012), Liddicoat (2016a, 2016b), and Wadensjö (2017) have challenged the seminal conduit interpreter's role

(Reddy, 1979). Nevertheless, the aspects of IC in Thai–English interpreters have yet to be explored regarding how IC is incorporated in daily practice.

## **1.4 Research Problems, Research Aims, and Objectives**

Interpreting challenges due to cultural differences are related to the utilisation of IC. First, when examining interpreters working between cultural groups, a lack of semantic and grammatical similarity between languages, as well as the pressure that interpreters work under, forces interpreters to frequently and unintentionally alter the original utterance (Baker & Pérez-González, 2011). The central argument of this premise is that the intercultural components seem to contribute to the complexity of problems and add to the difficulty of interpretation. Arguably, improving the intercultural skills of interpreters could directly alleviate the intercultural problems that interpreters tend to face. Another layer of complexity is the legal obligations that require interpreters' compliance despite interpreters being socially expected to follow local norms. When legal compliance collides with sociocultural expectations, I argue that interpreters frequently (re)evaluate circumstances and (re)define their roles. Such decisiveness and independence contest the conventional conduit role (See Loach, 2019; Reddy, 1979; Sawbey & Mickelson, 2008). I will argue that meetings, whereby an interpreter often intervenes and mediates between parties, tend to accomplish expectations (i.e., well-mediated in terms of objectives and cultural expectations) and produce favourable results.

Concerning IC, it is widely agreed that the teaching of IC to students plays a vital role in the improvement of their skills as suggested by various models, such as those put forth by Bennett (1986, 2017), Deardorff (2006), and Spitzberg and Changnon (2009). Although the IC field offers a critical contribution to the development of culture and communication competence (Gudykunst, 2003), Kirkpatrick (2007) notes that in environments where English serves as a lingua franca, including Thailand, insufficient emphasis has arguably been given to an in-depth knowledge of IC and intercultural mediation. In Thailand, some scholars have promoted IC in English education (Laopongharn & Sercombe, 2009; Loo et al., 2019). Works on Thai interpreting can be seen in Banjongmanee (2004); Nishikito (2017); Piyathamrongchai (2018); Poemchawalit (2014); Sirithanachai and Rangponsumrit

(2014), but the overall emphasis in the context of interpreting studies seems to be placed on the domestic shortage of interpreters (Keetawattananon et al., 2016; Maturote Patship & Nobuaki, 2019; Santung et al., 2019; Wongprasit, 2018).

The limited number of studies and the narrow engagement with IC in the Thai context suggest that further development is needed. In the professional and educational domains, evidence indicates that the country has struggled to grasp a public acknowledgement of interpreting as a profession that is built upon an educational pathway, as evident in the absence of licensing (Australian Embassy in Bangkok, 2016) and study programme availability (Chalermprakiat Center of Translation and Interpretation, 2020). The shortfall adds to the urgency for research and skills development between IC and interpretation. In addition, due to the lack of PhD programmes in Thai–English interpreting studies, the largest collection of dissertations is at the Master’s level and can only be accessed at Chulalongkorn University.

In terms of research objectives, I aspire to provide a comprehensive study on IC within the Thai interpreting sector. Participants include professionals who work as interpreters and those who teach interpreting studies. By analysing interpreting experiences and the application of ICC skills, the research aims at achieving the following objectives:

First, it will explore professional interpreters’ experiences and relationships with IC.

Second, it will study interpreters’ compliance and determine the extent to which the interpreter’s role can afford to be flexible.

Third, it will explain whether IC materials have been used or are being used in interpreting lessons, while also investigating if interpreters and trainers have any background in teaching IC.

Fourth, the findings will likely inform teachers and other stakeholders, such as licensing committees and training facilitators, about how they can incorporate IC into future policy planning and curriculum designs.

## 1.5 Research Questions

Because of the aforementioned lack of research and skills development between the two disciplines, this PhD project aims to identify the necessary characteristics of ICC for Thai–English interpreters and explore the levels of IC teaching in interpretation classrooms. The research aims to address the following two research questions (RQs):

1. What does intercultural communicative competence entail in the interpretation industry in Thailand?
2. What is the importance of intercultural communication in interpretation classrooms and training programmes?

The rationale for RQ1 is predicated on the underpinnings of IC in the current professional practice of Thai–English interpreters. It will evaluate strategies used in tackling intercultural differences when interpreters work with clients who come from two or more cultural backgrounds. By investigating the strategies applied, the research will outline key desirable skills for IC, which arguably takes place before, during, and after interpretation. Subsequently, since RQ1 will underline the professional foundations of IC, RQ2 is formulated as a follow-up enquiry. Although focusing on professional practice, it is projected that empirical findings will lead to a theoretical understanding of interpreters' experiences. After being informed about the existing IC application and gaps from RQ1, RQ2 evaluates the present implementation of ICC development and teaching in interpretation classrooms and programmes. RQ1 will be addressed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, while the answers for RQ2 will be mainly discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

## 1.6 Research Significance or Justification

By stressing the interconnection between IC and the act of interpretation in the context of Thailand, the current chapter links the individual experiences of interpreters to professional and educational institutions. Outlining such relations is important because of their potential impact on the methodological, professional, and educational facets of IC in consideration of interpretation.

First, since existing studies on Thai interpreters have been grounded on quantitative (Fargrajang, 2010; Kraikhunthot, 2012) or qualitative methods with more conventional techniques, such as interviewing (Sereenirach, 2012; Tepatanapong, 2014), this thesis offers new methodological insights into the use of multiple creative research methods, vignettes, and the River of Experience drawing (RoE). This part of the enquiry incorporates creativity into conventional research methods. By drawing on non-traditional methods, the thesis builds on two creative techniques (vignettes and RoE drawings) to enhance our understandings of interpreting. It introduces these alternative methods to interpreting studies as an addition to semi-structured interviews and document analysis. For example, using creative drawings as an indirect dialogic research instrument can reveal participants' past intercultural experiences. Alternatively, incorporating photographed and video-facilitated vignettes as stimuli can encourage participants to put themselves in the shoes of the displayed interpreter facing an interculturally challenging dilemma. Here I will argue that interpreters who experience such techniques can reflect on their own practices in order to make interculturally informed decisions.

The second potential impact is the use of interdisciplinary conceptual frameworks. The thesis can thus contribute to tripartite interdisciplinary collaborations by integrating an analytical cycle with no designated order of analysis. The first will employ Hofstede's (2001; 2020) scores to any cultural conflicts. This scoring framework allows the researcher to evaluate the cultures in conflict from a macro perspective. At the same time, it could be a practical and convenient preparation approach for interpreters who often have little preparation time. The next framework will examine the interpreter's role based on the theory of translators' visibility. This theory challenges the conventional conduit view of complete

transference of a message from language A to B (Reddy, 1979); see Davidson (2000), Farini (2012b), or Wadensjö (2017) for contesting views. The last framework is used to assess the ICC skills utilised during interpretation, and it is based on the ICC framework of Byram (1997, 2021). Not only will this arguably address the missing gaps in interpreting studies, but it will also promote interdisciplinary learning and research between the scholars of both interpreting and IC domains (given that most interpreting studies in Thailand do not frequently visit IC theories). Here I will argue that using thematic analysis that applies translators' visibility, ICC, and cultural dimensionality as a tripartite analytical lens can result in more fine-tuned interpretations of data.

The third aspect relates to definitions of ICC. As explained, this thesis builds upon Byram's definition (See 1.3.2 Scholarly Background, pp. 23–25) because of its high-achieving score from Deardorff (2006), yet there remains a large number of available definitions which could suggest a false sense of this ICC definition as being overtly ubiquitous (i.e., anything cultural and linguistic can unquestionably be about ICC). By investigating professional interpreters who face intercultural dilemmas, it is hoped that this thesis can arrive at a working definition of ICC based on a consensus: a definition that is empirically sound as well as being contextually and professionally specific.

The fourth aspect of research significance regards the development of professional guidelines in Thailand. This research is conducted during a pivotal moment for the Thai interpreting industry, where its national ethics and guidelines for interpreters are yet to be stipulated nationwide. Contrast this with other developed countries, such as the UK, the US, or Australia, whose professional standards have long been established and implemented. Any new suggestions in these contexts would undergo public scrutiny, or the industries or chairing committees would consider them based on their circumstances and conditions. I would argue that recommendations based on empirical evidence from an academic source like this thesis are likely to be taken more seriously. The chance of empirical research informing practice is, therefore, still applicable for the Thai interpreting context. Arguably, this continues to be the case. If IC is found to be a dominant feature of the interpreting mechanisms between clients of different cultures, the insights obtained from the findings will help

establish professional guidelines in terms of ICC. It is also more likely that the industry in Thailand would adopt the suggestions, especially if they are based on rigorous empirical findings. Thus, this research is critical for providing tangible value to the professional development of interpreters working in Thailand.

The last contribution expands to the area of education. When considering countries that offer interpretation courses in Thai, study options become very limited, not to mention finding PhD programmes or supervisors with expertise in Thai. This creates learning problems for those who wish to pursue an interpreting degree centred on Thai. 2023 is the first year that the nation's first full undergraduate BA in *Translation and Interpretation in the Digital Age* at Thammasat University has started taking in students, while Chulalongkorn University is the only institution that offers a full Master's degree in interpretation. Despite such programmes, there is room for improvement.

## **1.7 Study Scope**

This thesis consists of two RQs. RQ1 focuses on the professions in the field, which include Thai–English interpreters who mainly reside and work in Thailand. It does not include recruitment teams, agencies, or clients, although they may have a factor in determining the hiring policy. RQ2 highlights the current lack of IC teaching. While the secondary findings from the document analysis inform the gaps for both RQs, the detailed answers come from the empirical interview data. The duration of the whole project is four years (October 2019–October 2023). Whereas the initial plan for data collection was to be in person in Thailand within a period of approximately three months, as allowed by the scholarship conditions, this timeline was adjusted due to the pandemic.

## **1.8 Structural Outline**

This research is structured into seven chapters: (1) Introduction, (2) History of Interpretation and Intercultural communication and Interpretation Practices in Thailand, (3) Theoretical Frameworks, (4) Methodology, (5) Document Analysis, (6) Findings, and (7) Discussion and Conclusions.

Chapter 2 reviews the scholarly works on IC and interpreting studies, particularly the historical background of interpretation. First, I will address the historical developments of IC and interpretation. I will then provide detailed definitions and types of conference interpretation that are the thesis foci. Subsequently, I will switch to the definitions of ICC. I will attempt to combine the two schools by reviewing research that has challenged the conventional notion of the conduit role in interpreting. The second half of the chapter focuses on interpreting practices in Thailand. I will underline Thailand's domestic interpreting teaching and research. I will then highlight the history of English education and interpreter training programmes. Lastly, I will discuss the demands for language interpretation in Southeast Asia and Thailand and end by identifying gaps between existing researches on Thai interpreting research in consideration of IC.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical frameworks. I will give an overview of the three frameworks, which are Hofstede's (2001; 2020) Cultural Dimensionality, Venuti's (2012) Translation Visibility, and Byram's (2021) ICC Model, while also drawing on the scholarly criticisms that the frameworks have received.

Chapter 4 explains the methodology. I begin by discussing research ontology and epistemology. I will then elaborate on the selection criteria of the interview participants, including the recruitment process. Next, I will address four research methods: document analysis, creative semi-structured qualitative interviewing, vignettes, and River of Experience drawing activity. Afterwards, I outline the research procedures and explain the data collection timeline for secondary and empirical data. For the interviews, details about the pilot study and main study will be given in separate sections. These will encompass the contingency plan, data analysis process, manual pilot coding, coding check and coding guidelines, and main study coding with NVivo software. Lastly, I will address the criteria used to evaluate the trustworthiness of the findings.

Chapter 5 presents the document analysis, which is based on secondary data. After justifying the methodological and theoretical contributions of document analysis, I will thematically analyse a compendium of dissertations according to four themes.



Chapter 6 presents the empirical data. I will begin by discussing demographic data and explaining the themes and sub-themes from the primary data that informed the writing. Themes A, B, and C are dedicated to addressing RQ1, while Theme D addresses RQ2 in terms of the teaching of IC.

Chapter 7 combines the discussion of the data and the conclusions of the thesis. I begin by presenting five major findings from the data. The introduction elucidates the groupings of the major findings and themes. The second section, Culture, addresses RQ1 by demonstrating the relationship between IC and interpreting. The third section, Teaching Interpreters IC, addresses RQ2 in consideration of the educational scene of IC and interpretation teachings. I then give a summary of responses to the research questions. The last section concludes the thesis. First, I present limitations by identifying how the thesis has dealt with five major restrictions. Second, I summarise the methodological implications, contributions to knowledge, and practical implications. Methodological implications for future researchers are given in terms of creative research instruments. Then, implications about replicating interdisciplinary frameworks are extracted for future projects. As the first study of its kind in Thailand, I will also discuss the novel contributions to knowledge as I intend to marry the disciplines of IC and interpretation. The third sub-section addresses the practical implications and recommendations for the professional and educational domains of interpreting studies in Thailand (i.e., how interpreters, recruiters, and policymakers could incorporate IC into their thinking and approach). Two examples of practical benefits are given as a demonstration for future initiatives. I then discuss recommendations for future researchers and end with conclusions and personal reflections.

The last section is the appendix, which includes additional figures, vignettes, detailed participants' demographics, a detailed interview schedule, participant cluster, interview materials, a course proposal, participant information sheet, and consent form & privacy notice.

## **2 Chapter 2: History of Interpretation and Intercultural Communication and Interpretation Practices in Thailand**

This chapter elaborates on the historical backgrounds of IC and interpretation and Thailand's interpreting practices. I begin by introducing the field of IC and its historical development, mainly its global engagement, followed by the definitions of the word cluster of interpretation. After that, I will illustrate the history of interpreting as a profession while exploring the notions of ICC and intercultural mediation. I then examine scholarly works investigating IC and interpretation. The second half of the chapter focuses on interpretation practices in Thailand by providing a detailed account of the domestic development of interpreting teaching and research. I elaborate on the history of English teaching and link it to interpreter training programmes in Thailand. Then, I discuss the interpretation demands in Southeast Asia and Thailand and close the chapter with IC in Thai interpreting research and identify the scholarly gaps that motivated the need for this thesis.

### **2.1 History of Intercultural Communication and Interpretation**

#### **2.1.1 History of Intercultural Communication**

First, this section presents descriptions of the field of IC (Falbo et al., 2019) in order to establish the context for this thesis. As an academic discipline, IC merges linguistics into anthropology, psychology, and other schools of social sciences. IC studies are engaged in the interactions between speakers from two cultural groups, while cross-cultural communication research considers the communication practices between two or more cultural groups (Bowe & Martin, 2014). Gudykunst (2003) stresses that the scope of IC is within the communication between people from varying national cultures, with the locus on aspects of culture and communication, while other comparative cultural studies are under a sub-field of cross-cultural communication.

With respect to the historical development of IC as a discipline, Rogers et al. (2002) praise the anthropologists, Edward T. Hall and George L. Trager, as the trailblazers of IC because of their devotion to designing intercultural classes at the Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. Department of State in the 1950s. They developed training to teach languages and foster cultural understanding of the host country to which the diplomatic mission was assigned. As a spearheading text, Edward T. Hall's book *Silent Language* (1959) was an unprecedented breakthrough for his career and is still known as a founding text of the IC field. Over the years, scholars have criticised him for failing to address individual cultural complexity in non-verbal communication (Mehrabian, 1981) and overlooking the dynamic use of language to shape cultural meaning (Scollon & Scollon, 2001). However, the book was a pioneering publication and has remained influential up until the 1980s, with scholars adopting the area and developing theories (Croucher et al., 2015).

IC as a field of study is characterised by an abundance of research on people of different backgrounds concentrating on language, thought, and culture, and producing knowledge hybridity between disciplines (Sharifian & Jamarani, 2013). IC studies interact with other disciplines, and it is relatively uncommon for IC to be stand-alone research. In contrast, a cross-cultural project could be a comparison between Japanese and American greeting etiquettes without interactions between the cultures. Piller (2011) elaborates on the types of people who communicate interculturally by stating that studies of IC are conducted by 'people on the move' (p. 174). 'People,' here, refers to those who encounter other groups of people while carrying a distinct cultural package with them. With linguistic discrepancies between them, these people may require interpreters to transfer their thoughts and practices to other groups. Here, I contend that interpreters can arguably decide to display, accept, negate, and challenge another group.

Overall, this thesis focuses on interactions between people of various backgrounds, particularly Thai and English speakers from different cultures, and do so via the perspectives of interpreters. With the focus being on the shared interplay between two or more groups of people through a mediator or an interpreter, this research is characterised as an IC study. I will select and examine participants within the phrase

‘people on the move,’ specifically referring to interpreters who arguably work in and between cultures.

## **2.1.2 History of Interpretation**

The history of interpreters’ mediation of intercultural and interlingual interactions can be traced back to East Asia during the 9<sup>th</sup> century or in early explorations to the Americas when merchants had to contact and negotiate with each other (Takeda & Baigorri-Jalón, 2016). It was through this shared need for trade that consecutive interpreters were able to provide their services. However, records illustrate that simultaneous interpretation (SI) was practised in the form of ‘chuchotage’ or whispered interpretation during the Sui to the Tang dynasties of China from 618 to 907 when Buddhist monks were given the responsibilities of interpretation and translation (Sephocle, 2017). In contemporary Western history, the Nuremberg Trials in 1945 are often regarded as the pinnacle of SI (Gaiba, 1998) due to the content volume of transcripts, consisting of over six million words (Plunka, 2009). Consequently, without a spontaneous interpreting apparatus, it would have been nearly impossible to carry out such a magnitude of trials or to bring war criminals to justice. It was arguably the largest scale SI at one of the most critical events in modern history. It was milestone for the interpreting community as it proved that SI was practical and nearly ready for large-scale operations.

### **2.1.2.1 The Birth of Consecutive Interpretation (CI) and Simultaneous Interpretation (SI)**

According to Jalón (2005), the 1919 Paris Peace Conference was the first official commissioning of consecutive interpretation (CI). English and French were the official languages, with Spanish, Italian, and Dutch later joining the list of languages for translation. In a documentary film sponsored by AIIIC and other affiliated agencies called *The Interpreters: A Historical Perspective (Interpreting at the UN 1945–1995)* by Moggio-Ortiz (2006), the producer interviews over 60 conference interpreters based in New York, Paris, and Geneva. Amongst the interviewees is Robert Kaminker, one of the most exceptional 21<sup>st</sup> century interpreters (Jalón & Barr, 2004; Skuncke, 2019). Robert shares his experiences with CI at the League of Nations (LON), where an interpreter would listen, take notes and synthesise the speech at the rostrum (in

Moggio-Ortiz, 2006). Robert further explains that the sole interpretation method applied at the LON is that the speaker would deliver the entire speech, which could last an hour to an hour and a half. The interpreter then would render the whole speech to the audience. The core of interpreting was evidently about message synthesis. Nowadays, interpreters work with much shorter speech lengths, usually not over five minutes, and interpret during the pause. This practice of interpreting has given interpreters more frequent windows of opportunity to clarify unclear points with the speaker(s), thus preventing misunderstandings and suggesting a more active and involved role for the interpreter in the present day.

In terms of the origin of simultaneous interpretation (SI), evidence of its establishment in the Western world points to 1925, when Edward Filene, a Bostonian businessperson who had previously attended the LON and realised the repercussions that CI had on meeting time management, proposed the idea of using SI to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) (Chernov, 2016). Nevertheless, it was Gordon-Finlay, a British professor, who experimented with the proposal (Baigorri Jalón et al., 2014).

It was not until 1945 that SI became operational at a macro scale. The 1945 Military Tribunal at Nuremberg was an unparalleled scale of SI in English, French, Russian, and German. Skuncke (2019) recalls her experience interpreting at the trials, wherein the booth and equipment were rudimentary, and the interpreters were all beginners and inexperienced in SI. However, it was indeed a milestone, as Skuncke asserts (2019), 'Nuremberg was a truly historic trial that stood out like a beacon in the surrealist atmosphere of post-war Nuremberg' (p. 2). The development was subsequently continued at the United Nations. Macdonald (1967) pays tribute to Léon Dostert, a former professor of French at Georgetown University and General Eisenhower's interpreter. Dostert was designated to install an SI system for the United Nations in 1946. The installation consisted of apparatus that he transferred from a previous project at the Nuremberg Trials (Macdonald, 1967). In terms of the interpreter's presence, my argument is that interpreters still need to mediate intercultural differences when simultaneously interpreting despite the practical challenges posed by the spontaneous factors of SI (e.g., decreased interaction with speakers, reduced thinking time, and increased physical proximity).

Besides technological advancement, interpretation as a profession has expanded in scale since its inception. As an overview, Pym et al. (2011, p. 139) estimate that there are approximately 330,000 translators and interpreters globally. As an institution, the European Union, together with the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Court of Justice, and other affiliations, currently employs the most significant number of interpreters in the world (Apostolou, 2011), totalling 4,300 translators and 800 interpreters (EU, 2020). In the professional areas, evidence suggests that CI and SI interpreters have worked in various industries and domains at the global level, where achieving meeting objectives cannot be possible without language exchanges, and arguably social and intercultural mediation.

### 2.1.2.2 Interpretation, Translation, and Intercultural Communication

#### 2.1.2.2.1 Founding Interpreting Studies

The developmental stages of interpreting studies can be explained in four periods: (1) the first steps (1950s), (2) the experimental psychology period, (3) the practitioner's period (1970s–1980s), and (4) the 'Renaissance' (Gile, 1994). In the 1950s, research was conducted on personal expertise. In the following two decades, Trieman, Oleron, and Nanpon, as well as Goldman-Eisler, and Gerver led the experimental psychology phase in investigating noise and delivery speed. From the 70s throughout the 80s, professional conference interpreters took part in the third movement, such as the thesis defence by Ingrid Pinter in 1969, along with other PhD graduates in Paris. The fourth movement occurred through a conference organised by the University of Trieste, Italy, in 1986. Dominant ideas were challenged, and outlets for empirical studies were called, which led to the production of the Section of Studies in Modern Languages for Interpreters and Translators (SSLMIT) Trieste's *The Interpreters' Newsletter*.

In terms of establishing schools, evidence of parallel developments with a shared chronological timeline suggests that translation studies and interpreting studies are closely related. This relationship explains why some universities pair the two schools together or later develop one from the other (i.e., interpreting studies as an extension). In Europe, the training for interpreters and translators began in 1941 in Geneva, which became known as the Interpreting Department at the University of

Geneva (Komatsu, 2016). Although books on interpreting had already been published in Japan and the Soviet Union by the 1960s, Gile (2009) points to Danica Seleskovitch, a professional conference interpreter who founded France's first PhD programme on translation and interpreting called *École Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs* or ESIT in 1957 (Komatsu, 2016). Her contribution is often introduced as the 'Paris school,' which primarily centred on the 'theory of sense' or later further developed into the Interpretive Theory of Translation (ITT) (Seleskovitch & Lederer, 1984). The theory, by Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer, is grounded on four pillars which are 'command of the native language, command of the source language, command of the relevant world and background knowledge, and command of interpreting methodology' (as cited in Choi, 2003, p. 2).

Choi (2003) argues that the fourth command embodies the concept of 'sense,' which includes understanding language meaning and cognitive complements. This is invariably explained as possession of world, time, and place knowledge about the spoken speech (Lederer, 1990). In order to achieve it, translators/interpreters need to understand the meanings embedded in the mind of the listener or the reader. If we apply this analogy to interpreting, when people speak, they command the language and background knowledge derived from their worldview. In this thesis, I reason that background knowledge can be informed by the language spoken by the speaker or the cultural obligations attached to the language. For example, marking the 12 tenses in English poses a key challenge for tenseless language speakers, such as Thai speakers (Nicoladis et al., 2020). It is arguably the interpreters who are responsible for disentangling the complexity of the languages and cultures they traverse, while delivering decoded meanings to the other party. This relevance links to the previous discussion of the interlaced association between language and culture.

Another concept that came about in the 1960s is *translation equivalence*. A number of theorists have researched and contested the notion (Baker, 1992; Catford, 1965; Nida, 1964; Nida & Taber, 2003; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). Catford (1965) formulates the factors for equivalence as linguistic and cultural values. Baker (1992) differentiates equivalence at the word, grammatical and textual and pragmatic level, whereas Nida (1964) and Nida and Taber (2003) categorise equivalence into

formal correspondence and dynamic equivalence. The former refers to maintaining content and form from the TT (target text) in the ST (source text), while the equivalence of effect for natural expression is the focus of dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964; Nida & Taber, 2003). Later known as functional equivalence, Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence would likely be contested by Venuti (2008), who postulated that the equivalent effects of Nida and the inclination towards the target language actually manifest domesticating practices. As Nida's approach pays less interest to the source and aspires to produce a fluent translation, the question that this thesis aspires to address is whether it is realistic for interpreters to achieve equivalence when interpreting.

While the early work of interpreting researchers in the 1990s paid considerable attention to cognitive processes and the mystery behind brain functions (Gile, 2011), the focus has shifted towards interdisciplinarity. The research trend, however, seems to be the surge of interdisciplinary research conducted by non-interpreting scholars, strongly contested by Bartłomiejczyk (2012). This scholar voiced three concerns about research led by scholars with non-interpreting backgrounds: (1) insufficient knowledge, (2) complete adoption of an external theory, and (3) the risk of translation studies losing importance. She raises that psychology, neurophysiology, and linguistics are the feeder disciplines. Nonetheless, Bartłomiejczyk may have overlooked that interpreting as a profession is one of the most, if not the most, diverse professions. In view of this thesis, I combine external (IC) and translation theories to create a hybrid study investigating the intercultural perspectives in the work of interpreting, which theoretically require interdisciplinary lenses.

Furthermore, one of the remaining unexplored areas is the 'dynamics of interpreter-mediated interaction in the conference setting' (Diriker, 2011a, p. 58), which has influenced the nature of interpreting research to be interdisciplinary. Operations of interpreters occur through depth and breadth on various professional fronts. For example, the work of an interpreter may range from medical interpreting for a rural Scottish GP centre to diplomatic interpreting between the North Korean leader and the US President. Various work contexts arguably require professional interpreters to have versatility and up-to-date knowledge. Both interpreting scenes are different



and complex in detail. The interpreters need to decode the message and be well prepared for context-specific content. Hence, adequate preparation is as crucial as linguistic skills.

Bartłomiejczyk's (2012) argument essentially equates to saying that an interpreter should not accept any task that is out of context or expertise. In that scenario, the industry would be left with hardly any professionals capable of doing medical or legal interpreting. Contributions from scholars of other fields arguably benefit interpreting studies in multi-faceted ways. With regard to work preparation, scholars from other fields conducting interpreting research undergo stages of familiarising themselves with the field to ensure their knowledge is on par with interpreting researchers (i.e., through a ritualistic academic task such as reviewing the literature). The same applies to interpreters tasked with an unacquainted topic. Preparation is critical to the quality of the interpretation output. What is worth remarking on is that academics share and create a much-needed body of knowledge that interpreters and scholars within the fields would be unable to produce due to knowledge limitations—for instance, a psychology professor examining the mystery and feasibility behind SI. Besides, interested researchers typically come from overlapping study areas, such as psychology, sociology, linguistics, or neurophysiology, as mentioned in Bartłomiejczyk (2012). Interpreting studies would be narrower and more confined if interpreting scholars were contained within their realm. This suggests that the advantages seemingly overshadow the drawbacks of interdisciplinarity.

Parallel scholarly trends have been found in translation studies. In the 1990s, there was the Cultural Turn in translation studies (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990; Snell-Hornby, 1988, 2006) which implies a paradigm shift in how scholars approach the research and teaching of translation in terms of theory and practice. The discipline then developed and gave rise to new translation theories, such as the Polysystem (Even-Zohar, 1990), Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury, 1995), Manipulation School (Hermans, 1985), and the Skopos theory (Nord, 2016; Reiss et al., 2013). Moreover, a merger with IC has benefited the translation and interpreting disciplines. Simon (2003) points out that cross-cultural communication has been improved through cultural references in translation. This view has been accepted by

Katan (2013), who puts forward that intercultural mediation is ‘a form of translatorial intervention which takes account of the impact of cultural distance when translating or interpreting’ (p. 84). For Katan, interpreters or translators need to consider any distinctions between the two cultures. Moreover, any cultural gaps can be diminished with intercultural mediation using interpretative or translatorial strategies to arbitrate.

Regardless of the developmental origin of interpreting as a profession, the literature suggests that interpreters have played significant roles in monumental historical events between nations and countries, requiring the knowledge of various languages and cultural practices. With the early focus primarily paid to descriptive and translation theories, this thesis calls for further examination of interpreters and their relationships with IC.

## **2.2 Definitions and Types of Conference Interpretation**

The act of interpreting is defined as a translational activity performed in a prompted manner (Pöchhacker, 2004). For comparison, the word ‘to interpret’ as a verb is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2019a) as ‘To expound the meaning of (something abstruse or mysterious); to render (words, writings, an author, etc.) clear or explicit; to elucidate; to explain,’ while *Merriam-Webster* (2019) defines it as ‘1: to explain or tell the meaning of: present in understandable terms.’ The crux of interpretation lies in deciphering the meaning. After construing the meaning, the interpreter recalibrates and rearranges the message in the new communicative code or language. In contrast, translation involves the translator rendering the written form of the source language (SL) into another written language of the target language (TL) (Munday, 2001). The spontaneous characteristics of the act of interpreting distinguish it from translation.

### **2.2.1 Conference Interpretation**

Turning now to the concept of conference interpretation, in addition to the definitions provided, Pöchhacker (2009) defines conference interpreting as a professional communication service. It is categorised into two types by mode

(simultaneous interpreting and consecutive interpreting) and by language modality (spoken and signed). Unimodality is characterised as working from spoken language A to B, while bimodality is working between a spoken language and a signed language (Nicodemus & Emmorey, 2013; Petitta et al., 2016).

According to the International Association of Conference Interpreters' website (AICC, 2011), conference interpreting refers to translating a spoken message from one language to another in 'a formal setting' and 'in real time.' Pöchhacker (2012) determines conference interpretation as a rendition service through simultaneous or consecutive mode. The scholar stresses that the definition is no longer restricted to the conference arrangement because the crux has shifted to interpretations of difficult oral speeches. This thesis focuses on this definition and that participants or interpreters must interpret consecutively or simultaneously for formal purposes. All types of conference interpretation can be found in various settings and are joined by eclectic interlocutors who do not speak the same language. These meetings may include, but are not limited to, the context of high-level meetings, multilateral meetings, press statements, diplomatic roundtables, high-level business meetings, official banquets, and others (Diriker, 2015). This means that the selection of participants will not be restricted to interpreters who work in conferences in the traditional sense.

### **2.2.2 Simultaneous Interpretation (SI)**

SI is defined as 'the interpreter sits in a booth, listens to the speaker in one language through headphones, and immediately speaks their interpretation into a microphone in another language' (AICC, 2011, p. 1). The strength of SI is instantaneous performance as the interpreter typically provides their services via sophisticated transmission equipment, and thus it is more suitable for meetings with many participants. It is delivered faster than other types of interpretation. Because of the intensity, it is not uncommon to find interpreters working in pairs and taking turns interpreting approximately every 30 minutes to prevent information overload (Chmiel, 2008).

One challenge of SI is physical positioning. The interpreter is usually not visible to the interlocutors (Diriker, 2015). At times, the interpreting booth may be placed at the back, so the interpreter is physically detached from the speaker in comparison to consecutive or whispered interpreting. Arguably, how and where the booth is positioned appears to depend on the organisers' awareness and experiences of working with interpreters. Without understanding the potential impact, organisers may set up the area for journalists and their camera tripods, which could entirely block the viewing from the interpreting booth. However, the booth may be furnished with a live-streaming monitor to give the interpreter better viewings, but it is not always the case. When physical detachment occurs, elements of non-verbal communication could be missed before reaching the interpreter. Non-verbal communication is a crucial element that is central to interpreting operations. If non-verbal communication is part of communication, regardless of its ratio, there could be lost meanings when adequate audio-visual aids are not given to the interpreter.

According to Littlejohn et al. (2009), non-verbal communication encompasses 'personal feelings, emotions, attitudes, and thoughts through body movements—gestures, postures, facial expressions, walking styles, positions, and distance—either consciously or involuntarily, more often subconsciously, and accompanied or unaccompanied by the spoken language' (p. 690). In other words, verbal communication may be governed, influenced, structured, intensified, or softened by non-verbal communication, and different cultures tend to operate differently with non-verbal communication practices (Phutela, 2015). This suggests that an interpreter may be forced to interpret a limited inflow of verbal and non-verbal nuances. Experienced interpreters may advise the organiser of a more appropriate booth arrangement, whereas inexperienced interpreters may not be aware of the potential downside. Therefore, this is worth researching as it is an element that participants are expected to have experienced (i.e., how SI interpreters handle mediation when cultural subtleties become less explicit than in in-person encounters).

### **2.2.3 Consecutive Interpretation (CI)**

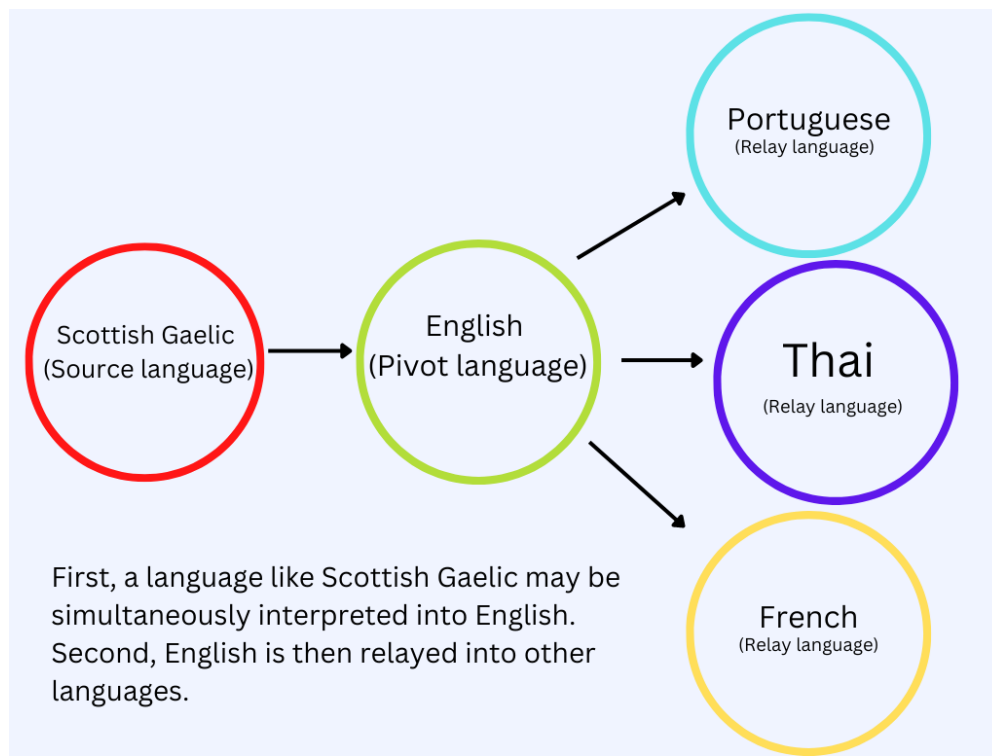
Consecutive interpretation occurs when ‘the interpreter is in the same room as the speaker and follows their speech while taking notes before presenting their interpretation’ (AIIIC, 2011, p. 1). Here, note-taking and concluding the points from the speaker are key goals. When the speaker pauses, the interpreter gives the interpretation. This type of interpretation does not require any equipment except for notetaking. Short CI may contain a few sentences, while long CI can last more than several minutes (Russell & Takeda, 2015). The main distinctive feature seems to be the frequency of the language switch. If a consecutive interpreter sits in the middle of two parties who are speaking language A and language B, the interpretation will involve constant switches between the two languages. Interpreting between languages may increase the inclination to encounter and mediate intercultural differences.

Because of the consecutive interpreter’s presence, as an advantage point, the interpreter could ask the speaker(s) to shed light on any ambiguous issues (Carter & Watts, 2016). The ability to ask for clarification between the two parties is distinctive in CI compared to other types, since the interpreter is more favourable to mediating problems between the agencies. As opposed to SI and whispered interpretation, CI interpreters are likely to be bombarded with verbal and non-verbal nuances because they are physically active in the meeting. Interpreting from language A to B for long periods before any language switch occurs tends to increase the amount of information. In terms of challenges, in a meeting with many attendees with highly controversial agenda topics, participants tend to race to articulate at the same time, while the interpreters may be asked to side with an argument because of their native background. Consecutive interpreters may have to navigate such dilemmas and others.

### **2.2.4 Relay Interpretation**

Relay interpretation is performed in a scenario with a language that cannot be interpreted by one interpreter (Mikkelsen, 2014). I created Figure 1 to illustrate the process in which the pivot language acts as a bridge between the initial language

and the target languages (Portuguese, Thai, and French); the interpreter rendering the relay is referred to as the pivot or *relayer*.



**Figure 1: Relay Interpretation**

One operational challenge appears to arise from the relay interpreting process. Mikkelson (2014) remarks that the process can be burdensome, as relay interpretation cannot be completely simultaneous. When speech is interpreted into a pivot language that is then rendered into the target language, it can result in rendition lag and imprecision. In other words, it raises the question of how an original meaning could be misplaced when it is finally transferred to the target language. The pivot language acts as the mediating language in bridging the other two languages. Although relay interpretation or indirect interpretation can be performed in the modes of consecutive and simultaneous, consecutive relay interpretation is typically not preferred due to its time-consuming limitations (Pöchhacker, 2015). Relay interpretation is not as commonly practised as SI or CI; therefore, it will not be the primary focus of this thesis.

### **2.2.5 Whispered Interpretation**

Whispered interpretation is when ‘the interpreter sits very close to the listeners and provides a simultaneous interpretation in a quiet voice’ (AICC, 2011, p. 2). Comparable to SI, the original message is interpreted simultaneously through whispering with no use of equipment. The interpreter usually sits behind the speaker and is generally visible or else relatively close to the speaker. The interpreter can typically interpret for one person to a small group of audience.

In terms of benefits, whispered interpretation offers excellent flexibility with no special tools required. This type of interpretation is often used in official meetings involving heads of state or authorised leaders. As for challenges, being seated behind heads of state or leaders suggests that the interpreter can experience interference from their voice; therefore, the volume must be kept low so that other participants in the room are not disturbed (Diriker, 2015). Acoustic problems can be alleviated but not eliminated by adopting hand-held devices for a wider audience (Baxter, 2016). The interpreter would interpret quietly into the microphone, which is transmitted wirelessly to the audience’s headsets. In connection with the concept of mediation, unlike CI, whispered interpreters have a reduced physical presence as they work in the background. This causes repercussions on mediating decisions, although they have more presence than booth interpreters do. Subsequently, whispered interpretation will not be the thesis’ primary focus.

### **2.2.6 Interpreters in the Limelight**

Considering the interpreter’s duty, interpreters on the job are in a position where they can speak on behalf of people, meaning that they might be inadvertently in a place of power to induce influence (positive or negative). For example, when Marie Kondo’s show on Netflix became a sensation for American families (Grady, 2019), all eyes turned to her Japanese–English interpreter, Lida, who was in charge of interpreting decluttering tips. Insider called her ‘the unsung hero of the KonMari phenomenon’ (Quito, 2019, para. 1). In addition, the Guardian, CNN, and the Korea Times have all noted how the director of a 2020 Oscar-winning silver screen ‘Parasite,’ Bong Joon-ho, was not alone in the glare of publicity. The director was

joined by his interpreter Sharon Choi, who became widely known for her eloquence and remarkable interpreting performance (Gonzalez, 2020; Hoad, 2020; Lee, 2020).

These examples show that interpreters perform their tasks and provide on-the-spot solutions for various reasons. It can be assumed that the success of a meeting depends on how the communicative targets are met (i.e., whether the meeting purpose is reached or agreed upon in high-level meetings or if business deals are made).

### **2.2.7 Delivery of Interpretation**

A further description of interpreting settings involves on-site and remote interpreting. Braun (2013) experimented on simulated police interviews and found a significantly higher drop in the performance of remote interpreting than in-person interpretation. There is also a surge in teleconference interpreting demand in a multitude of contexts, such as legal, healthcare, business, and education (Braun, 2015). According to AllC's survey on Distance Interpreting in 2018, terms and definitions regarding teleconference interpreting, videoconference interpreting, and audioconference interpreting have been gathered as follows (Executive Committee, 2018, p. 3):

- *Distance Interpreting* is an umbrella term that covers interpreting between one or more speakers joined from a distance.
- *Teleconference Interpreting* refers to distance interpreting, which provides the interpreter with a view of the interlocutor(s).
- *Videoconference Interpreting* refers to interpreting via a technological platform that provides the interpreter with a view of the speaker and other interlocutors.
- *Audioconference Interpreting* refers to interpreting via a technological platform that does not provide the interpreter with a view of the speaker but a view of other interlocutors.



- *Remote Interpreting* refers to distance interpreting, which does not provide the interpreter with an audiovisual image of the interlocutor(s).
- *Video Remote Interpreting* refers to distance interpreting via a technological platform that provides an audiovisual image of the speaker or signer but does not provide an audiovisual image of the interlocutor(s).
- *Audio Remote Interpreting* refers to distance interpreting via a technological platform that does not provide the interpreter with an audiovisual image of the speaker nor that of the interlocutor(s).

Remote and computer-assisted interpreting is known as a third major development in interpretation (Fantinuoli, 2018), with the first two major developments being the wired systems for SI and the Internet for convenient knowledge access. Distance interpreting can be performed using a combination of software and communicative platforms. A telephonic interpreting session is a good illustration of technological incorporation. An interpreter may be required to log into a computer mirroring programme such as GoToMeeting (2022), where the interpreter can remotely see the mirrored computer screen of the speaker. The process orients the interpreter to navigate through difficult figures and numbers. This can be used in parallel with a conference call, making it possible for three or more parties to join the conversation from different locations while observing the speaker's screen. The lack of live-stream video for the interpreter needs to be considered in this scenario.

This section has expounded on SI, Relayed interpretation, CI, and Whispered interpretation, which are all considered conference interpretation, while identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each interpreting type. The review then paid attention to how interpretation is conveyed with the assistance of modern equipment and raised the question of the interrelation between non-verbal communication and interpretation technology or lack thereof. Compared to CI, SI is more spontaneous, but communication can be hindered by the proximity of the interpreting booth and the lack of direct interaction with the speaker(s). Arguably, simultaneous interpreters must make quick decisions and move on to focus on the incoming message. Consecutive interpreters deliver longer interpretations during

the pauses, but the nature of CI offers communication opportunities when the speaker(s) pause for clarification. Consecutive interpreters often get the ‘limelight’ as they are more physically present than other types and more pressured to make politically-correct renditions. Since other interpreting types (e.g., relay, whispered, distance interpretation) are not as widely practised, the thesis will mainly investigate these two interpretation types.

## **2.3 Intercultural (Communicative) Competence (ICC)**

In this section, I present the notion of Intercultural Competence, and the many definitions scholars have given to the term. Afterwards, the discussion will elaborate on the conceptual infix of the word ‘Communicative’ in ‘Intercultural (Communicative) Competence.’

### **2.3.1 Historical Development of Intercultural Competence**

The introduction of linguistic competence came to the forefront via Chomsky (1965), in which he describes it as a part of his model for learning language and linguistics. The definitions for competence were given as ‘the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language’ and performance as ‘the actual use of language in concrete situations’ (p. 4). Hymes (1972) casts doubt on Chomsky’s model by proposing that linguistic competence would have been more valuable if Chomsky had been more realistic in the communicative context. Hymes’ model of Communicative Competence considers the ethnography of communication and claims to be a more comprehensive approach than the preceding one of Chomsky’s (1965), which had positioned grammar at the centre of competence.

Ontario, Canale, and Swain (1980), on the other hand, while investigating the teaching of French as a second language, explain their interpretation of the integrative theory of communicative competence as the integration of grammatical knowledge and socially-derived contextual understanding. Purporting to shift away from the inadequacies of prior cultural competences, which had exclusively comprised native speakers (Byram, 2009), Byram and Zarate (1997) coined the term ‘intercultural speaker’ under the ICC Model to describe a knowledgeable individual

who can harness the preservation of one's own cultural traits while traversing new cultural contexts. Byram (2009) explains that everyone (e.g., diplomats or foreign language instructors) will carry with them their world knowledge regardless of their ability to communicate in a foreign language. Therefore, as a deciding element, 'mutual perceptions' have to be established (p. 32). My argument is that becoming an 'intercultural speaker' (p. 31) is seemingly akin to interpreters needing to equip themselves with the five *savoirs* laid out by Byram, which are crucial for balancing their own cultural characteristics and norms of other cultures. For instance, people from Thailand are to choose their pronouns based on a selection of formality registers and gendered pronouns, such as 'กระผม' *kraphoǎm* (m), 'ผม' *phoǎm* (m), 'ดิฉัน' *dichán* (f) (Iwasaki & Horie, 2000, p. 527). Even though all these pronouns convey formality, the first two, *kraphoǎm* (m) and *phoǎm* (m), are for males, and *dichán* (f) is for females; see also Lohmann (2016).

In normal conversations between people of the same language, the speakers are responsible for harnessing their cultural traits (i.e., national or sub-cultures) and conveying them to the other speaker(s). In other cases where there is a lack of linguistic ability, interpreters are, on behalf of the speaker(s), in the position to harness and preserve those traits. But a problem often arises because the interpreters must do this for and from at least two or more cultural reference points, with a tendency for tensions. The interpreters seemingly fit the definition of Byram and Zarate's (1997) proposal of the intercultural speaker. Given the many definitions of intercultural competence, I will further review the available approaches to the term below.

### **2.3.2 An Abundance of Intercultural Competence Definitions: The Paradox of Choice?**

Language learners who aim to become 'informed agents between languages' must acquire linguistic mastery and intercultural knowledge (Garrett-Rucks, 2016, p. 41). The domain of intercultural competence is a highly researched area with numerous prolific authors (e.g., Bennett, 2015; Byram et al., 2001; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Spitzberg, 1983, 2000; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2015;

Van Ek, 1993; Wagner et al., 2017). A large array of researchers has resulted in an abundance and confusion of accepted definitions; some of which are defined as ‘the capability to shift one’s cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities’ (Hammer, 2015, p. 483). In other words, intercultural competence is the ability to adjust one’s cultural perspective and conduct in a way that considers cultural contrasts and similarities.

In order to prioritise definitions, Deardorff (2009) conducted a study of intercultural competence definitions from 23 leading IC scholars and found that Byram’s definition had received the highest score from other scholars. The definition states that intercultural competence is ‘Knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or to interact; valuing others’ values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing’ (Cited in Deardorff, 2009, p. 34). Deardorff (2009) summarised the top-rated definitions and asserted that intercultural competence is embedded in how one is able to hold effective and appropriate communication through one’s intercultural knowledge and skills. Moreover, some of these defined keys conform to the personal traits of conference interpreters when compared to the recommended personal traits for interpreter learners by AICC Training & Professional Development (2006, p. 1). Key resemblances are ‘a polished command of their own native language over a range of registers and domains’ for ‘skillfulness and knowledgeability.’ The characteristics focus on the linguistic competence of the speaker. In terms of intercultural competence, AICC further recommends ‘a familiarity with the cultures in the countries where their working languages are spoken’ for ‘adaptability and open-mindedness.’ These desirable traits can be applied as preliminary guidelines for designing methodology (e.g., formulating interview questions or designing vignettes and follow-up questions). It can be construed that the overall ideas seemingly encompass skillfulness, knowledgeability, adaptability, and open-mindedness. These are desirable traits because they, as given in the definitions, contribute to the development of understanding other cultural practices. Here I argue that being equipped with these skills will, in turn, improve the interpretation quality.

### **2.3.3 Intercultural Communicative Competence and Intercultural Competence**

Although the two terms may be used interchangeably, Byram (1997) made a distinction between them as follows. Intercultural competence is ‘the ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about intercultural communication’ (pp. 70–71). On the other hand, ICC pertains more to this research owing to the aspect of mediation, since it focuses on ‘the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language’ (Byram, 1997, pp. 70–71). Byram explains the concept by underlying the importance of being a mediator through negotiating and interacting in a manner that satisfies all the parties when eclectic cultural backgrounds are involved (further discussion of Byram’s ICC model, 3.2.3, Chapter 3, pp. 95–98). In my view, interpreters’ decisions to interpret can be shaped by the cultural norms of the people (clients) they meet. Superficially, these norms may be implicitly in conflict with another. When they, however, are interpreted without any mediation or intervention, they can explicitly cause misunderstandings between clients and, thus, the need to pay attention to the act of mediation during interpreting.

### **2.3.4 Interpretation and Intercultural Communication: How are Language and Culture Intertwined?**

To discuss the relationship between language and culture, I begin by revisiting the work of pioneering IC scholars. As a seminal project, Sapir (1929) stipulates that language and culture are intertwined and can affect the speaker’s perception and interpretation of reality. Therefore, being able to speak in a multitude of languages equals the ability to perceive distinct world realities. This idea was further developed and solidified by Whorf (1940), who asserts, ‘the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by the linguistic system in our minds...’ (pp. 213–214). These two linked ideas are referred to as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

As per the principle behind the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, this thesis is based on the premise that no two languages are identical; thus, interpreters must serve as

representatives of two or more distinct realities. Interpreters construe meanings from the language spoken and then render a newly arranged set of meanings. This helps substitute for what is lost or added when meaning progresses back and forth between languages. Michael Halliday, one of the most internationally distinguished linguists, gives his opinion on culture and communication that, 'Language actively symbolises the social system, representing metaphorically in its patterns of variation the variation that characterises human cultures (1978, p. 3).' To put it in the interpreting context, when interpreters interpret, they attempt to reflect the 'social system' of the source language in newly arranged patterns (See Lucy [2016]; Pederson [2010]; Wolff and Holmes [2011]).

Another prominent linguist Edward T. Hall gives many examples of what cultural differences may bring in his book *The Silent Language* (1959). In his book, he focuses on events related to time perception in different regions. Hall explains a flexible South Pacific time system that allows a local business to thrive because the owner could book up to fifteen people at the same time. This is possible because the locals would normally show up later than their reservation time. In contrast, an American plant manager working on the island, who valued punctuality, would likely be offended to learn that the 45-minute wait was an acceptable norm on the South Pacific Island. These examples demonstrate that different cultures often operate uniquely. It is a contrast in the cultural perception of time (i.e., how different cultures consider time and how their decisions are affected by it). If there were an interpreter, cultural issues would have likely been raised, such as why the locals are not punctual, or why the American manager is unnecessarily strict with punctuality. These issues would have required further clarification from the interpreter.

In more contemporary research, David Crystal, a prolific scholar on the English language, expresses, 'Language would stand still only if society did. A world of unchanging linguistic excellence, based on the brilliance of earlier literary forms, exists only in fantasy. The only languages that do not change are dead ones' (2006, p. 357). His remarks imply that the reflections a language socially produces are the representations of a constantly changing society. In this view, interpreters traverse between two or more areas of living languages that are continually evolving. Because of the diversity of cultural landscapes, this thesis aims to propose structural

strategies for interpreters to improve the interpretation quality. Crystal's view is a widely held outlook that speakers of a language influence the language they speak, and the language shapes the identity of the speakers.

In an early approach to assimilating US personnel to Thai culture, for example, the U.S. Foreign Service lists 28 first-person Thai pronouns in the U.S. Foreign Service Thai Reference Grammar Book (1964) or 27 first pronouns, according to Cooke (1965). A Thai speaker has the luxury of choosing from a number of pronouns. Amongst them is 'ผุ' Phom, a general polite male pronoun, which is vastly different from 'กู' Kuu or a crude I, which is used amongst boys and men. This implies that all 'I's' in Thai are not made equal, and what determines which pronoun will be used is the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Those interpreting Thai into English would have to consider the subtle nuances of the pronouns, which are not readily available in English. Interpreters would need a method to express the underlying message; otherwise, they could risk losing that meaning or misinterpreting the message.

#### 2.3.4.1 Language Reflects the Culture – Culture Reflects the Language

The following section discusses the interrelation between language and culture raised by Sapir (1929) and Whorf (1940). In essence, both scholars postulate that culture is an umbrella concept under which language is rooted. When speakers of one language communicate, they manifest cultural cues. Language is seemingly the window to the worldview of that culture, while cultural practices and sociocultural factors formulate and construct the language. Similarly, human development was understood to be mediated by social, cultural, and linguistic factors by Vygotskian sociocultural theory in the early 1900s (Swain et al., 2015). A demonstration of language and culture being interwoven could be found in the case of the Thai use of the politeness particle.

In Thai, the prefix 'คุณ' Khun, meaning Mr, Mrs, or Ms (Bargiela-Chiappini et al., 2007), is used as a form of the honorific title (Howard, 2009). In his study, Howard (2009) found that Thai students would combine honorific speech registers in Thai

and English by using ‘Khun Teacher’ to call their instructors. Moreover, other evidence suggests that Thais who speak English might use the ending particles of ‘*ครั้บ*’ *khrap* and ‘*คะ*’ *kha*, which are politeness particles for males and females as elaborated in the following excerpt from Kirkpatrick & Lixun (2020, p. 97).

S1: [first name1] how are you today?

S2: i’m fine thank you kah how about you?

S3: i’m: good doing well do you have your lunch mhm?

The authors explain that S1 is a Vietnamese female and S2 is a Thai female. This leads to a potential mismatch between the interlocutors. On the one hand, the Thai person wishes to be more polite by adding the marker ‘kah.’ On the other hand, the intended politeness would not be received due to S2’s inability to speak Thai. If there were Thai interpreters in the situation, however, they could intervene and explain the nuance behind the politeness particle. It seemingly becomes the interpreters’ responsibility to clarify the purpose of adding the ending particle even when the Thai person is speaking English. For these reasons, it may be socially acceptable in Thailand, although grammatically incorrect in English, to call one’s teacher ‘Khun Teacher Krub’ (mister/miss/misses + teacher + male politeness particle) to convey respect and politeness. A comparable case of intercultural politeness particles can be found in the Korean honorific system (see also Han et al. [2015] or Yoon [2004]).

Cultural collisions can be taken seriously by people on the other end of the spectrum, although the collisions may seem trivial from one’s perspective. This may be for lack of realisation that the other interlocutor is being evaluated based on another cultural framework. The following is an example of what happens when a Thai businessperson serves his Italian business partner Chrysanthemum tea at a joint meeting. Chrysanthemum is associated with death in Italy, whereas it is a popular health drink on Thai meeting tables (Stewart, 2009). Moreover, in Asia, Chrysanthemum symbolises strength and vigour (Li, 2017). The burden for bridging



these differing beliefs on Chrysanthemum could be weighed on the shoulders of the interpreter, whose key responsibility is to make the conversation transparent among the interlocutors. The interpreter may choose to be impartial by only interpreting, but then the Italian client may leave the meeting feeling offended. Alternatively, the interpreter can mediate by clarifying the cultural difference to both clients. The decision is almost entirely dependent on the interpreter.

Another cultural aspect this thesis will incorporate is humour interpretation due to its presence in cultures across the globe. Humour is culturally inspired and constructed (Jiang et al., 2019; Yue et al., 2016). When humour is presented, interpreters either use their own cultural knowledge or avoid translating it (Espinoza-Saavedra, 2017). In translating jokes, Phimtan and Tapinta (2011) propose six strategies (e.g., cultural substitution, word-for-word translation) for English to Thai humour (see 5.1.4.5 Humour Interpretation, pp. 158–159). Jokes, which can be plays on language (puns, for example) or culture-specific, can be translatable through the creative use of language (Low, 2011); however, translatability can be hindered by issues of equivalence (Raphaelson-West, 1989; Venuti, 2002). The interpreter's duty is to 'bridge linguistic and cultural barriers' under time constraints (Pavlicek & Pöchhacker, 2002, p. 385), and deliver interpretations without being affected by any rendered jokes, that is, translating without laughter (Michael, 2003). Hence, one challenge for interpreters worth investigating is the fact that one distinct cultural meaning may not be transferable to another cultural group, even though both meanings are derived from the same object or concept.

#### **2.3.4.2 Opposing Views: Language and Culture as Separate Entities**

While recognising that language and culture are closely related, scholars have offered alternative approaches to their relationship. Chomsky (1980) posits that language is not determined by cultural influences because the factors surrounding it are biologically innate. Comparably, a language's underlying rules are universal and separate from culture to a degree (Chomsky, 1980). However, learning new languages requires 'deliberate practice' (Ericsson et al., 1993), such as the acquisition of vocabulary (Nation, 2015), which implies that learners have to dedicate their time to acquire a new set of signs and symbols. The idea that

languages have shared structures has also been attested by Evans & Levinson, (2009) who argue that there are only a few languages with common traits as evidently shown in sound, meaning, and syntactic variances.

Next, I will examine work by Risager (2007), who is critical of the idea that language and culture are intertwined. She proposes a rethinking of language and culture: a third position extending from (1) language and culture are inseparable and (2) language is culturally neutral. Risager's third reinterpretation prescribes that language and culture are separable when culture is treated as context and culture as content. In her interpretation of culture as context, she argues that when a native Chinese person moves to Germany and speaks Chinese in the new context, the language detaches from the original culture. In other words, the use of Chinese is no longer entirely influenced by the Chinese context and is replaced by that of Germany. The example of culture as the content is derived from the educational setting. For instance, German is used in a geography class for teaching about Argentina. The class content is, therefore, focused on the country of Argentina, not Germany. She argues that the culture of the instruction medium is removed from the culture.

However, Risager's (2007) argument seems to rely heavily on one-way communication. Regarding culture as context, my argument is predicated on the premise that a person speaking the language carries with them the nuanced cultural package because a person has to socially learn a language as an addition to the cognitive practice (Bakhtin, cited in Zou, 2018). This view agrees with Halliday's view that culture is an organising principle at the level of phylogenetic development (1978). In Risager's analogy, the new proximity changes more than how the language is used. Changes and adjustments the Chinese person faces represent a reciprocal relationship of accommodating, renegotiating, and mediating with the new culture. The cultural dynamics of Germany are negotiated and developed because of the Chinese speaker's representation as a new member of German society. Second, when culture is interpreted as content, the researcher claims that the language of instruction is influenced by content, especially in language teaching. I agree that the content will highly influence the language of instruction, but it would not 'un-entwine' the German speakers from their roots. Even in a language class, German

students would rely on German language and reference points at the beginning, while the instructor may have to rely on examples which are relatable to the students. In view of this thesis, through the act of interpretation, I argue that communication is a shared activity of diverse social outlooks and participants.

#### 2.3.4.3 High-Context and Low-Context Culture

This section visits the notion of high- and low-context culture in the seminal work of Hall (1976). Specifically, I use it as a case to discuss the tendency of cultural discrepancies between Thai and other cultures.

High-context culture refers to the implicit nature of communication where decisions are made collectively. On the contrary, low-context culture implies that communication is carried out in the pursuit of explicitly stressing individualism. Thailand is broadly considered a place of high-context practices (e.g., Thai speakers communicate and read between implicit cues rather than being straightforward), although not disputing the fact that one country could consist of high and low situations. Given that the research participants are Thai–English interpreters, I estimate that their working environments will move between high-context and low-context driven encounters, but what are the implications of being from a high or low-context culture?

Croucher et al. (2012) construe that Thailand and India are high-context nations because Thais and Indians tend to avoid conflicts. The claimed differences between high- and low-context cultures implies that people who speak Thai and subscribe to Thai culture are inclined to be implicit and reserved compared to speakers from low-context cultures. In another study, Americans were found to assert less verbal aggressiveness than Thais (Croucher, 2013). Croucher attributes collectivism and uncertainty avoidance to explain the insertion of verbal passive-aggressiveness. According to both studies, Thailand tends to be a society with speakers at both communicative extremes, indirect and verbally aggressive.

Predicated on these traits, the analyses of the interpreting scenes between Thais and pre-dominantly people from English-speaking countries will likely be encounters

of high-context vs low-context orientations on a sophisticated cultural platform. In practice, interpreting for a high-level Thai government officer may unveil a lengthy introductory speech of personal anecdotes, a kind of statement. Those who work for the political figure may be socially obliged to support it. In contrast, American counterparts tend to be straightforward. To Thai people, the Americans may sound blunt. Still, to Americans, a collectivistic ritual of honouring the elderly and their personal success stories of the Thais may be foreign, which does not lead to fruitful meeting results. These are anticipated communicative patterns that interpreters can prepare before interpretation.

#### 2.3.4.4 Collectivism and Individualism

The second expected collision is between collectivism and individualism. Triandis (2001) states that people from a collectivist culture tend to be more concerned about social relationships due to them being mutually dependent on one another. On the contrary, people from an individualist culture would demonstrate their autonomy by stressing the importance of personal accomplishments. Hofstede's (2001) individualism score of 20 for Thai culture indicates that the Thais function socially as a group and that emphasis is placed firmly on group connections (see also Hofstede Insights, 2020).

Hofstede's (2001) scores highlight a complicated relationship that may arise because of sociocultural differences. A collectivistic society would be a society where the members function as a group. The score of 20 given to Thailand suggests that Thai people tend to be more collectivistic and be less willing to embrace new changes. In contrast, being direct and straightforward is a much-preferred approach in the United States and Ireland. Both English-speaking countries scored 70 and 91, respectively, on individualism based on the Hofstede scale (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede Insights, 2020). However, other researchers have proposed alternative approaches.

Cultural frame switching theory by Hong (2009) and Hong et al. (2000) elaborates that individuals dynamically change their behaviours based on the situation, rather than portraying their static characteristics, while Minkov et al. (2017) detail three

dimensions of collectivism (in-group, institutional, and societal), which they maintain are more suited to understanding nuanced differences. In my view, Hofstede (2001) still offers a level of understanding that is suitable for my project, as I will utilise these scores as estimated cultural trends and not as definite fashions, to complement and compare with other findings (see 3.2.1 for detailed discussions, pp. 87–90).

In a project on ethical interpreting healthcare settings by Phipps et al. (2014), one of the two videos, which I intend to use in the data collection, shows a dilemmatic medical interpreting scenario in which there is a Pakistani interpreter who works from Urdu–English. The interpreter tries to be professional, but he is continuously asked about his personal life, hometown, and dialect (See 9.1.1, Appendices, p. 410). The interpreter even tells the patient that he is only there to interpret, not to discuss personal life. At the end of the session, the patient asks the interpreter to drive him home, but the interpreter declines, saying that he is not insured to do so. If we apply the Hofstede scale to the scenario, the following is a brief analysis.

Similar to Thailand's score of 20, there is a high discrepancy in scoring between Pakistan's 14 points and the United Kingdom's score of 89 on individualism (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede Insights, 2020). The disagreement between the Pakistani interpreter and the English medical patient could result from a prescribed norm of a collectivist culture of the context, which in this case is Pakistan and the United Kingdom. Here, norm-conforming seems to override professional responsibilities and violate the representative duties of the interpreter. The example can be applied to Thai–English interpreters, considering that the scores of Pakistan (14) and Thailand (20) on individualism are only slightly different (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede Insights, 2020), and the people in contact with the Thai interpreters will mostly come from English-speaking countries.

So far, I have identified interdisciplinary links between interpreting and IC studies, while arguing that interpreters are witnesses of intercultural exchanges, they are also in a privileged position regarding which decisions to employ using their intercultural expertise. I then presented conflicting views on language and culture. Last, the section concluded with the projected cultural disagreements between

high- and low-context cultures, and individualism and collectivism, which were reflected in the data. I will argue that interpreters, as research participants, not only transfer messages between languages, but also act as mediators who elaborate on their practices, which may be considered foreign and unique, to the other interlocutor(s). Studying this phenomenon requires investigating the tenets of interpretation and IC.

## **2.4 Interpreter's Roles: Beyond a Linguistic Conduit**

The role of the conduit is the conventional role of interpreters, which has gained dominance in the arrangement of training programmes (Brashers & Goldsmith, 2009). The term 'conduit metaphor' was initially explored and invented by the American linguist, Reddy (1979). The coining of the phrase was not specific to interpreting studies, but it suggested that language is at the front of transferring thoughts. A message is conveyed and transmitted fluidly through language.

For an interpreter, adherence to the conduit metaphor means that the interpreter must act as a passive and non-participating carrier of messages from A to B. In other words, the interpreter metaphorically takes the same role as the language(s). When the interpreter renders the interpretation, the message is not hindered by the interpreter's presence but flows through the communication pipeline conveniently without any obstacles. The conduit metaphor treats all languages equally, as if the word 'tree' in English perfectly matches an equivalent 'tree' in Thai or other languages. For example, a banana tree for an English person does not carry the same cultural meaning as a Thai banana tree. In Thailand, some banana trees, wrapped in colourful strips as offerings, are a sacred living place for Taani Mother spirit (Johnson, 2012). As a superstition, local Thais at times gently rub the tree trunks to search for winning lottery numbers (Johnson, 2012). The interpreter would have to consider the cultural significance attached to the word.

In addition to differing representations in semantics, a conduit stance can also be pragmatically problematic; for instance, the phrase 'how ya going?' in Australian English is not intended to ask the hearer about the means of transportation but as a greeting (Boberg, 2011). Rendering the greeting phrase requires the interpreter to

be well-informed of (1) the Australian English variety, (2) the greeting culture of the source language, and (3) the greeting culture of the new language, which may not be a simple conversion to 'how are you?' in the target culture.

In the 1990s, seminal scholars began to cast doubts on the conduit role (e.g., Kaufert & Putsch, 1997; Roy, 1993), and the positioning of interpreting has shifted to how interpreting plays a role in mediating communication stretching beyond the roles of an invisible conduit (a prevalently discussed topic by many scholars, e.g., Davidson, 2000; Farini, 2012; Liddicoat, 2015a, 2016b; Wadensjö, 2017). In signed interpreting, Janzen (2005) states that the field has drifted away from conduit models. In legal interpreting, Mikkelsen (2008) acknowledges that court interpreters in the United States are strictly prohibited from adding any information but proposes that the interpreter roles have multiple tenets, which are more complicated than mechanistic rendition. The development of changing roles may be attributed to the interpreters' performing other tasks, including intervening, mediating, and manipulating the intercultural package to facilitate effective communication between the parties. I will argue that not only does the interpreter's task require a near-native capability in both languages, but the skills of mediation require a comprehensive understanding of both worlds to facilitate successful communication between interlocutors. This leads to the importance of discussing the notion of the translators' visibility, subsequent to the Cultural Turn (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990; Snell-Hornby, 1988).

Translators visibility challenges the conventional conduit role (invisibility) by prescribing that translators and interpreters can demonstrate their visibility through necessary intervention (Venuti, 2008). The interpreter's role is subject to change, while invisibility and agency must be continuously renegotiated (Gómez, 2015). The interpreter may relocate between the conduit role, which acts as a pipeline to preserve neutrality and message authenticity, and the agency role by utilising different transitional identities. Gomez's (2015) study, for example, which was conducted at two Spanish prisons, suggest that mediation for foreign inmates is necessary and practised because the prisoners require help in their medical, legal, disciplinary, and educational causes. Although mediation seems to contradict the

strict nature of a prison, it could be argued that the interpreter's role can be flexible and dependent on the context in which the interpreter works.

For certain industries, such as interpretation for the justice system, faithful interpretation is an expected quality (Christensen, 2011), although being literal does not equal interpretation precision (Hale, 2014). The decision to mediate appears to be context based. Furthermore, the interpreter's visibility can be found in other contexts, as mediation is seemingly performed regardless of the speakers' socioeconomic status. In 2006, an interpreter arguably performed intercultural mediation in front of the world. At the United Nations, Hugo Chavez called US President George W. Bush 'señor dictador imperialista' or literally 'Mr Imperialist Dictator.' The interpreter quickly presented to the audience a toned down and less harmful interpretation of 'dear world dictator,' leaving out the essence of 'imperialism' (Cunico & Munday, 2016, p. 208). The modification suggests that this interpreter performed intercultural mediation, possibly to avoid potential diplomatic conflicts.

With regard to recent publications, a gap can be identified regarding Thai–English interpreters who work in conjunction with IC. Recent works of interpreting-related studies have seemingly encompassed a wide range of topics: techniques of interpreters' self-repairs (Lee & Hong, 2021; Shen & Liang, 2021), rephrasing (Chmiel et al., 2018), and note-taking in relation to speech difficulty (Kuang & Zheng, 2022). However, studies that examine IC have mainly focused on interpreter-mediated interactions in healthcare and public services in Europe; for example, studies predominantly focus on public service interpreting in other contexts, such as in Catalonia (Marta Arumí & Vargas-Urpi, 2017; Vargas-Urpi, 2013), Switzerland (Bischoff et al., 2012), and Scotland (Piacentini et al., 2019).

In terms of the mediation process, according to *the United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation*, mediation 'is a process whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements' (2012, p. 4). The emphasis is placed on the act of assistance done in order to manage a conflict with consent. In comparison, the *Oxford English dictionary* (2019b) specifies that mediation comes



from the verb, mediate: ‘To act as a mediator or intermediary with (a person) for the purpose of bringing about agreement or reconciliation; to intercede with. **b. intransitive.** Of a person or other agency: to act as a mediator or intermediary; to intercede or intervene.’ In other words, the dictionary definitions focus on having a mediator who reconciles a conflict.

In the European Union, intercultural mediation is a profession in many European healthcare systems, such as in Italy (Farini, 2008; Sani, 2015) and Belgium (Nierkens et al., 2002), and as a systematic method to ensure public services (Arvanitis, 2014). Moreover, Verrept (2019) reviewed 87 documents on mediation in Dutch, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish across the WHO countries and found that 58 papers discussed medical intercultural mediator roles. Although this role is specific to medicine, it was remarked that interpreting and bridging socio-cultural gaps are the two leading roles that intercultural mediators take. Other less vital roles include preventing conflicts, encouraging patients to use existing healthcare services, and offering support to nurture therapeutic trust (Verrept, 2019). In other words, mediating seems to refer to an intervention to prevent dispute, while interpreting mainly refers to rendering the message. During the process, both roles take turns being a subset of each other.

Not only does evidence illustrate that IC helps clients, particularly patients in healthcare contexts in EU countries, overcome language and cultural barriers (Nierkens et al., 2002), but also the role of the intercultural mediator is found to be the driving force of national and local multicultural promotion in Europe (Theodosiou & Aspioti, 2015).

According to Theodosiou and Aspioti (2015), intercultural mediation is an act of linking cultures and connecting meanings. They assert that interpreters without proper training cannot anchor successful IC. In their review of migration in 11 EU states, they found that among these countries were shared assimilation issues regarding migrants’ inabilities to acquire the new language and to work in the new country. Despite the variety of terms being used for the intercultural mediator profession (e.g., cultural interpreter in Austria, intercultural mediator in Belgium,

or social interpreter in Italy), these nations agree that it is a recognised and paid profession.

In summary, interpretation in Europe has a combined role between that of an interpreter and a social facilitator. In Thailand, Kosiyaporn et al. (2020) investigation of the country's interpreters in health services suggests that migrant health workers (MHW) interpret and mediate cultures in communities where migrants reside despite their roles being unspecified (i.e., clear regulations on the roles of healthcare personnel are not systematically stipulated). This indicates that the profession is vital and has demonstrated its criticality in helping newcomers in the assimilation process, mainly through healthcare, in the foreign land; however, there appears to be a lack of legal control in Thailand when compared the European contexts.

#### **2.4.1 Mediation in Educational and Intergovernmental Institutions**

The Monterey Institute of Foreign Studies' founding philosophy in the US states that translation is part of IC while interpreters render the message 'across a cultural/linguistic barrier' in 1967 (Arjona, 1978). Today, that philosophy has been developed into an Intercultural Competence Committee, which offers specialisation and IC courses (Middlebury Institute of International Studies, 2022).

In the UK, on the front page of the Centre for Intercultural Mediation, Durham University writes that it 'supports, encourages, and promotes Durham's multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to understanding the intricate complexity of mediating human thoughts and behaviours across linguistic, political, cognitive, and cultural boundaries' (2019, para. 2). Durham University underlines the diversity of 'human thoughts and behaviours' which exist across borders.

Another Master's programme in Sociology–Intercultural Mediation offered at Poland's University of Warlow–concentrates on equipping students with skills to understand 'how culture (in its great variety) informs social change and how it can be facilitated using the knowledge on how people create social groups, how they communicate, what kind of internal and external factors influence how society

works' (University of Warclow, 2019, para. 2). The focus is similar to that of Durham University, but slightly shifts towards social change that is affected by the cultural practice in a given society.

The notion of mediation in Southeast Asia seems to have taken a different approach and philosophy (Vatikiotis, 2009), particularly in The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, established in 1967 and consisting of 10 nation-states. The ASEAN Charter 2008 prescribes mediation under article 23 - Good Offices, Conciliation and Mediation of ASEAN Charter (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2008). The Southeast Asian region makes up over 50 per cent of all the intra-conflict areas in Asia (Queen & Sheng, 2020). However, to my knowledge, the literature suggests that the term mediation is Eurocentrically studied (See 2.5.3 Intercultural Communication in Thai Interpreting Research, pp. 73–77), specifically on migrant and medical interpreting. The lack of scholarly focus has informed the need for RQ2: What is the importance of intercultural communication in interpretation classrooms and training programmes in Thailand? Obtaining empirical data will clarify the existing application of IC in the classrooms and guide future educators on the needed development areas.

Overall, the literature suggests that the conventional conduit role of the interpreter has been challenged, as evidence indicates that interpreters do more than simply translate from language A to language B. In professional practice, mediation is practised as a profession in Europe. Educational institutions in the US and Europe seem to recognise the utilisation of IC by interpreters, as suggested by the availability of teaching courses and curricula. At the highest regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, mediation is found in the writing of the ASEAN Charter. The evidence suggests that IC is discussed, prescribed, and taught in scholarly works, professional bodies, and universities.

## **2.5 Interpretation Practices in Thailand**

In the second half of this chapter, I provide a comprehensive overview of the domestic growth of interpreting teaching and research. I discuss the historical context of English instruction in relation to Thailand's interpreter training

programmes. Then, I elaborate on the surging demand for interpreters in Southeast Asia and Thailand before outlining the existing scholarly gaps.

### **2.5.1 A Brief History of Interpretation and Translation in Thailand**

Interpretation in Thailand has not only appeared in modern-day Thailand. Records of interpretation and translation in the Kingdom began when the Siamese delegations (Siam is the former name of Thailand) to the Ming Dynasty of China were requested to teach the Siamese language to Chinese students (Rojanawanichkij & Wei, 2015). This visit directed the production of the first Chinese-Thai glossary. In contemporary Siam, contact with the West began in 1512 when Portuguese merchants and sailors came ashore at the port of Ayutthaya (the former Capital of Thailand). Subsequently, it was approximately during the 1610s that Dutch, English, and French sailors and diplomats repeated the same trip (Surintatip, 2007), which prompted a growing demand for multilingual interpreters.

#### **2.5.1.1 Constantine Gerakis: the Most (In)Famous Interpreter and Mediator in Siam?**

The power of interpreters has long been manifested in Thai history. In 1678, Siam witnessed arguably one of the most renowned interpreters in its history with the arrival of Constantine Gerakis (Bruce), a poorly educated Greek adventurer who travelled to the Kingdom. His fluency in Thai, English, French, Portuguese, and Malay put him in the position of an interpreter under King Narai in 1683. He ascended the social ladder and was eventually appointed as Chief Minister, a potent position second only to the Thai King (Sioris & DiCrocco, 1992; Smithies, 1994). Internationally, King Louis XIV of France made Phaulkon a Count around 1687. By March 1688, through an unexpected turn of political events, self-taught interpreter Phaulkon was beheaded in a controversial death while King Narai was on his deathbed (Bruce, 1982).

What can be learned from Phaulkon and his role as Siam's interpreter? First, throughout the life of Phaulkon, his interpreting profession had a pivotal role in the Kingdom of Siam, which was an unprecedented foreign influence on domestic politics. Second, his interpreting career consisted of intermediation between Siam

and other states. Ruangsilp (2007) postulates that Phaulkon was ‘brought into the Siamese administration because of his ability to facilitate between different systems’ (p. 125). The ability to navigate between ‘systems’ opened doors of opportunities at the Siamese court for Phaulkon. These historical events elucidate that the interpreting profession has had dynamic roles at many levels of the Thai social spectrum, from the lowly traders to the Bourgeoisie to the noble chancellor. For Phaulkon, his contribution as an interpreter in managing foreign affairs was highly commendable and appreciated in his early career by King Narai. Nevertheless, as he grew more politically involved and connected, he rose to exploit his authority to dominate and monopolise trade, ultimately costing him his life (Ruangsilp, 2007). Phaulkon’s role as an interpreter manifests how interpreters’ intercultural mediation could incite positive or negative change at arguably one of the highest political levels in and outside Thailand. The evidence indicates that interpreters may have long played an integral role in bridging cultures while also fostering socio-economic cooperation between Thailand and representatives from other nations.

#### **2.5.1.2 Teaching English and Interpreting Studies with IC in Thailand**

In 19<sup>th</sup> century Thailand, the teaching of foreign languages was primarily limited to the Royals, the Thai elites, and aristocrats during the reign of King Rama III from 1824 to 1851 (Durongphan, 1982). English, however, subsequently gained its place as the most respected foreign language due to an influx of foreigners during the reign of King Rama V (Chitkla, 2017). In 1891, the teaching of English was expanded to the broader public during his reign, when the Ministry of Education carried out the education reformation and annexed the English language to the curriculum (Foley, 2005) through the modernisation and reformation of Thai education (Kaur et al., 2016). Nevertheless, it was not until 1921 that the teaching of English was made compulsory for students above Grade 4, while 1996 was the year that the threshold was lowered to Grade 1 upwards with new objectives, such as communication and knowledge acquisition (Foley, 2005).

In contrast, foreign language teaching and interpretation teaching were not parallel to the country’s literary development. Although the French missionary, Pallegoix, contributed a pivotal advancement to the country’s translation literature by

creating the first published Thai-Latin-French-English dictionary in 1854 (Chitkla, 2017; Lausunthorn, 2014), the consolidation of interpreting teaching, including translating literary works, and introducing translation studies, came to the fore nearly a century later despite the historical importance.

For other contemporary interpreting and translation, it was as recently as 1993 when Thammasat University in Bangkok initiated the first translation programme (Wakabayashi, 2014), while applications to the Master of Arts Programme in Interpretation were opened to the public in 2007 at Chulalongkorn University (Chalermprakit Center of Translation and Interpretation, 2020). In late 2022, the nation's first Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpretation in the Digital Age was opened at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University in Bangkok (Faculty of Liberal Arts, 2022a).

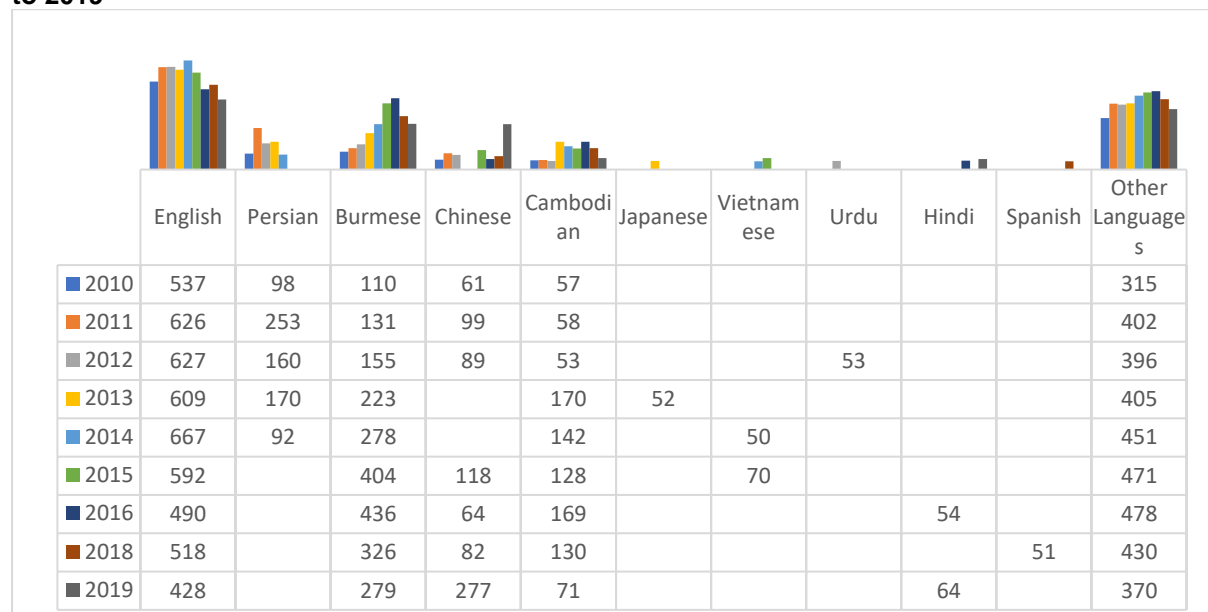
In view of IC teaching, the official stipulation of cultural policies in Thailand seems to have marred the country's move towards multiculturalism, given that the government's priority has been focused on promoting Thai-ness and singularity (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2016). One approach to circumvent the stipulation is through an integration of IC with English education in Thailand, which has been called for by Laopongharn and Sercombe (2009) and Loo et al. (2019). These scholars have raised concerns about teachers' lack of IC expertise and their arbitrary personal interpretation of IC teaching. However, there appears to be no evidence of IC being systematically taught in relation to interpreting at Thai schools.

The establishment of English education for the public in the country has been at forefront of policies for approximately 130 years. However, while the founding of translation programmes started about three decades ago, it was not until as recently 2022, that those interested in pursuing an interpreting career could earn a full interpreting degree domestically. Compared to European institutions dating back to 1941 in Geneva (Komatsu, 2016), the development of interpreting programmes in Thailand is fairly recent and still has room for major establishment and improvement based on academic suggestions from research on the Thai scene. However, IC teaching in interpreting studies is yet to be incorporated into the teaching paradigm.

## 2.5.2 Interpretation Demands in Southeast Asia and Thailand

As explained in Chapter 1, Thailand has been undergoing a multicultural shift that is fuelled, in part, by regional and national cooperation. As of 2014, interpretation jobs in nine ASEAN nations (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) account for US\$ 129.96 million or 4.06% of the world market, excluding Myanmar (Parker, 2008, p. 139). The comparison is between the EU as one institution and the job markets in nine countries. At the national level, as shown in Table 2-1, English has maintained its popularity for interpretation as the highest requested language from 2010 to 2019 in Thai courts (Office of International Affairs, 2019). The demand for English language interpretation experienced a peak in 2014, with 667 cases, while Burmese and Cambodian are the other two languages with high enough figures to be recorded throughout the nine years. These numbers emphasise a more privileged status of English in Thailand and Southeast Asia, which reflects the demand for interpretation between English and other languages.

**Table 2-1: The Number of Foreign language Interpreted Cases in Thai Justice Courts from 2010 to 2019**



The European Union has 24 official languages. EU citizens can use any of the languages to contact EU institutions and they must be responded to in the same language (2000). In comparison, at the regional level, the importance of English has been highlighted in terms of international cooperation between the ASEAN states (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). An illustration of English influence in ASEAN

can be observed in the organisation of the 40<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 8–13 November 2022, in which leaders and delegations from 18 nations participated (ASEAN Cambodia, 2022). Despite the many official languages, Article 34 of the ASEAN Charter stipulates that English is the working language of ASEAN (2008). The plan of adopting Malay as a second official language does not seem far-fetched since Malay is an official language in at least three or four ASEAN countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore (Adelaar, 2000) (some exclude mutually intelligible Indonesian due to geopolitical reasons [Montolalu & Suryadinata, 2007]). Nevertheless, when Kirkpatrick (2010) asked the director of SEAMEO (the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation) about the possibility of adopting Malay as the region's second official language in 2007, the answer he received was that the proposal would only cause trouble to the community. English and respective languages are the lingua franca of conversation at ASEAN meetings, hence establishing how central Thai–English interpreters' roles are situated—on some occasions, at the core of these important meetings.

In terms of governing bodies, codes of ethics in Thailand are not stipulated by central organisations (Australian Embassy in Bangkok, 2016; Bancroft, 2005) but by individual bodies that typically enforce the rules on smaller groups of interpreters, such as regulations by the Office of International Affairs of the Thai Courts (2022). The problems seem to be that these in-house codes of conduct would not be lawfully applicable to all working interpreters in the country. In contrast, despite an absence of certification and guidelines, the Thai Civil Procedure Code prescribes under Section 46 that 'All proceedings carried out by a Court relating to the trial and adjudication of civil cases shall be in the Thai language' (UNODCD, 2020, p. 29). The case is also valid for the Thai Criminal Procedure Code B.E. 2551 (The year 2008) in which the law has been stipulated under Section 13 that 'The inquiry, preliminary examination or trial shall be made in Thai; but if it is necessary to translate local Thai language or dialect or Thai into a foreign language or foreign language into Thai, an interpreter shall be required,' (International Commission of Jurists, 2012, p. 16).



### 2.5.2.1 Thai and English Statuses in Thailand

The United Nations (2011) reports that Thailand is a pluralistic society comprising five language groups: Tai, Austroasiatic, Sino-Tibetan, Austronesian or Malayo-Polynesian, and Hmong-Mien Language Family, totalling 70 languages (Premsrirat, 2007). Languages other than Thai constitute a small portion. Thai had over 60.6 million speakers in 2019 (Eberhard et al., 2019) and is currently the de facto official language in Thailand (Premsrirat, 2007), while English is the official language of ASEAN (2008). This information signifies the positions of Thai and English and emphasises that both languages are widely used as mediums of communications in Thailand and the region.

With regard to English proficiency in Thailand, the nation is struggling to compete with its neighbours in light of English education. Based on the ETS reports (ETS, 2018a, 2018b), the TOEIC score in Thailand has a MEAN of 478 and SD of 196 ( $M = 277$  listening, 105 SD;  $M = 201$  reading, 98 SD), and it is ranked 47<sup>th</sup> out of 49 countries. Moreover, the country averages at 78/120 (Reading19, Listening20, Writing19, Speaking20) and 77/120 (Reading19, Listening20, Writing19, Speaking19) by native language category on the TOEFL test. Both reports correspond with a 2018 report by IELTS (2018), unveiling the country's IELTS academic scores of Listening6.29, Reading6.06, Writing5.55, Speaking5.91 and overall 5.98 and by native language category Listening6.3, Reading6.1, Writing5.4, Speaking5.9 and overall 6.0. Southeast Asian TOEFL takers, comprising both elite and average students, generally take the test for further studies or to advance in their careers (Tsuneyoshi, 2017).

Taken together, the existing codes of ethics and interpreting practices at the regional and national levels seemingly contradict the lack of licensing in Thailand, which places major responsibilities on interpreters, including decisions on intercultural mediation. The court requirements may indirectly increase the demands for Thai–English interpreters, even in cases where interpreters are not necessarily needed for interpreting but they are needed for lawfully satisfying the requirements of using Thai in courts (i.e., a court case between foreigners and English-speaking Thais). The laws, figures, and existing literature indicate that Thai

interpreters, despite the growing demands for Thai–English interpreting, still lack the necessary career support (e.g., access to equal training programmes, career progression framework, and bargaining power for fair pay). The linguistic ecology of the Thai market demonstrates a domestic shortage of interpreters. In terms of language testing, it can be argued that some of the test-takers have educated or professional backgrounds, which is the cluster of the population most inclined to have the ability to speak English. Still, English has a critical position in Southeast Asia. When coupled with the fact that test-takers of English standardised tests possibly come from the middle to higher social strata, the average standardised scores may exhibit the English proficiency of just a subset of the locals. It also reflects the reality of the country’s English education and highlights that Thai–English interpretation arguably remains a necessity for most Thais on many fronts.

### **2.5.3 Intercultural Communication in Thai Interpreting Research**

In recent years, interpreting and IC have been prevalently discussed in the literature; for example, in the contexts of Hmong–English (Lor et al., 2022), Swahili–English (Lor et al., 2022), or in the conceptual explorations of Spencer-Oatey and Xing (2008) and Köksal and Yürük (2020).

Focusing on Thailand, to my knowledge, only a few works published in international journals have concentrated on Thai language-specific areas. As discussed earlier, Kosiyaporn et al. (2020) examined intercultural mediation in Thailand in the context of medical cultural mediators of migrant communities. Although the authors defined the term cultural competence as ‘bridging the gaps between health workers and patients with a migrant background’ (p. 2), this notion was not explored in detail. Furthermore, there are areas where the study could have been more clearly explained, such as the definition and justification of methods (i.e., system analysis and in-depth interviews). Notwithstanding these limitations, the study still offers valuable insights into interpreting situations in terms of the needed regulation and support for service improvement.

Another recent work by Cho (2021) touches upon the interpreting experiences of two Thai–English interpreters in the Australian context (e.g., virtue and sexual taboos in

Thai culture, or the effect of having an Australian accent). Cho's data offer broad examples from many cultures and languages, but the descriptions are generally Korean-specific examples, arguably due to the author's background and specialisation.

Overall, the research to date has tended to focus either on the IC process or other linguistic contexts rather than specifically on Thai–English interpretation. For these reasons, this section will further review the Thai interpreting articles from the Thai Citation Index (TCI), the first national citation index in the country and the region (Sombatsompop et al., 2012). I mainly used the terms 'interpreters' and 'culture' to search for related articles about IC and interpreting because the keywords 'interpreters' and 'intercultural communication' only yielded one entry. Still, the search yielded approximately 20 studies. In order to illustrate the currently engaged study areas by scholars who have worked on Thai interpreting, this section has been organised into four themes: (1) medical interpreting, (2) tourism, (3) Japanese-related, and (4) other contexts. Illustrating the themes will allow me to arrive at the scholarly gap that is currently being overlooked by Thai scholars.

The first theme is medical interpreting. Examining the challenges and development of Arabic–Thai interpreters, Nawong (2017) reports that the challenges Arabic interpreters in Thailand face are their inability to understand dialects, medical terminology, and Arab cultures. Similar challenges are recognised by Khasuwan (2017), whose paper investigates Middle-East tourists' use of Thai medical services. The author found that the patients were concerned about the interpreters' lack of proficiency in the Arabic language, culture, and religion. Based on these studies, it can be suggested that being culturally sensitive is a sought-after skillset in medical interpreters. These skills may be referred to as cultural sensitivity in interpreters of medical tourism.

The second theme is research on the Thai tourism context. Studies by Kadroon et al. (2018); Muneenam et al. (2017); Naksena et al. (2018); Waiyakrud (2021) suggest that the concept of interpreter seems to intertwine with a person whose responsibility is to convey culture. The term 'interpreter' is used in the English-translated abstracts of these articles, but the Thai terms used are 'ผู้สื่อความหมาย [a

person who conveys meaning’ or ‘*นักสื่อความหมาย* [a professional who conveys meaning].’ Being an interpreter does not have the meaning of a profession as conventionally referred to in English. Instead, it is an individual who is able to convey the story of a community in historically and culturally accurate ways (Waiyakrud, 2021) or as an individual who can extract local stories from the tourists (Muneenam et al., 2017). However, apart from defining what ‘interpreters’ in tourism entails, these researchers have not treated IC in much detail. This depth seems to be the level of discussion on culture or mediation in most articles on the TCI database.

The third theme presents studies on the Japanese-speaking population in Thailand. These studies tend to offer more detailed narratives of IC situations than the Thai-based studies reviewed above. In Piyathamrongchai (2018), among the cultural issues identified between Thai and Japanese cultures experienced by Thai interpreters at Japanese enterprises is the concept of ‘Ho-Ren-So.’ The concept translates to ‘Report-Contact-Consult,’ a uniquely Japanese practice that means employees mediately report, contact, and consult with the immediate supervisor. Japanese bosses and employees use the ‘Ho-Ren-So’ approach to report progress or any issues that may arise. Conflicts arise when Thai employees report their work progress without clearly elaborating on the cause of any problems. While understanding that the concept may be unfamiliar to Thai workers, it is critical for the interpreters to ensure that the practice is understood and followed before any violation causes tension for both parties. Ho-Ren-So and Thai interpreters have been further investigated in Sopolsittipong (2021), which emphasises that the concept be ‘profoundly understood’ by Thai employees and Thai interpreters (p. 70).

Last, this cluster of articles is a collection of various topics, including non-verbal communication, migrant workers, and others. Poemchawalit (2014) touches lightly on the use of body language, recognised as part of IC. The author suggests dressing appropriately as a crucial element of the interpreter’s work and that interpreters should study the target culture’s body language patterns to foster intercultural appropriation. In the East Asian language context, Ayuwat et al. (2010) demonstrate that Thai–Chinese interpreters play a crucial role in the lives of Thai workers in Taiwan. The interpreters have many roles, including translating documents, helping

the employees solve their problems, mediating the employers' demands and passing along the message to the workers. In other studies, interpreters are mentioned, not as the primary research emphasis, but as interpreters who offer their respective services and expertise, such as in-depth knowledge of human trafficking, to help the researchers connect with their participants, such as in Faijaroen et al. (2019), Maneedang et al. (2016), and Saramon et al. (2019).

In comparison, in the adjacent field of translation studies, a similar search on the TCI indicates that Thai scholarly works have mostly pioneered the area of literary studies, including investigation of translation strategies and language use (e.g., proper use of pronouns, noun usage, and grammatical and semantic errors). Yamamoto (2018) conducted a bibliometrics investigation on 144 Thai translation studies from the Thai-TCI database (1992–2014) and found that approximately 50% of studies focused on translation methodology, while translation education was ranked second in popularity. As of 2022, there is one peer-reviewed translation-specific journal titled 'Journal of Translation and Interpretation' listed on the TCI, with the first volume published in June 2016.

Regarding cultural translation, the focus on culture, particularly cultural substitution, has been embedded within the larger research area of translated novels, such as the work of Narkpongphun and Charmsil (2019). However, apart from employing cross-cultural translation principle (van Widenfelt et al., 2005) in view of Thai culture to translate Aberrant Behaviour Checklist-community (ABC-C), they have not treated the translation of culture in much detail.

For other studies that investigate cultural translation with more depth, in exploring the translated version of *The Wizard of Oz*, Narata and Rakpa (2021) use Baker's (1992) taxonomy in an analysis that explored guided translation strategies. The authors unveiled that cultural substitution is the most applied strategy accounting for more than half of all used strategies. Nevertheless, they still gave brief descriptions of the strategies in a quantitatively-inclined fashion. Furthermore, Phongphanngam and Lach (2019) culturally adapt the translations to the target culture, while preserving the 'meaning and intent' of the text (p. 171). They share common ground with Venuti's domestication (2012), where the translator

substitutes elements of foreignness with a locally understood context. Correspondingly, Pokasamrit (2013) posits that most substitutions of culture are provided in the form of a literal translation with cultural notes on the side. Despite the fact that Pokasamrit attempts to investigate in view of ‘untranslatability’ (Apter, 2014) beyond word equivalence, as challenged by Venuti (2008). Pokasamrit (2013) is an initiative for cultural translation focus; however, the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the data collection lacks specificity in the document types collected (e.g., business, idiom and proverb, science and technology).

In another project, Khotchaphet (2021) researches the translatorial strategies of Thai idioms. As a conceptual paper, the author investigates translation in idioms that are arguably influenced by cultural values. However, the writer does not attempt to differentiate the cultural specifics among the people who speak Thai and English. The author treats English and Thai as two opposite sides. This is the scholarly gap that this thesis aims to fill, that is, it takes into consideration the language variations, sub-cultures, or other cultural groups using English as a lingua franca.

Moreover, there appears to be a strong engagement in the number of studies on the translation of cultural instruments in nursing and medicine (See Charoenlimprasert et al., 2021; Longlalerng et al., 2019; Narkpongphun & Charnsil, 2019; Phongphanngam & Lach, 2019). Although these projects seek to achieve translation equivalences, translation that produces the same effect (Nida & Taber, 2003), where the audience gets the same effect, such as semantic, idiomatic, experiential, and conceptual matches, much of their research has been quantitative. This suggests a gap for more descriptive research studies to which this PhD can contribute by providing an in-depth analysis of the qualitatively obtained data.

Overall, the majority of existing works by Thai scholars on culture appear to be studies of translation, while a smaller number of Thai studies on interpreting and IC has been conducted with an inductive approach and suggests that intercultural mediation exists. The four main reported themes, however, offer little details of intercultural differences unfolding, although they exemplify that intercultural mediation is among the interpreter’s many roles.

## 2.6 Concluding Thoughts

IC studies are interested in the interactions between people from different cultural backgrounds who meet one another. Early developments of IC date back to the 1950s and are repeatedly attributed to the book *Silent Language* by Hall (1959). Interpreting as a profession at the global level, meanwhile, was first recorded as whispered interpretation in China in 618 (Sephocle, 2017), while contemporary records indicate that the 1945 Nuremberg Trials marked the advent of SI in the West (Gaiba, 1998). Evidence also suggests that the profession has been involved in pivotal historical exchanges between nations.

In terms of theoretical development, early scholars concentrated on descriptive and theoretical translation theories, while in the 1980s, there was a shift towards the cultural lens (Snell-Hornby, 1988). Scholars have recognised the links between translation and intercultural mediation (Liddicoat, 2015a, 2016b; Scarino, 2016), but the area is still under-researched (Liddicoat, 2016a). In order to increase understanding and acknowledgement of IC as possibly a fundamental element of interpreting, the RQ1 of this thesis is ‘What does intercultural communicative competence entail in the interpretation industry in Thailand?’ This inquiry will seek to study the process of IC in Thai–English interpreters and ultimately uplift the overall interpretation quality.

Despite a wide array of interpreting types, CI and SI will be the focus of the thesis due to their prevalent use in formal meetings. Simultaneous interpreters are challenged in terms of timely delivery and may be physically detached from the speaker(s). Contrastingly, consecutive interpreters are allowed more time since they interpret during pauses, which, in turn, requires them to possess enhanced memorisation and note-taking skills. They can clarify and interact with the speaker(s), but it also puts them in the spotlight. This implies that they may be pressured to side with their native speaker group or to be more politically correct. In reviewing the notion of ICC, I concluded that its characteristics arguably comprise skillfulness, knowledgeability, adaptability, and open-mindedness. I argue that interpreters need to be equipped with these skills in order to effectively learn about other cultures, mediate, and/or intervene to avoid causing miscommunications

between the parties. Interpreters arguably have a responsibility to ensure that the social outlook (e.g., high-low context culture, and individualism and collectivism) between the interlocutors and participants are transparently shared. Studying this necessitates exploring the principles between interpretation and IC.

The subsequent section on the conduit role casts doubts on this idea, given that interpreters were conventionally expected to move meanings from one language to another. Nevertheless, the idea has become somewhat obsolete as it has been challenged by the current practices of intercultural mediation in educational and intergovernmental institutions (e.g., in the US, Europe, and Southeast Asia). This informs the RQ2: What is the importance of intercultural communication in interpretation classrooms and training programmes in Thailand? The answer to this RQ will shed light on how IC is now used in Thai classrooms and direct educational plans between IC and interpreting toward the critical improvement areas.

Furthermore, evidence shows that interpreting is an old profession, first recorded during Siam's diplomatic ties with China's Ming Dynasty (Rojanawanichkij & Wei, 2015), while interpreting Western languages started when the West arrived in Siam around 1512 (Surintatip, 2007). By exploring a prime example of Constanstine Phualkon, whose role as an interpreter at the Siam Court was politically prominent, it seems that intercultural mediation has long been performed and can be influential to different cultural groups (i.e., Thais and European nationals).

Moreover, despite the acknowledged importance of mastering European languages, teaching English was restricted to the Royals and aristocrats. It was not until the late 1800s that English education was expanded to the Thai public. Furthermore, compared to European institutions, where interpreting classes began in the 1940s (Komatsu, 2016), the establishment of translation schools in Thailand occurred in the 1990s, while the first four-year undergraduate programme in interpreting studies was recently approved in 2022. Since these programmes are relatively new establishments, it will be worth investigating whether IC, at which breadth and depth, has been incorporated into the thinking and designing of curricula.



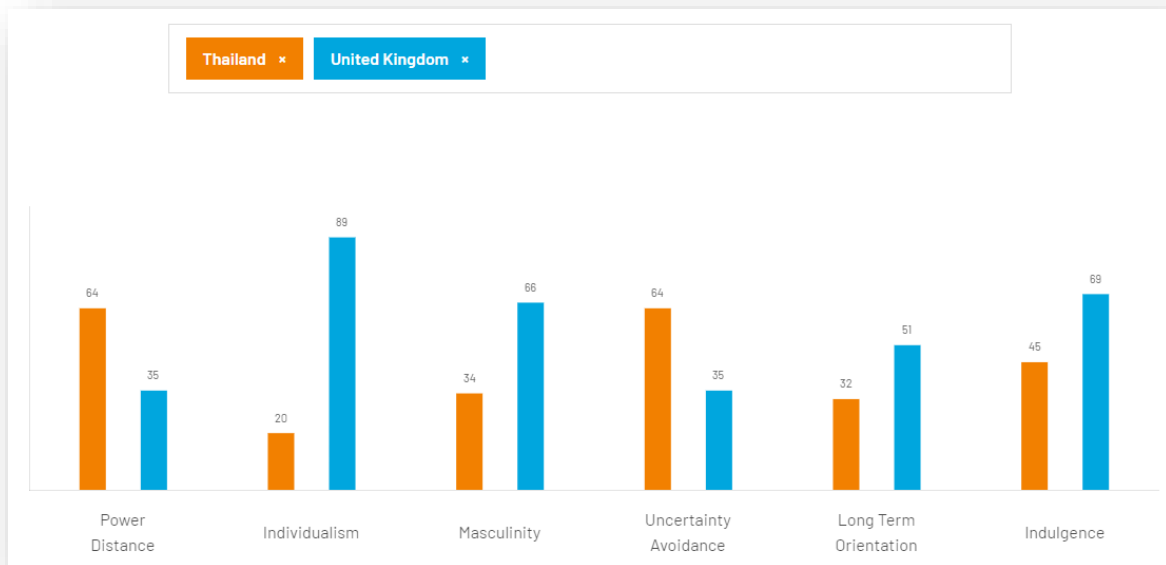
The last section, owing to the limited number of studies, briefly touched upon a small number of existing research studies in Thailand and identified critical under-researched areas. Namely, studies on Thai interpreting that focus on IC have mostly been inductive, and have suggested that Thai interpreters perform intercultural mediation when interpreting. Nevertheless, such studies tend to pay little attention to the intercultural mediation process, underspecify essential components for performing mediation, and ignore IC foundations in training programmes. However, there appears to be more research engagement with IC in the adjacent field of translation.

## 3 Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks

The chapter is divided into two sections: an overview of the three frameworks (Hofstede's cultural dimensionality, Venuti's translation visibility, and Byram's ICC model) and detailed discussions regarding the criticisms and potential shortcomings of each framework. The chapter will also discuss other frameworks that were taken into consideration and recent works that have incorporated the three frameworks in their studies.

### 3.1 Overview

First, the Hofstede (1980) paradigm is an outlook on cultures that categorises six dimensions of cultures: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism, Masculinity, Long Term Orientation, and Indulgence. The cultural project was inaugurated at the local subsidiaries of what later came to be known as International Business Machines (IBM). In 1968 and 1972, the project was launched to study cultures through family teaching and institutionalised norms (Hofstede, 1984; 2011). This later extended to 76 countries, covering 40 nations that housed IBM branches, and involving 116,000 administered questionnaire sets (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Hofstede Insights, 2020). The original dimensions investigated four areas: social inequality, individual and group relationship, masculinity and femininity, and uncertainty and ambiguity. Long-term orientation and indulgence were added as the fifth and sixth dimensions. The following figure illustrates a comparison between Thailand and the United Kingdom in six respects with detailed explanations (Hofstede Insights, 2020).



**Figure 2: Comparisons between Thailand and United Kingdom (Hofstede Insights, 2020)**

**Power distance** shows the level of acceptance that members of a particular society are arguably prepared to accept social inequality. In this case, Thailand's score of 64 arguably manifests the country's acceptance of an unequal society, whereas the UK scores 35 implies that the social ladder in the UK is easier to ascend. In an interpreting session, it may be the case that participants from a low power distance score country would be socially obliged to support their superiors, bosses, or people of power who are likely to govern the conversation, while countries with a high score encourage participation and everyone's voices.

**Individualism and collectivism:** individualism relates to the extent to which social members rely on one another. An individualistic society is one that upholds self-value. In contrast, a collectivistic society honours in-group relationships. Thailand, scoring a low 20, tends to be highly collectivistic. The members of the Thai society are likely to operate as a group whereas Britons, with a high score of 89, tend to underline the importance of the individual self. It may be expected that a collective decision may direct the core of the meeting with Thai participants. If this dimension were viewed in combination with the power distance score, final

decisions made by Thai participants would reveal the desires of the most influential person(s) and collectively supported by others of less power.

**Masculinity and femininity:** masculinity is not necessarily associated to sex or gender in the traditional spirit. In a masculine society, competition and achievement are paramount while a society whose focus is placed on the quality of life would receive a low score and be deemed a feminine society. With a score of 34, the importance of quality of life (i.e., being less assertive and less competitive) may be highlighted more in Thailand, whereas the UK's 66 points arguably exhibit the need to excel and be prosperous. The clash is between a competition-driven society and a well-being emphasised society.

**Uncertainty avoidance** is the willingness to cope with novel and unclear changes. Hofstede Insights (2020) claims that participants from the UK may be more resilient and able to cope with sudden changes in the planning more than Thai participants. Thailand's score of 64 suggests that when it comes to embracing change, Thailand would be more inclined to have more mixed feelings compared to the people from the UK.

**Long term orientation (LTO) and short term orientation (STO).** Long term orientation refers to the ties a society attaches its past to the current practices. A score of 32 of Thailand indicates that the country tends to embrace the past, the UK scoring 51 tends to be slightly more realistic, acknowledging that both nations have a long history.

**Indulgence and restrained:** this was the latest dimension to be added in 2010 from the World Value Surveys. An indulgent society rarely controls its desires. As a mid-range scorer of 45, Thailand's outlook towards life and expenditure is challenging to understand, while the UK's score of 69 is clearer that the nation is more indulgent in terms of life and spending.

Second, in translating culturally influenced messages, the Cultural Turn within translation studies was an important disciplinary shift in the 1980s. The Cultural Turn was first identified by Snell-Hornby (1988) and advocated by Bassnett and

Lefevere (1990). The name Cultural Turn reflected a paradigm shift in scholars' attention to the cultural equivalence of source and target language, exemplified in this thesis's focus and data collection questions. Specifically, in light of culture, the Cultural Turn serves the descriptive and theoretical objectives James Holmes had envisioned in 1987 as it 'emancipated' translation from theoretical enthrallments with literary theory and linguistics (Snell-Hornby, 2006, p. 3). Besides, it provided translation studies with disciplinary independence, resulting in further developments in various locations around the globe (Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990).

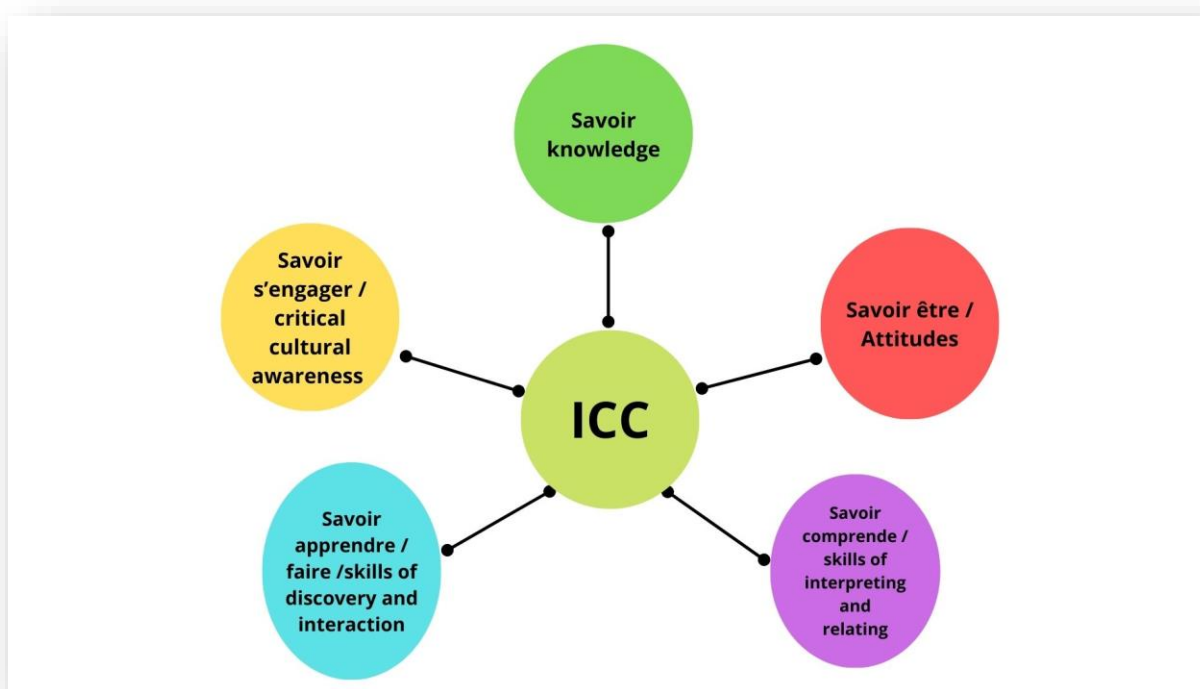
One of the many positive repercussions of the Turn is the advent of translation theories in view of cultures such as Manipulation School (Hermans, 1985), the Polysystem (Even-Zohar, 1990), Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury, 1995), and the Skopos theory (Nord, 2016; Reiss et al., 2013).

Moreover, since interpreting is typically a subset of translation, Pöchhacker (2008) maintains that the word pairing of 'translation' and 'culture/mediation,' following the Cultural Turn, should be permissible to interpreting studies; paradigmatic evidence, for example, can be found in the epistemological changes in community interpreting (Rudvin, 2021).

In Susan Bassnett's essay with André Lefevere (1998), Bassnett reiterated that translation studies had traversed beyond the point of a 'Cinderella subject.' This suggests that scholars may have initially perceived the field with less academic prestige, while more independent disciplinary outlets highly influenced its developments (e.g., linguistics, anthropology, or others). Over two decades has passed since this essay, and the field of translation has drastically gained academic traction. Scholars have begun to examine translation in relation to other disciplines, such as Comparative or World Literature (Bassnett & Damrosch, 2016). In terms of study programme inception, there are now universities that combine translation and intercultural studies; to name a few: Heriot-Watt University (2022), the University of Manchester (2022), the University of Sheffield (2022), Princeton University (2022), and Universidad Europea (2022). The presence of these translation and intercultural studies programmes at these universities suggests that translation scholars have rooted its importance as a discipline. This comes as the field of translation has

reached out to collaborate interdisciplinarily with other adjacent domains, such as IC.

Lastly, I employ the ICC Model by Byram (2021), which proposes five objective elements or ‘savoirs’ as a set of repertoires to achieve ICC. The model began with the concept of ‘intercultural speaker’ (see 2.3.1 Historical Development of Intercultural Competence, pp. 49–50), which refers to a person who is well-equipped with the knowledge to preserve cultural traits when confronted with new cultures (Byram and Zarate, 1994). Byram (2021) divides this into five skillsets: attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, knowledge and skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (Byram, 2021)**

The first savoir of attitudes (*savoir être*) is meant to deal with (1) curiosity and openness to embrace foreignness, (2) learning about others, (3) questioning own values, (4) willingness to adapt, and (5) preparedness to immerse with verbal and non-verbal communication. These five qualities suggest that developing an

attitude is constructive and requires more than a simple encouragement to form a healthy attitude toward intercultural communication.

The second *savoir* covers the skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), which constitute one's interpretive and deciphering skills when examining a cultural document or event (i.e. mediating skills during conflicting encounters). A person, for instance, with *savoir comprendre* may attempt to explain the misunderstanding and help both parties to locate mutual understanding.

The third element is the possession of knowledge (*savoir*) of both the intercultural speaker's cultural group and that of the other participants. This may include products, practices, and processes from the cultures of one's group and the other participant's. For example, the intercultural speakers with this element are advised to equip themselves with various cultural norms so that they are aware of the underlying issues and cause from the clash of the shared communication.

Fourth, it is the skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*), which deals with one's skills in obtaining cultural knowledge under time constraints. One is advised to be able to (1) facilitate concepts and develop a system to explore knowledge (2) to recognise cultural references and implications, and (3) to establish the links between contemporary and past of own culture and other cultures.

Last, the critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) deals with one's criticality and evaluation skills as follows: (1) identification of direct and indirect values present in cultural texts or events (2) evaluative analysis of the documents, and (3) intercultural exchange mediation. Byram reasons that this *savoir* is of the most importance because it enables the intercultural speakers to present 'to the experiences of their own and other cultures a rational and explicit standpoint from which to evaluate' (2008, p. 233). What Byram means is that the key to understanding lies within the self-cultivated awareness of one's and other's cultures and the presentation of that awareness.

Although the three mentioned frameworks may be considered the cornerstone for intercultural communication and translation studies, they have not been able to escape academic criticisms.

## 3.2 Framework Criticisms

### 3.2.1 Hofstede's Dimensions

Contentions surrounding Hofstede's (1980) dimensions include irrelevancy, cultural homogeneity, national divisions, political influences, a one-company approach, outdatedness, too few dimensions, and statistical integrity. On the other end, those who advocate for Hofstede's approach state that the research is relevant to its time with a rigorous design and good accuracy (Jones, 2007). Among many critics is McSweeney (2016), who indicated four flawed assumptions: (1) the predisposed choices for the Values Survey Module (VSM) survey participants at one company; (2) representations of national cultures, and categorisation assumption that one group of people could be representatives of the whole nation; (3) the participants' answers were based on a bi-polar choice (i.e., collectivistic versus individualistic); and (4) the results were treated as being conclusive and applicable to other professional arenas despite the data being specified to the workplace. Hofstede (2002) asserted that all the flaws had been addressed in the updated *Culture Consequences* (Hofstede, 2001). However, some of the critiques were not addressed in the book (e.g., the critique that Hofstede's ideas are static if taking into account the multiple factors that continually affect individuals on a constant basis).

First, Hofstede (2002) does not disagree with criticisms that the dimensions only came from the IBM survey data. As the dataset is one of the most extensive in the world, there is a considerable amount of data for researchers to carefully select to complement other types of data (Hofstede, 2002). Second, although the concept of nations may not be the most suitable categorisation for cultural values, gathering data from the basis of nations is practical and manageable when considering data availability and volume. Third, answering the critique that the data derived from international branches of IBM cannot adequately represent national cultures,



Hofstede ascertains that the dataset represented highly correlated samples. Fourth, the data is not obsolete due to revisions. The only data still used is that which has demonstrated stability and validity after being used in two surveys. Any addition to the now available five dimensions will need to be independent because the five dimensions have been settled and defined. New entries would be required to be validated conceptually and statistically.

Furthermore, Baskerville (2003) claims that Hofstede never investigated culture as the concept of culture was restricted by the dimensions, that is, there is more to culture than merely a few dimensions. This is not necessarily the case. First, the concept of culture was thoroughly investigated by Hofstede et al. (2010). In the chapter *Culture as Mental Programming*, culture is explained as a learned process that begins within the family the child is born into, the neighbourhood, and the living surroundings. All of which can vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, city to city, and indeed country to country. The underlying argument is in the core of one's culture, the essence that has been collectively shared and designed and that most social members have agreed to conform to. Moreover, in view of homogeneity, Moulettes (2007) indicates that there was an absence of female participants in IBM at the time. Not disputing the fact that Hofstede's quantitative data was predominantly generated from within a single company and the same socioeconomic ladder with virtually identical job descriptions, it can still be argued that the data was reflective of the current world at that time. If IBM had employed more middle-class female employees or other demographics, the data would have reflected those social structures as well.

When compared to the leading seminal work of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961), who prescribed six generalised cultural orientations with a range of trust and distrust variations, the Hofstede dimensions are more extensive in scope and scale, since Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's orientations were only tested in the Native American context (Hills, 2002).

Another seminal theory is the high/low context theory by Hall and Reed (1990), which categorise countries between opposing ends, high and low, despite the varying

degrees. Implications were found regarding inconsistencies in country classifications (Kittler et al., 2011) and empirical validation (Cardon, 2008).

As an opposing paradigm to Hofstede, Adrian Holliday (1999, 2016) avoids using national cultures by proposing the notion of small cultures as the type of culture that belongs to smaller social groupings. He argues that using a 'large' approach to cultures can lead to overgeneralisation and reductionism. Holliday (2016) argues that one needs to learn 'on the go' by going through 'threads of experience' accumulated from the beginning of one's life until the end (p. 1). Here I argue that his thesis is applicable to the formation of everyday competence where time and resources are more abundant. This is true even for interpreters who do not intensively prepare for an assignment, in that it is crucial to add to their understanding the knowledge about other cultural practices. This process should be constant over one's lifetime. Nevertheless, the same may not be said for assignment preparation, where time and resources would be scarce. Due to practical purposes and the nature of interpreting work, interpreters, as the direct beneficiary of this study, are often given a small period of preparation time and thus would benefit from a quick-to-use approach as their baseline understanding when encountering new cultural domains (i.e., being aware of the tendencies of etiquette rules and potential norm violations).

Further, as one of the most important academic works on culture categorisation (Kirkman et al., 2006), Hofstede's work is the most cited work on culture and remains one of the most challenged ground-breaking works (Bond, 2002). From 1980 to 1993, 1,036 citations referenced the original version of Hofstede's *Culture's Consequences* (Chiang & Birtch, 2006; 1980). Moreover, his approach to data collection and theory was considered systematic (Søndergaard, 1994), which resulted in over 61 replications until 1994.

As a scholar in international management and social psychology, Hofstede's influential work has continued to be referenced and inspirational to other empirical research works due to it having the largest sample size for cross-cultural studies (Erdman, 2018; Kirkman et al., 2006; Merkin et al., 2013). More significantly, there have been numerous attempts to replicate and revalidate or re-invalidate the model

in other professional and geographical contexts (Alkailani et al., 2012; Eringa et al., 2015; Lowe, 1996). The impact of its influence has been vast and continuous, considering how worldly recognised Hofstede has been since his theory conception in 1968, bringing about positive cross-cultural study ripples in the following decades (Merkin et al., 2013). The framework has constantly been contested over the years, and it can be argued that Hofstede's breakthrough paved the way for other researchers with local expertise to generate context-specific knowledge, this PhD included.

In the Thai context, both in and outside of Thailand, Hofstede has been incorporated and replicated in the examination of the Thai public sector (Pimpa, 2012), business practices between Thailand and Japan (Harada, 2017), negotiation styles between Thailand and Germany (Promsri, 2013), intercept surveys and Thai politeness (Chanchai & Sellitto, 2016), and Thai education culture (Chayakonvikom et al., 2016). While interpreters can be found embedded in the data collection process, such as using interpreters during data collection (Graham, 2021), Thai scholars have yet to use the Hofstede scale to examine the interpreting process in relation to the cultural dimensions. There are a few exceptions to this, which were produced by Master of Management at Mahidol University students, such as interpreters in multinational companies (Sangduen, 2016) or using interpreters to collect data (Pohkaew, 2017). However, using the framework as an apt approach to unravel qualitative insights at this level and scale is still unprecedented in Thailand.

Overall, whilst there are other criticisms that I did not raise in this section, the reasons for choosing Hofstede are sufficient since the cultural dimensions can offer a more profound understanding of the intercultural interaction, although with limitations; for instance, projected difficulties when deciphering mid-scale scores. However, this PhD seeks not a fixed equation to the intertwinement of cultures but a detailed explanation of contextual accounts and cultural disagreements that tend to occur or explain why cultural clashes arise.

### 3.2.2 Translation Visibility

This section discusses the notion of translation visibility, or how a translation distinguishes itself as a piece of translated work rather than a complete reproduction of the original text (Venuti, 2008), (see the seminal works of Schleiermacher & Bernofsky [2012] and Hermans [2015] for detailed discussions).

Visibility in translation arrived after the monopolised period of prescriptive translation with seminal theories such as mutual translatability (Jakobson, 1959), equivalence (Nida, 1964) and text typology (Reiss & Rhodes, 1971, 2000). In defiance of the translation convention that had previously promoted fluency through renditions that read smoothly for easier consumption (Nida, 1964), Venuti (1995, 2008) further developed the seminal approach of Schleiermacher into a contrasting idea of the translator's invisibility. Venuti argued that Nida's equivalence is a type of domestication and popularised the notion of visibility by arguing that fluency can only produce a deception of translation transparency. He claimed that it could lead to other cultures being imperialistically marginalised and overshadowed by the target language (and culture).

In his argument, Venuti (1995, 2008) suggests that as the translators/interpreters encounter a foreign text or speech, they have the choice between domesticating and foreignising translation strategies. Domestication leads to an easier read for the target language audience, while foreignisation prompts the reader with the origin of the source text through culturally nuanced cues. The goal of foreignisation is to ensure that the readers are aware that the text they are reading is originally foreign by intentionally using foreign ideas or words. Since a foreignised text arguably brings similar effects to the reader, it presumably produces a less smooth read. In contrast, a domesticated text tends to read more fluently because the foreign elements have been erased.

In view of the ethical positions between domestication and foreignisation (Venuti, 1995, 2008), Myskja (2013) argues that the translator practising domestication tends to overlook translation decisions associated with marginalised peoples. This is because translators are forced to domesticate translation with restricted linguistic

and cultural options. Domestication produces a translated version for the general target audience; therefore, other minority groups may be left out. Myskja questions if foreignisation is a truly more ethical position for the translator to import the qualities and characteristics from the source culture than a domesticated text if the reader is forced to intake refabricated foreign nuances. While it may be true that some interpreters intentionally reinvent foreign elements, Myskja may have overlooked the fact that translation/interpretation is not and cannot be absolute – that is, certain elements would be lost during translation and not be transferred to the target language and culture. In this light, Venuti (1995, 2008) does not limit the choice to one or the other, nor does this thesis, meaning the discussion will not be restricted to either-or decisions.

Moreover, foreignisation is difficult to achieve since acquiring proficiency in a foreign language demands dedicated training from translators. Not only that, but the translators must ensure that their readers reach the same understanding in one common language, potentially limiting readership (Tymoczko, 2006). Another practical difficulty may arise from the lack of distinct criteria for Venuti's foreignisation, posing an issue for translators who would benefit from more detailed descriptions (Tymoczko, 2000, 2006). For instance, it is difficult for translators to deliver foreignised renditions on practical terms when the degree of foreignisation needed for the text is not elaborated. However, this thesis's objective is not about drawing a line between the two strategies but investigating the underpinning rationale behind the application of both approaches in their interpretations.

It is expected that the application of foreignisation and domestication guidelines will allow the thesis's analysis to demonstrate the state of the constantly evolving role, including the decisions and the factors, internal and external, that influence the interpreter's approach. When considering the two approaches in the position of interpreters, strictly adhering to only one approach may not work well with interpreters. The interpreters must render the translation while also evaluating the listeners' openness and ability to understand the translation. This is due to the varying factors that impact how interpreters move towards their job (e.g., interpretation types, legal implications, the audience's perception and inclination to understand foreign concepts, etc). Under these unpredictable conditions, the

interpreters arguably often change their decisions and shift their approach to fulfilling changing expectations.

As evidence that Thai translation scholars have had interests in foreignisation and domestication, a search on Thailand's TCI database led to Konthong's study (2012), which investigated the terms of address in two Thai novels: *Si Phaendin* (Four Reigns) and *Lai Chewit* (Many Lives). While indicating the loss of sociolinguistic values of domestication and acknowledging reading disturbances of foreignisation, she concludes that Thai culture is significant and highlighted in the translations of both novels; also see Anansuchatkul (2022) and Luangthongkum (2021). For example, in *Four Reigns*, Konthong explains that the translator maintains the Thai term of address 'พี่ Phi,' meaning elder brother, used in a non-reciprocal relationship. Similarly, the translator of *Many Lives* maintained address words such as 'หลวงพี่ Luang Phor,' which is how a Thai layman addresses a monk.

Staying with the topic of translating novels, Inphen (2020) uses Venuti to study the Thai translation of a series of Dan Brown's novels (*Angels and Demons*, *The Davinci Code*, *The Lost Symbol*, *Inferno*, and *Origin*) and learned that most translation agents applied 'exoticising' techniques. This practice occurs when the translation creates 'foreignising effect(s)' (p. 291), which in Dan Brown's novels mostly involved religious markers (87.6%). In other words, exoticising is done through the retention of specific names of persons, venues, or concepts (e.g., 'the Masonic ring' becomes 'แหวนนินจา' [back translation - ring Masonic]). It is an approach that specifically requires the translator to preserve names and proper nouns of foreign settings, while foreignisation is generally source-text oriented and promotes source cultures (Venuti, 1995, 2008).

In terms of translating rationale, Inphen (2020) also identified a link between the Thai readers' elite educational backgrounds and the translation technique, suggesting a tendency to foreignise translation when the readers are educated and have a tolerance for foreignness. In other words, it seemed that the translators were well-aware of the target audience's background and their readiness to understand

foreign topics; hence, the translators were more willing to take risks for the audience to experience the foreign cultures.

It can be seen in the elaborated translation studies mentioned above that the authors have engaged in comprehensive discussions, supported through detailed examples and analysed translator's rationales. Studies on Thai interpreters would benefit from incorporating the notion of visibility as framework; however, to my knowledge, the same level of discussion depth is missing in Thai interpreting studies.

Besides translators' visibility and equivalence, another theory that I consider relevant to my investigations is Relevance Theory (RT) (Sperber & Wilson, 1996, 1995). RT proposes that every message conveyed by a sender is done with worthwhile intentions, while the receiver's commitment is to decipher the meaning of the message.

There are two ways that a sender can convey meanings/messages. First, the message can be ostensive, which aims to explicitly draw the receivers' attention to the conveyed message. Second, the message can be inferential, meaning that the sender has encoded implicit meanings in the message. Although it could be argued that only the sender knows for certain that the message is explicit or implicit, the receiver is to infer beyond the surface level or literal meaning and extract the most likely intended message if the message is unclear. RT aims to elucidate the latter means of communication, for which they use the term implicature.

Although RT allows for a deeper inferential interpretation of communication by investigating the communicative process, the framework is principally established on the premise that communication depends on the communicator to convey meaning in a way that is relevant for it to be understood by the receiver. Arguably, this model places more responsibility on the speaker and listener, which seems to contradict the purpose of this thesis (i.e., the interpreter's responsibility for the communication). Here I argue that the fact that theory posits that there is an expected optimal relevance could be problematic. This is because, in reality, communication is not always driven by relevance since interpreters tend to work with all levels of messages conveyed by communicators of eclectic communicative

styles, purposes, and socioeconomic status. Therefore, the irrelevance challenges interpreters to mediate and create mutual understanding between the parties. In view of this thesis, although the statement may be true in most interpreting cases, which suggests that the interpreter has to render the said statements to the receiver, the interpreter has the credentials to decide the message (or the underlying cues) is worth interpreting.

To conclude, whereas there is evidence of translators' visibility having been used by Thai translation scholars, employing the framework with interpreting studies in this context is novel and can offer suitable channels for examining the interpreters' roles, which I expect will be influenced by their obligations and intercultural complexities. Implementing it will address RQ1 as it facilitates investigating beyond the conduit role in consideration of their intercultural responsibilities.

### **3.2.3 Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence Model**

Michael Byram's works on ICC has been criticised for being exceedingly theory-focused, with some scholars claiming that the model is fragmented and not capable of providing relations between components (Matsuo, 2012).

First, Matsuo (2012) believes that Byram's model is theoretically weak as a result of the weakened relationship between each individually-oriented savoir. Specifically, the five savoir elements are clearly delineated, which means that the practical application of the framework is difficult because of a reduction in complexity; therefore, it can only serve to raise awareness. She raises that educators are well aware that models will never 'paint a full picture' (Matsuo, 2012, p. 24). Nevertheless, the scholar may have neglected that teaching, especially of culture, is often done through decompartmentalised topics that demand planned preparation from the trainer. Even if raising awareness were the only benefit that Matsuo sees from Byram's framework, it would still be critical to the preparation of teaching content. Moreover, evidence has shown that Byram's model can be beneficial when assessing IC in students (Elola & Oskoz, 2008; Lazarevic, 2018; Liaw, 2006; Schenker, 2012).



Moreover, Byram's approach to IC has been incorporated into the thinking of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages, which is a guideline for learning and teaching English and developing English curriculum in Europe and other regions (Charttrakul & Damnet, 2021), according to the CEFR documents (2022). Although Matsuo argues that the model was not included in the final print of the CEFR, similarities between Byram's ICC model and the listed 20 competences can be identified in *Competences for Democratic Culture* (Byram, 2022; Council of Europe, 2001). Furthermore, the relevance of this for interpreting in Thailand is clear if we consider that the CEFR was adopted by the Ministry of Education of Thailand in 2016 (Phoolaikao & Sukying, 2021). Being part of the CEFR arguably puts Byram's framework in a preferably familiar position where language-teaching teachers in Thailand can more easily engage and make use of the model.

Second, Matsuo (2012) postulates that culture has been equated to national cultures and that culture is more individual and detailed than macro and generalised national cultures. This means, within one culture, there are typically embedded sub-cultures. For example, in the aspect of regional cultures, Thailand would normally be divided into four main political regions: Northern, Northeastern, Central, and Southern Thailand, each with its own micro-distinct identities and practices (see Draper et al., [2019] for unrecognised Thai-Lao identity in the Northeast). In contrast, Byram (1997) states that culture is associated with a national culture due to the European context in which the model was created, as evident in the Council of Europe as the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters*, where the model was adopted (Barrett, 2011). Furthermore, Byram (1997) acknowledges that one needs to be aware of the risks in presenting culture(s) as static, uninfluenced by the changing of time, or belonging to one country. In other words, people who live in geographically different locations may even share meanings. Considering this analogy, Byram (1997) raises an example of Western European countries where citizens of the same society may be native speakers of more than one language. It can be argued that Byram not only bore in mind the fact that each country is distinct but also that each country is complex and may comprise more than one central culture. This may be the reason why Matsuo (2015), despite the criticisms, recognises the model for its clarity and constant development.

Other dominant intercultural competence models that I considered are Deardorff and Jones (2022) and Bennett (2017).

Deardorff's (2006) model was developed based on Byram's and offered a circular analysis of IC learning. Deardorff assesses learning outcomes predicated on desired internal and external outcomes (Moeller & Osborn, 2014). However, this kind of assessment does not seem to fit my intended research purpose, which does not exclusively concentrate on outcomes but on processes of interpreting IC (i.e., potentially interviewing participants or interpreters about their interpretation mechanisms to learn about the roots and causes of the intercultural problems). Moreover, I argue that because the model offers a circular analysis, it would be more suitable for examining students' or interpreters' pre and post-learning outcomes. The analytical circle can be recalibrated at the element of 'Attitudes' again when students encounter new lessons or enter a new semester. In contrast, the process of IC competence utilisation in interpreters is not sequential, but rather, interpreters tend to shuffle different skills to engage with clients' needs spontaneously.

Bennett's (2017) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) categorises the six continuum phases of achieving intercultural sensitivity. One of the relevant criticisms of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) is the assumption that learners start learning culture monoculturally (Liddicoat et al., 2003). In contrast, before becoming interpreters, interpreters have normally already gained some competence through being competent in at least two or more languages and cultures. In my opinion, similar to the previous limitations of Deardorff (2006), the DMIS model is suitable for analysing learners' developmental processes that are related to ICC, which is more appropriate for longitudinal studies monitoring the increments of IC learning.

Ultimately, despite its shortcomings, Byram's (1997) model has been applied in multiple curriculums (Elola & Oskoz, 2008; Orsini-Jones, 2015; Ottoson, 2012; Serna Dimas, 2016). The idea of ICC has even been incorporated into the teaching of English in Thailand, such as in Fungchomchoei and Kardkarnklai's study (2016), Snodin (2016), Thai classroom research (Feeney & Gajasen, 2020; Hayes, 2010; Jumpakate & Hieu, 2019; Worawong et al., 2017), hotel and tourism studies (Inkaew,

2016), and as part of the English-for-tourism curricula of universities in Southern Thailand (Siriphanich & Yusoff, 2018).

### 3.3 Concluding Thoughts

First, Hofstede's (2002) cultural dimensionality framework offers an overview of cultural tendencies. However, the framework has been criticised for its limited dimensions and cultural homogeneity that is based on national cultures; these points, however, were partially addressed in Hofstede (2002). When compared to the opposing framework by Adrian Holliday (1999, 2016) of Small Cultures, the idea of personally acculturating oneself and learning about other cultural norms and practices over one's lifetime is not to be disregarded. Nevertheless, I am of the view that interpreters often work against time, and it is arguably appropriate for them to prepare for interpreting assignments based on structured cultural inclinations. In addition, Hofstede has been cited in recent works on Thai linguistics and business fields.

The next examined framework was translation visibility (Venuti, 2008). Despite domestication being contested in terms of its lack of consideration towards marginalised peoples, this thesis and Venuti (1995, 2008) do not necessarily restrict the interpreter's choice to domestication or foreignisation. Moreover, before choosing translation visibility, I also considered RT (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, 1995) which allows for inferential analysis, but it emphasises the speaker's role in conveying relevance rather than the interpreter's role. For this thesis, the visibility framework can be used to analyse the interpreters' shifting and evolving roles.

The last framework was Byram's (1997) ICC Model, which stipulates a set of skills for developing IC competences. Although the framework has been critiqued for being fragmented, in the context of teaching and training, the model can still offer a learning structure for interpreters and interpreter learners.

The three frameworks invite conversations of culture, translation, and ICC. Cultural dimensionality framework, translation's visibility, and ICC Model arguably complement one another in categorising cultural and translation problems within a

broad array, from the national to the individual level, which can collectively formulate generic and context-specific guidelines for intercultural training for interpreters.

## **4 Chapter 4: Methodology**

This chapter explains the research methodology and the selection of participants. I gathered broad data at the industry level and specific data at the classroom/training level to answer both RQs, as seen from the categorisation of participant groups in the following section. The research scope encompassed professionals in the field, as well as interpreter instructors and students in educational settings.

In what follows, I first introduce the approach to research and epistemological underpinnings. Then, I discuss the selection of interview participants, as well as the interview process. Following this, I explain the materials and research tools employed in the study, including document analysis and creative semi-structured interviews. Finally, I describe the research procedures, encompassing the pilot study, main study, data analysis, and the trustworthiness of my analysis.

### **4.1 Approach to Research**

#### **4.1.1 Ontological and Epistemological Underpinnings**

There are a plethora of factors and rationales as to why one conducts research, such as aspiring to find the key to social curiosity (May & Williams, 2002), achieving a research goal, solving a set problem (Novikov & Novikov, 2013), or testing hypotheses (Popper, 2005). Being aware of how this study defines and positions its ontological and epistemological stance is vital due to the varied diversity in the spectrum of the study field and topic. This is because ontological and epistemological underpinnings govern the philosophical foundations of research. By definition, ontology deals with social entities and what can be comprehended, while epistemology is the researcher's view of the world and the assumptions that the researcher makes about the ways of investigating the world, reality, and knowledge (Ritchie et al., 2013).

Creswell (2014) exemplifies philosophical worldviews into four types under the term 'worldview,' which refers to a fundamental guiding set of beliefs for research direction (Guba, 1990, cited in Creswell, 2014). While the term worldview is

frequently used interchangeably with paradigm, epistemologies are conceived as research methodologies (See Wilson [2001]) with some of the most commonly discussed paradigms being post-positivism, constructivism (interpretivist), transformational (critical), subjectivism, and pragmatism (Creswell, 2014). This thesis is primarily based on a constructivist approach, as it seeks to explore individual qualitative values co-constructed by the researcher and the researched. This project adopted the constructivist worldview since the crux was to understand the views experienced by the interpreter participants.

As for epistemology, Ritchie et al. (2013), experts in social research methods, introduce three underlying points and explain that inductive researchers create knowledge from observations by agreeing to let the data orient the research. Induction-induced research may arrive at propositions about how things operate, whereas deductive learning stems from a theory which acts as a lens to understanding a hypothesis through confirmation or rejection (Horrigan, 2007). This thesis takes an inductive approach. A second epistemological issue concerns the relationship between the researcher and the researched. For example, *Model A* researches a topic that is unaffected and separated from the researcher. Contrastingly, in *Model B*, researchers believe that the phenomenon is affected by the interaction and the knowledge acquisition process. The latter is the stance that this thesis will aspire to achieve.

One key ontological issue regards the concepts of ‘accuracy’ and ‘truth.’ In one view, truth can be observed and treated independently (i.e., a positivist paradigm). Alternatively, truth can be intersubjective or coherent and proposed as more appropriate for the social world. In this view, reality is not absolute, but negotiated. As an interpretivist or constructive researcher, I see ‘truth’ as being shaped by the interactions between myself and my participants. My main objective is to comprehend their experiences, particularly how social and cultural circumstances they have experienced influence them. Ultimately, as the investigation enquires into the interculturally experienced accounts of interpreters, this PhD study’s methodology can be described as an inductive exploration between the researcher and the researched. The acquired insights, therefore, are primarily the products of shared and negotiated reality.

## 4.2 Study Participants

The participants comprised interpreters with diverse professional knowledge serving an array of clients, from highly educated figures of power, who use an interpreter for political and national purposes, to clients who require an interpreter for linguistic purposes. When the clients are political figures of authority, increased complexity and heightened tension to get the appropriate message across may be anticipated, requiring interpreters to be reflexive and spontaneous.

There were forty participants. The following eight groups were the original groups based on my work networks and gatekeepers. Reasons for the selection and categorisation of each participant group can be found on pp. 106–107.

- Group 1: interpreters from various levels of professional experience.
- Group 2: Thai–English AIC interpreters.
- Group 3: Thai–English interpreting officers of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Group 4: interpreters at the Administrative Court.
- Group 5: students from the Master of Arts Programme in Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakiat Center of Translation and Interpretation, Chulalongkorn University.
- Group 6: lecturers from the Master of Arts Programme in Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakiat Center of Translation and Interpretation, Chulalongkorn University.
- Group 7: trainers at the Translator and Interpreter Association of Thailand.
- Group 8: trainers at the Court of Justice.

Participants were approached via two modes: (1) from the interpreting networks I have interpreted with or networked in previous interpreting seminars, and (2) through four gatekeepers. All participants were at least 20 years old, one's legal age in Thailand or the age one is no longer considered a minor (Uthairat, 2020), and were selected through purposeful sampling, where 'information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding' (Patton, 2002, p. 273). The participants were divided into two main clusters with eight sub-groups based on their expertise and associations. Contacts were made through personal connections and through gatekeepers, referring to those who can 'grant or deny initial access [to the informants]' (Feldman et al., 2003, p. 31)—reliance on my personal network alone would have resulted in a small number of participants. This is where gatekeepers or persons with authority to grant access to larger participant pools can be of assistance. Formal gatekeepers have authority, whereas informal gatekeepers are those with no official authority (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The four gatekeepers were formal gatekeepers who provided access to restricted areas and populations, such as accessing former and current students and interpreting staff at Thai official agencies.

Table 4-1 shows the criteria and procedure for participant recruitment.



Table 4-1: Criteria for Recruitment

Criteria for Participation	Recruitment Process
1. Professional interpreters, ranging from those with little experience in interpreting to highly experienced professionals; must be at least 20 years old	Through personal connections and gatekeepers
2. Students and trainers of interpretation from various educational institutes; must be at least 20 years old	Through gatekeepers: teaching personnel and contact staff

For further details of participant contacts, see Table 9-3: Participant Groups, pp. 427–429.



Figure 4: Recruitment Poster

Figure 4 shows a recruitment poster that I posted on three Facebook groups with a brief project description. The photos and icons in the poster were from five sources: licensed photos from [gettyimagesbank.com](http://gettyimagesbank.com), [dreamstime.com](http://dreamstime.com) and non-copyrighted images from [unsplash.com](http://unsplash.com), [pexels.com](http://pexels.com), and [thenounproject.com](http://thenounproject.com). The reason for using the photos from non-copyrighted sources is to mainly guard the value of the work and avoid copyright infringement.

The groups I targeted were readily available connection sources from my educational and work networks. The group members were not asked to provide or post personal information in their responding comments, but to contact the researcher directly if interested in participating in the project. Although Facebook groups are considered free online spaces, page admins can make decisions to delete, ban, or block posts. Therefore, it was imperative to ask for permission and ensure that the posted content was appropriate for each group's page. The poster and contact details were passed on to the gatekeepers for the groups with which I did not have direct contact.

Participants were purposively sampled (Palinkas et al., 2015) and approached via three modes: personal and professional network, connections with various gatekeepers, and snowball sampling (Browne, 2005). I contacted potential participants via three private groups by posting the participant recruitment poster. Participants were asked to participate in the study because they were professional Thai–English interpreters with no minimum experience. I anticipated that the posts would recruit people who belong to Participant Group 1, or 15–20 interpreters from various levels of professional experience.

The following is a list of the channels I used for posting the recruitment poster.

1. The personal/professional network via a LINE group of 30 interpreter members as of 11 May 2020. LINE is an instant messaging application used in Thailand, similar to WhatsApp in the UK.
2. A Facebook group called The Translators and Interpreters Association of Thailand (TIAT). There were 17,046 members as of 11 May 2020. I received permission from the page admin to post.

3. Two Thammasat University Facebook groups which I received permission from the page admins to post.

- Thammasat Alumni Marketplace. There were 174,477 members as of 11 May 2020.
- Liberal Arts Freelance Group. There were 3,082 members as of 11 May 2020.

In addition to personal contacts, the following gatekeepers provided connections to specific target groups. Gatekeepers were contacted to ensure that all groups of interpreters, from the most junior to most experienced, could be given an opportunity to take part and share their insights.

**Gatekeeper 1** is a lecturer at a Thai university who facilitated contacting the following participant groups:

- Group 2: Thai–English AIIIC interpreters.

This group was asked to take part in the study because they are Thai–English interpreters of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIIC).

- Group 5: students or graduates from the Master of Arts Programme in Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakiat Center of Translation and Interpretation, Chulalongkorn University.
- Group 6: lecturers from the Master of Arts Programme in Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakiat Center of Translation and Interpretation, Chulalongkorn University.
- Group 7: Thai–English interpreter trainers from the Translator and Interpreter Association of Thailand.

**Gatekeeper team 2** consisted of two officials from the Ministry of Affairs of Thailand. They contacted Participant Group 3, Thai–English interpreting officers of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The group was asked to take part in the study because they are currently employed as Thai–English interpreting officers or have a partial role as an interpreter in the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**Gatekeeper number 3** is an Administrative Court Official at the Administrative Court, Thailand. They contacted Participant Group 4, interpreters at the Administrative Court. The group was asked to take part because they were currently employed as Thai–English interpreting officers or had a partial role as an interpreter at the Administrative Court.

**Gatekeeper number 4** is the admin of the Facebook page ‘Court of Justice (COJ) Interpreter and Translation Sector.’ They contacted Participant Group 8, interpreter trainers at the Thai Court of Justice. Participants were employed as Thai–English interpreting officers or had a partial role as an interpreter at the Thai Court of Justice.

As for ethical consideration, the University of Glasgow’s postgraduate researchers must undergo an ethical approval process monitored by the College Research Ethics Committee under the College of Social Sciences. The application received full ethical approval on 8 July 2020. On 19 November 2020, I requested an application amendment to add snowball sampling to my research design to increase the number of participants, as I initially struggled to reach the target number.

The data collection process began on 22 October 2022 when I posted the recruitment poster on aforementioned Facebook groups. In managing the data, I kept an interview log, as suggested by Dahlberg and McCaig (2010), on an Excel file, using different colours to signify different stages (i.e., invitation email sent, interview date agreed, Zoom link with PLS and pre-interview guidance sent, River of Experience drawing received, a consent form signed, and/or transcript verified).

The first interview began on 28 October 2020, and the last interview was on 21 January 2021. In briefing, the participants were reminded of their consent at the

start of their interview. They could stop the interview at any time and take breaks as stated on the PLS (Plain Language Statement). The emotional response that participants may have from discussing their experience was taken into consideration while the interview was taking place, and questioning would not be continued if the participant started to get upset. After undergoing the interview, the participants were given details about the subsequent process of transcribing the conversation and transcript verification via email.

### **4.3 Materials and Research Tools**

This section elaborates on the research tools, including document analysis (Bowen, 2009; Olson, 2010), qualitative semi-structured interviewing (Edwards & Holland, 2013) with vignettes (Grey & Malson, 2018; Törrönen, 2018), and the River of Experience drawing or RoE (Iantaffi, 2012).

#### **4.3.1 Activity 1: Document Analysis**

The document analysis of this thesis is an analysis of a compendium of independent studies from a Thai university. According to the *SAGE Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, document analysis is defined as a method of ‘analyzing and interpreting data generated from the examination of documents and records relevant to a particular study’ (Schwandt, 2007, p. 76). It is a methodology for qualitative research that conducts a systematic analysis of a set of documents which can include, but are not limited to, books, manuals, diaries, letters, newspapers, reviews, sketchbooks, and reports from institutions (Bowen, 2009; Olson, 2010). Document analysis facilitates the researcher in data triangulation as the process helps determine the data type the research intends to explore (Gross, 2018). The analysis informed the literary gaps that require further attention, as well as the methods that Thai scholars have not employed in their studies.

The secondary data was obtained from 36 Master’s level independent studies of graduates of the Master of Arts Programme in Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakiat Center of Translation and Interpretation under Chulalongkorn University of Thailand. This higher education programme is the highest level of

interpretation training in the country offered by the most reputable Thai university for the year 2023, according to QS Rankings (2022). The collection contributes the most focused research area on the Thai interpreting scene. The paper versions are available to the public at the Humanities Information Centre, Faculty of Arts, Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Building of Chulalongkorn University. With permission from the programme committee, I was given access to 32 PDF files and four paper copies. The collection contributes to the most focused research area on the Thai interpreting scene. As of October 2022, six more students had graduated from the programme. However, their studies have yet to be published. The addition brings the total number of theses to 42 as of 2022.

#### **4.3.2 Activity 2: Creative Semi-Structured Qualitative Interviewing**

I employed the combined term of Creative Semi-structured Qualitative Interviewing, which comes from creative methods, and semi-structured qualitative interviewing. Referencing Douglas (1985) and Mason (2010a), I utilised creative interviewing due to its flexibility, while prompting participants to partake in creative activities that reinforced the interview process. These activities may include drawing, taking pictures, walking, and others.

In what follows, I will present the rationale of creative qualitative interviewing (Edwards & Holland, 2013), followed by the guide to conducting interviews and the translation of research questions to interview questions.

Creativity offers an alternative to circumvent disciplinary limitations. I employed creative methods to design ways to collect data for research questions that are complex (Kara, 2015). By doing so, I was forced to do away with conventional data collection techniques; instead, I combined existing traditional methods with innovative approaches. In this study, a creative method of vignettes and the use of drawings were integrated with the interviews, allowing the researcher and participants to approach issues more dynamically. The creative elements complemented the semi-structured organisation of the interview schedule, which contributed to the empirical findings.

In an IC context, adopting the semi-structured interview as a collection instrument is not uncommon, such as in López and Tun (2017), Rezaei and Naghibian (2018), and Tseng (2017), as well as in interpreting studies (Ahrens, 2015), such as those by Angelelli (2004), Diriker (2011b), and Major and Napier (2021).

Moreover, there are different schools of interviewing with different dichotomic outlooks and implications. Brinkmann and Kvale (2007) propose two metaphors composing the interviewer's perspective as a miner and that of a traveller to compare and illustrate how information in an interview is obtained. On the one hand, when the interviewer *mines* data from the interview, they indicate a positivist position. This thesis eschews this view because my approach to data is not an item that is simply waiting to be unearthed. On the other hand, if the interviewer is a traveller who *explores* new answers as the journey unfolds, they then embrace the postmodern constructivist position. These perspectives share commonalities with earlier stances on interviewing.

According to Seale (1999), the act of interviewing is distinguished into two mainstreams: interview-data-as-resource and interview-data-as-topic. The former, having received criticisms from constructionist researchers (Rapley, 2001), employs the interview as the reflector of reality experienced by the participant prior to the interview but reported and shared in the interview. In comparison, the data generated in the latter is co-constructed during the interview by the interviewee and interviewer. Co-construction of data is pertinent to this study as the interview questions required the researcher and the interviewee to interact through vignettes (Grey & Malson, 2018; Törrönen, 2018). By doing so, I acted as a traveller who took part in a co-created adventure with the participants, treating the interview-data-as-topic in contrast to considering the interview data as a resource, where the exploration boundaries and outlook would have been more limited and external.

Furthermore, attention should be paid to the input that comes from respondents' describing experiences and, in essence, through decryption of what they *do not* describe (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2007; Plas et al., 1996). These contradictory conventions were rethought and developed into interviewing as a *research instrument* and a *social practice* by Talmy (2010), asserting that both approaches

share a resemblance because they are intended to obtain data for analysis in consideration of research questions. When the interview is adopted as a research instrument, it converts into an entrance to the realities, truths, and experiences of the participants (Talmy, 2010); nevertheless, the perspective of interviews as social practice takes on interviewing as an integral part of the research where data is co-created by the interviewer and interviewee (Rapley, 2001). The former approach stresses data reception, yet, when the interview is engaged socially, the concept of assertion will replace reception. For this thesis, the practice of research interview as social practice (i.e., using interviews as a data co-creation activity) provided the opportunity for an investigation of voices co-ordinated, co-interacted, and co-constructed by the interview and interviewee, a bridge for constructing knowledge.

According to Edwards and Holland (2013), the most adopted interview types in qualitative research are semi-structured and unstructured. While unstructured interviewing gives the interviewee the flexibility to respond freely, semi-structured interview (SSI) sets out with a series of questions to facilitate the interviewer to expand into further discussions with the interviewee. SSI is similar to 'conversation interviewing,' advocated by Roulston (2008), because conversations are designed to create a relaxing atmosphere for the participants to share their thoughts without restrictions. Conversation interviewing uses techniques and features applicable to open-ended and in-depth questions. As per Roulston's (2008), I created a friendly environment, for example, rapport building before commencing the interview, creating an informal atmosphere while minding sensitivity, and ensuring the possibility that the interview could be influenced by and oriented to the participants. Setting up an inviting and relaxing environment may force the researcher to overcome institutional rules and formal boundaries, such as ethical guidelines, informed consent, and time limitations. In investigative interviews, rapport building can be achieved by creating a bond with the participants or establishing the interview protocol (Huang & Teoh, 2019). Yeschke (2003) states that rapport underlies the significance of how communication is made, particularly the communication flow. This was translated into the shuffling of questions and elicitation of the conversation course, performed in light of meanings conveyed through cues and words (Warren, 2001)—changing the question sequence and



creating an interview-friendly atmosphere can affect how participants answer and construct meaning.

I started the interview sessions with small talk to establish a friendly atmosphere. Once the interview procedure and rules were thoroughly explained (to maintain a balance between research compliance and friendliness), I slowly introduced the interviewees to each research depth level through four stages: (1) demographic, (2) vignette, (3) research-focused, and (4) the River of Experience drawing. Before beginning, I tried to build rapport with the participants by greeting them and asking general questions. The first section then began with demographic questions, followed by the vignette section, designed to simulate actual interpreting scenes. While the participants were asked to analyse simulated situations, they were also prompted to approach the problems by thinking in terms of intercultural interpretation. This worked as a preparation for the subsequent section or research-focused questions that directly enquired into the scientific terms (i.e., teaching and training of IC). Had they been introduced to this section before the vignettes, it would have likely been difficult to generate in-depth discussion solely based on keywords like IC and mediation. Ending on a slightly personal and positive note, the last section of the interviews was concluded with a discussion of the River of Experience drawing. The first interview section and the section after the vignettes were the most structured. The vignette phase was fitted with introductory, follow-up and/or probing questions without being restricted by numbers (Mason, 2010). The participants' answers determined and directed the follow-up questions.

In terms of interview questions, SSI incorporates a series of closed and open-ended questions (Adams, 2015). Fylan (2005) elaborates that SSI is resourceful and suitable for discussing sensitive issues because of the interviewer's presence as an active participant in the interview. During the interview, the interviewer may facilitate information by relying on a list of questions, but flexibility is emphasised so that participants can express issues and evaluate what is essential and what is not (Longhurst, 2016). Moreover, SSI is designed to 'capture the voices and the ways people make meaning of their experience' (Rabionet, 2011, p. 563). In other words, the questions can be used as a bridge to the meaning of told stories. Testing and proving hypotheses are not the purpose; rather, the locus stems from individual

stories' interests (Seidman, 2013). I used SSI to make sense of the participants' perspective since it dovetailed the participants with a word-based inquiry, especially for interpreters who continually construct and construe meaning through language. While adhering to the list of interview questions and vignettes, I, through word-based questions, was able to invite the participants to a familiar area for interpreters and even captured in-depth information that required further examination by asking follow-up questions. This flexibility created two-way opportunities for the interviewees to ask for clarification as well, which suggest that SSI can benefit from being sufficiently organised to achieve objectives and adjustable to offer spontaneous solutions—an advantageous combination of structured and unstructured interviewing.

#### 4.3.2.1 Translation of Research Questions to Interview Questions

A research interview is likely to be a collaborative activity between the interview questions structuring the interview flow and the interviewer monitoring the conversation (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015) in a more controlled environment (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). One of the most universally utilised tools in the interview is questions. According to Edwards and Holland (2013), the questions serve the research as a form of interaction and exchange. For this thesis, the questions are combined with other visual, textual, or creative aids (i.e., vignettes and a drawing activity). By recreating interpreting problems through photographed and video-facilitated vignettes, the interview was enhanced by providing visual prompting that participants could use as conversational stimuli, allowing them to focus on specific intercultural issues while also orienting the conversation's direction and maintaining flexibility (see how vignettes have recently been used in Chen et al. [2022]; Quigley et al. [2014]; Slead et al. [2002]).

The following are examples of four possible scenarios that can unfold with respect to language use, which have been drawn from my experience as a professional interpreter. They demonstrate the possibilities for heightened complexity in interpretation encounters. Hypothetically, this is a meeting between highly educated delegates from *English-speaking country A* and *non-English-speaking country B*, where a consecutive interpreter is put on the job to translate.

- No one in the room speaks English; the interpreter does their job faithfully.
- Everyone in the room speaks English; interpretation is performed because the local languages are preferred for diplomatic/procedural reasons. Both parties would thoroughly scrutinise and judge the interpreter's role and accuracy.
- Some participants understand and speak English, whereas some are beginners in English. The interpreter gauges when the language becomes too complicated for the clients to understand. It is only then that the interpreter intervenes and provides interpretation.
- Some participants speak English, whereas others do not. The interpreter interprets the message for those who do not speak English. Others who speak English listen along and sometimes even intervene to offer, correct, or insert their interpretation.

According to these proposed scenarios, it can be argued that the act of interpretation is not straightforward and that all listed situations require quick decision-making and multiple levels of intercultural mediation. While they informed the potential possibilities, using these as interview questions without any adjustments may be too abstract; the questions, therefore, were adapted into more tangible vignettes.

As for the writing of interview questions, I was guided by Brinkmann and Kvale (2018, pp. 11–12) who proposed nine types of questions: introductory, follow-up, probing, specifying, direct, indirect, structuring, interpreting questions, and silence. I adjusted these into five types of interview questions.

**Opening** (analogous to introductory questions): I gave the interviewees more flexibility by beginning with an open-ended question to begin the conversation as opposed to a closed-ended question. This strategy typically invites an extended response.

**Checking and reflecting** (analogous to specifying questions): if there were any ambiguous information, I would check with the interviewee. Check and reflect were performed throughout the interview.

**Following-up:** whenever there was a sign that the conversation required further discussion, I used follow-up questions to ensure clarity.

**Probing:** I used this as direct or indirect questions.

**Structuring:** when it was necessary, I signposted or signalled a topic change to keep the interview according to plan, especially when changing topics or sections.

**Other techniques:** Silence, and interpreting questions. The schedule, particularly the vignettes, research-focused questions, and RoE, incorporated interpreting questions, while silence was used throughout the interviews to allow the participants to contemplate before giving answers.

The interview was also governed by *thematically* reflective questions and *dynamic* questions to encourage positive interaction (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 1990). I included thematic questions to cover all the prepared study themes, such as IC and intercultural mediation. I used dynamic questions for open-ended and follow-up questions based on the situation. Combined thematic and dynamic questions generated systematic flexibility with structure. I avoided double-barrelled questions or questions that attempt to ask two questions simultaneously (Riazi, 2016) and double negative questions (Oppenheim, 2001). This was to avoid confusion and misleading the participants and the researcher during analysis. The questions were varied slightly for each participant group because the demographic information was relevant to completing the participant profile.

#### 4.3.2.2 Demographic Profile

Some of the following questions vary according to the participant group.

- What pseudonym would you like to use?

- How long have you been working as a professional interpreter? Or how long have you been an AICC member?—for AICC members.
- What modes of interpretation have you employed as a professional interpreter: simultaneous, consecutive, and whispered interpretation?
- Had you ever received any training before becoming an interpreter?
- Were you required to pass a license test in order to work as a professional interpreter?
- And/or were you required to pass any application tests before being enrolled in the programme?—for students of interpretation.

Other questions for trainers began with ‘Have you ever worked as an interpreter trainer?’ If the participant answered no, the following questions were skipped.

- How long have you been an interpreter trainer?
- What modes of interpretation have you employed as a trainer in the interpreting classroom: simultaneous, consecutive, and whispered interpretation?
- Had you ever received any training before becoming a trainer?
- Were you required to pass a licensing test in order to work as a trainer?

The next interview activity is the video and photograph vignettes.

### **4.3.3 Activity 3: Vignettes**

Vignettes were applied in the second interview section to elicit hypothetical stories, news stories, short stories, visual scenarios, and/or concrete accounts of other individuals. The technique has been a familiar sight for qualitative researchers (Grey & Malson, 2018), such as in Victor and Chapel (1999), who used it to explore IC

business ethics instruction. This was the second phase of the interview, and it applied a combination of thematic and dynamic questions.

The vignette themes were dynamically designed to stimulate the participants to share their thoughts on the topic. In this phase, the interviewer attempted to link the vignette scenarios to the Thai context while generating reflective responses from participants in a non-threatening manner through potentially sensitive topics (Gourlay et al., 2014). I specifically put each vignette in place as a lead-in to generate discussions related to the issue of culture and interpretation while providing flexibility and dynamism. The series of questions for the vignette section consisted of introductory, following up, probing, and direct and indirect questioning by Brinkmann and Kvale (2018) intended to provide flexibility for the interviewer and participants. Each participant was asked to capture the essence of the questions and retell what they had seen. Techniques of *prompt* and *probe* (Gillham, 2000) were applied in the case of any unclear statements.

The use of vignettes is an open genre designed for a focused open discussion and is enhanced by follow-up questions (Törrönen, 2018). I was not fixed on gathering right or wrong answers, thus the vignettes were designed to accommodate the notions of ICC and intercultural mediation in Thai–English interpreters arranged in the video and photograph-facilitated sets. In this study, there were nine original vignettes planned, but the number was reduced to six after the pilot study for an optimal interview time. The video vignettes were played once and followed by a set of questions, while the photograph vignettes comprised a photograph and a synopsis narrated by the interviewer.

Below are some of the guided questions I employed after showing each vignette slide:

#### 4.3.3.1 Vignette Interview Questions

- Can you describe what you have just seen or heard in as much detail as possible? (opening question)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please explain what happened in the video clip/situation. (opening question)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you see any cultural differences that may become an issue(s)? (Please explain your response) (opening, probing, following-up questions)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You mentioned...., what do you mean by that? (interpreting question)</li> </ul>

Although video and photograph vignettes are rarely used in interpreting studies, scholars of other disciplines have used video vignettes in qualitative enquiry to recreate ‘realistic’ scenes (Chen et al., 2022, p. 1831). For example, using video vignettes to recreate hypothetical date rape incidents provided contextual information about the scene (Sleed et al., 2002), or using photograph-based vignettes helped explore teachers’ views about the environment (Quigley et al., 2014). Comparably, the application of vignettes in these studies is akin to the synopses used in this thesis, while the participants have the flexibility to choose a focus from the vignette to discuss.

The chosen video set for my vignettes is from a collaborative research project by the University of Glasgow, Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network, Glasgow Caledonian University and BEMIS, which investigates the issue of IC. Phipps et al.’s (2014) research design includes a literature review, qualitative interviews, and five short films based on literature analysis. Two of the films investigating healthcare personnel and interpreters’ education, created by Phipps et al. (2014), were used as the first two vignettes in this thesis. Their project’s objectives were to develop intercultural communicative training for interpretation and translation for linguistically vulnerable migrants. These two films were also employed as teaching materials for fourth-year English majors in consecutive interpretation classrooms at Thammasat University in 2018.

Although the short films consist of five videos that present interpretation problems intertwined with IC, two videos were selected as vignettes because of their universal

IC nuances applicable to all modes of interpretation, such as recognition that the interpreter is from the same cultural background or is someone whom the patient can trust. The videos were equipped with subtitles for the source language, which allowed the participants to understand the vignettes without knowing the spoken language. The participants were asked to reflect on how well the interpreter in the vignette dealt with the challenges based on the mediating skills and appropriateness for the working context. Although the video series is available on YouTube, in the public domain, I received permission to use it from Professor Alison Phipps, the project's principal investigator. The below outputs are the two open-source video resources, each with a synopsis. The videos were presented to the participants as the first two vignettes.

1. Informal disclosures (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYTbvZfWU50>)
2. Tensions between personal and professional boundaries (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74kKWrhTKbl>)

As for photograph-facilitated vignettes, scenarios were adapted from up-to-date news stories and personal anecdotes. Model questions guided the researcher, as they permitted any complexity embedded within the questions to unfold and thus helped the interviewer decide if the answer required any further probing. There were six vignette themes, the majority of which were developed and adapted from my professional experience as an interpreter. Vignette 3 delves into issues arising from cultural differences which could potentially lead to conflicts. Vignette 4 explores language varieties and dialects, while Vignette 5, adapted from a news event (Hubscher-Davidson, 2017), investigates language amendments and censorship in interpreting. Adapted from Grace (2021), Vignette 6 presents a culturally dense joke. These vignettes were selected and designed to challenge the participants by putting them in interculturally complex situations where they are often required to mediate the scene.

The vignette designs were open and flexible, and allowed the respondents to describe the situation, identify the issue, and suggest a solution(s). The questions presented simulated uncertainty for the participants, where they were to



demonstrate spontaneous problem-solving skills. The study anticipated a wide range of solutions and answers that could be used to suggest an organised approach to IC problems.

When planning for the interview, logical development is vital to the interview guide (e.g., establishing background knowledge and knowing when to inquire deeper, altering the interview course, and discontinuing; see Morris, 2015). Overall, the vignette section was designed to stimulate thinking and to link the participants to more in-depth discussions (9.4.3, Appendices, Vignette Themes, pp. 433–435).

#### 4.3.3.2 Research-Focused Questions

For the third interview section, it was projected that the participant would be more prepared to engage with in-depth questions after having participated in the vignette section. Therefore, the questions were designed to enquire directly about their understanding and engagement with IC (9.2, Appendices, Interview Schedule, pp. 415–427).

The questions are listed below:

1. Since becoming an interpreter, have you received any training?
2. What has been the focus of the training? Were there any elements related to Intercultural Communication, meaning interaction between people from two or more cultures?
3. Have you ever heard of the term ‘Intercultural Communicative Competence’?  
\*definitions of intercultural competence can be provided (Deardorff, 2006).
4. What skills do you need as an interpreter in order to mediate cultures successfully?  
(\*Intercultural mediation is an act of linking cultures and connecting meanings [Theodosiou & Aspioti, 2015]).

5. Have you ever received any training related to intercultural communication?  
\*definitions can be provided (Gudykunst, 2003).

Questions about teaching and learning interpreting were as follows:

- Please describe what learning intercultural communication in an interpreting classroom is like.
- Have you ever discussed the concept of Intercultural (Communicative) Competence and Intercultural Mediation in the classroom? Could you tell me more about it?

These questions can be accompanied by ‘Please explain your response.’

Following this phase of data collection, I used the share screen function on Zoom to share the participants’ RoE drawings, which I had received prior to the interview.

#### **4.3.4 Activity 4: River of Experience Drawing Activity**

The participants were asked to think about their journey of becoming an interpreter as a pre-interview activity before the interview. In order to elicit responses, a drawing activity called ‘River of Experience’ (RoE) was put in place as a creative tool to ‘connect threads of their stories and weave them together’ (Iantaffi, 2012, p. 275). Scholars have used drawings to investigate participants’ experience, such as Rose and Unni (2018); however, the use of ‘river’ drawing is limited in Thai interpreting studies.

RoE takes the constructivist approach (King et al., 2019), since visual methods help participants express insights and perspectives (Glegg, 2019). This innovative research technique is aimed at generating reflective insights by asking participants to visualise their experiences based on a RoE drawing that explores their journey. It is suitable for research that requires deeper reflections on a participant’s profession.

In the drawings of my participants, each bend would reflect a significant moment in their journey to becoming an interpreter, thus such ‘bends’ can help them to expand upon what they may have overlooked if engaged in direct enquiry. I utilised the following instructions to lead the activity:

- Draw a picture of a river on a blank piece of paper with a pen to reflect on your journey as an interpreter and your experiences in dealing with intercultural differences.
- Imagine each river bend (a curved part) as a significant moment in your journey as an interpreter. This is not an artwork activity, so do not worry about your drawing skills.
- Provide an explanation for each river bend (a milestone or a significant moment).
- Take a picture of the drawing (an example is shown in Figure 5). We will use this picture in the interview.

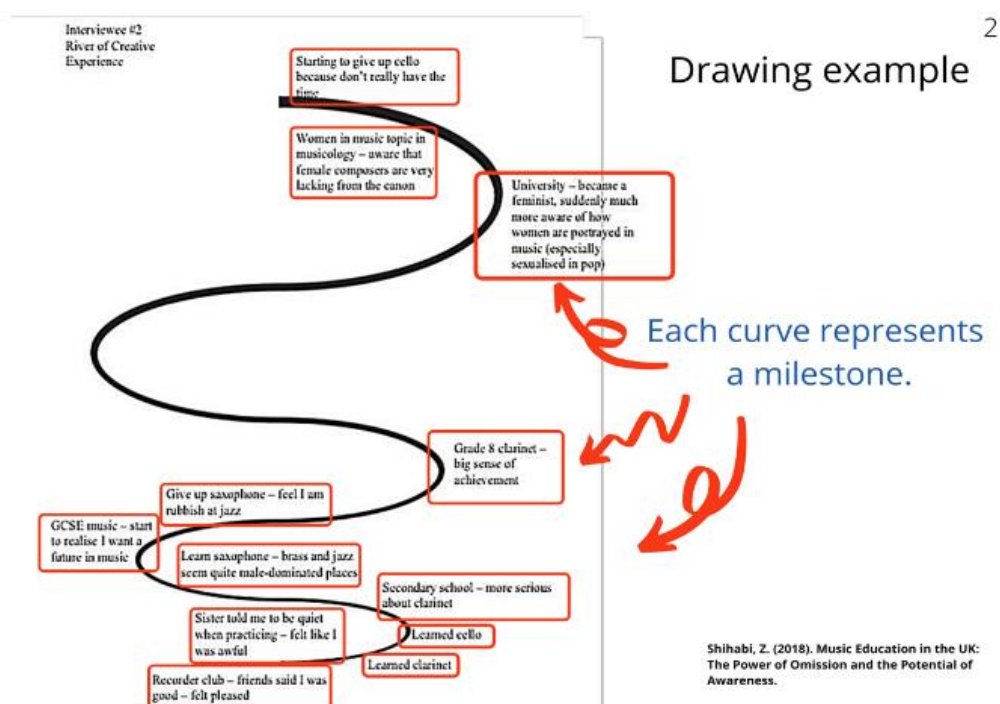


Figure 5: Example of River of Experience Drawing

The participants were then asked to share their RoE drawing and explain the milestones. I prompted the participant to explain the meanings portrayed through their drawing. The participants then finished the interview by answering an optimistic question, ‘Given your experience as an interpreter, what has been the most memorable and satisfying experience?’ which ended our interaction on a positive note, as advised by Maruster (2013). Doing this ensured that the conversations ended in a positive way since some parts of the interview involved sensitive topics.

## **4.4 Procedures**

This section describes the methods employed in the pilot and main studies and analytical stages in detail to allow for replication.

### **4.4.1 Data Collection Timeline**

Figure 6 explains the data collection timeline. Secondary data collection began in December 2019 through email exchanges with Chulalongkorn University. As for empirical data collection, the pilot interviews began in July 2020 while the main study began in October 2020 and ended in January 2021. Interview participants were allowed two weeks to cross check the transcript after the file had been sent to them.

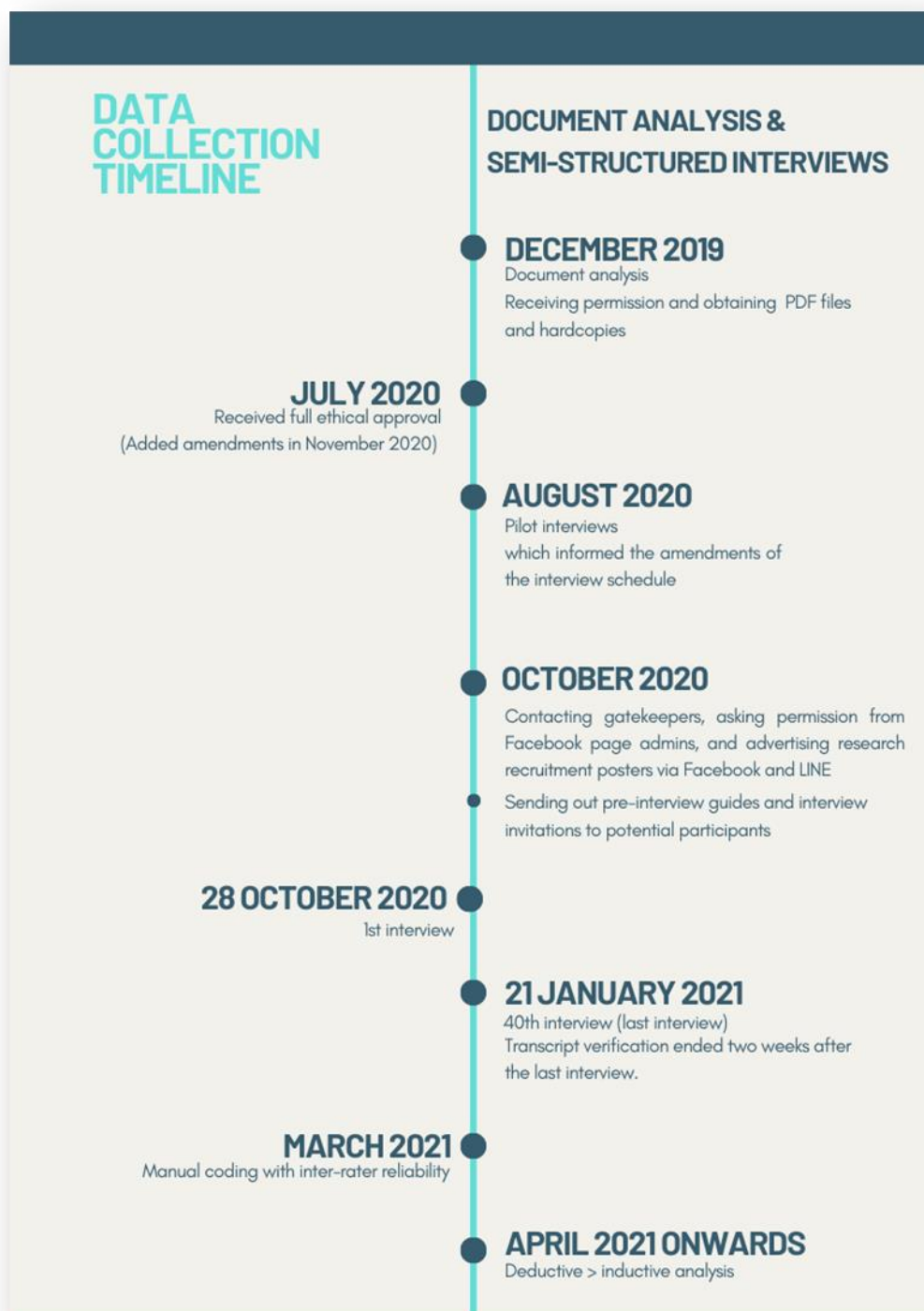


Figure 6: Data Collection Timeline

#### 4.4.2 Pilot Study

After the interview questions had been prepared, I conducted a pilot study with two purposively selected participants. The pilot study consisted of two interviews to produce well-informed and prepared research (Malmqvist et al., 2019). The pilot

study comprised two separate one-hour sessions with participant A, an intermediate interpreter and trainer from group 7 (The Translator and Interpreter Association of Thailand), and participant B, a beginner interpreter from participant group 1 (general-level). PowerPoint slides were shared with the participants using the University's file transfer services. At the same time, they were asked to select two video and three photograph vignettes that they preferred before the interview and again after the interview. Amendment details to the final interview schedule are explained in Table 9-4 (Appendices, pp. 430–432).

Overall, conducting the pilot study informed the necessary changes for the main study. It was a crucial phase since it provided the opportunity to evaluate and reshape the interview techniques before carrying out the main interviews. The insightful information enabled me to identify potential problems and formulate preventive measures before executing the interviews.

### **4.4.3 Main Study**

#### **4.4.3.1 Contingency Plan**

In the context of the COVID-19 pathogen, as of April 2020, the UK Government advised citizens to practice social distancing (2020). The University of Glasgow Ethics Committee from the College of Social Sciences released an urgent notice stating that 'studies involving face-to-face contact with participants should suspend activity until further notice' (2020, para. 3). Therefore, agreeing to meet anyone in person had to be avoided for this research to be law-abiding and socially responsible.

Among the numerous conference software options available at the time was an emerging remote video conferencing programme Zoom, a web-based conferencing platform that enables real-time online interaction by streaming video and audio conferencing (Zoom, 2017). Initially, it had been planned for the interviews to take place face-to-face in Bangkok, Thailand, where the participants mainly reside. However, due to the COVID-19 restrictions, Zoom was used in place of in-person interviews.

Since it is possible to share display screens between meeting attendees on Zoom, all the interview questions and vignettes were built into PowerPoint slides. The interviewer could share the screen and record both the video and audio, which could be securely saved onto the researcher's computer (Matthews et al., 2018). Still, drawbacks, such as poor internet connections, hardware (e.g., webcam) and microphone-related issues, call reliability, and unfamiliarity with the programme were negative points (Archibald et al., 2019). Such issues were mitigated as the participants were provided with a poster guide that elaborated on five simple steps for using Zoom, from installing the software, testing the microphone and camera, to ending the meeting (Figure 7 below).

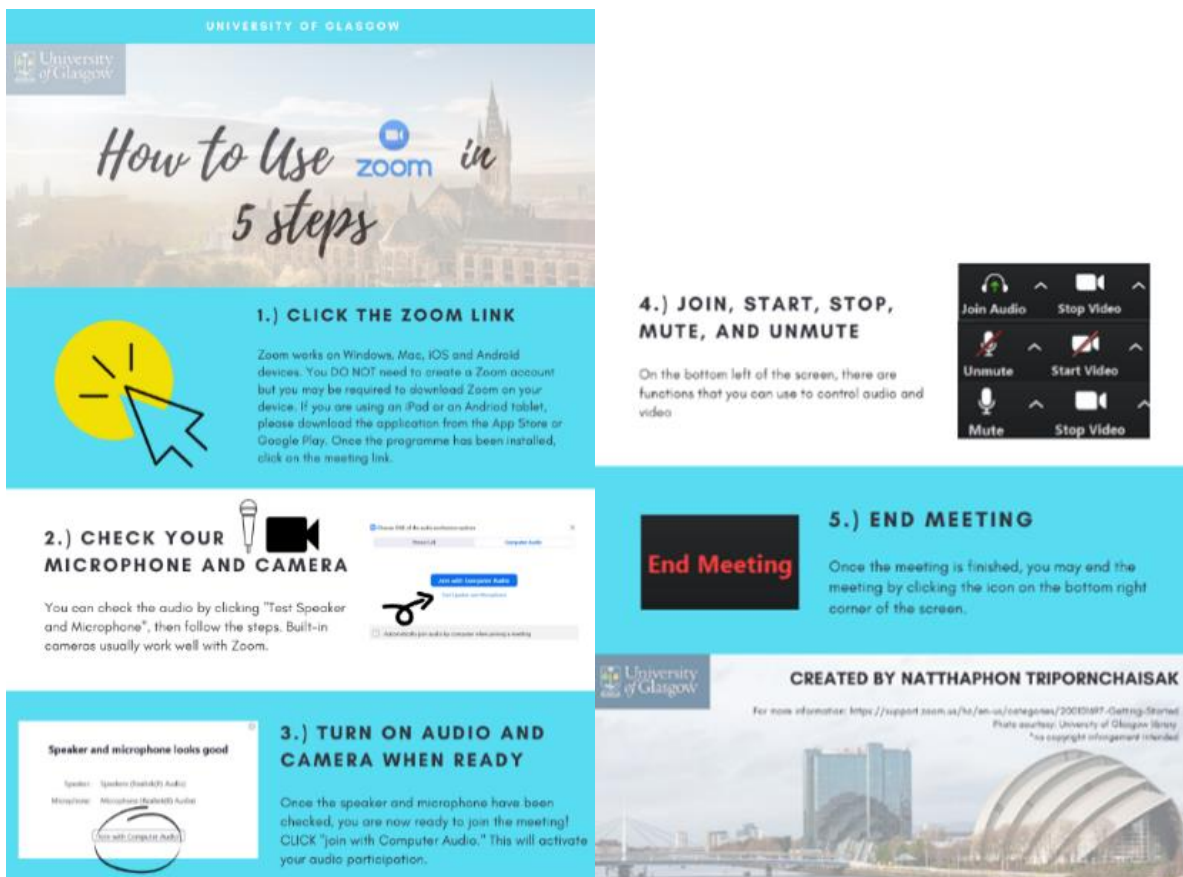


Figure 7: How to Use Zoom in Five Steps Poster

Despite such planning, interviewing online was not without its drawbacks. Primarily, participant recruitment became a lengthy process because scheduling individual online interviews with a large number of respondents and factoring in time differences—for most cases between Scotland and Thailand—required considerable management and planning. Consequently, data collection took approximately four months, from October 2020 to January 2021.

The interviews were recorded and auto-transcribed by Zoom. The transcripts were manually checked by the researcher, then cross-checked and verified with each participant before analysis. Manual checking of the transcription was an opportunity for the researcher to familiarise himself with the data. It was equally important that the transcription process was carried out not long after the interview so that the researcher was able to recall, capture and make notes of meaningful emotions, cues, and signs portrayed during the interview.



#### 4.4.3.2 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis, Data Coding, and Analytical Writing

After I checked the transcriptions and cross-verified the data with the participants via email responses, I incorporated the reflexive thematic analysis approach or RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019; Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Scholars have applied thematic analysis or TA since the 1930s, and its usage has branched out into great varieties (Lainson et al., 2019). Among its seminal users, Boyatzis (1998, p. 4) defines TA as an encoding process similar to the ‘translation of qualitative data’ into themes, while a theme has to resonate with ‘some level of patterned response or meaning’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 10). In other words, a repeated occurrence is represented under a theme.

Emphasising creativity, reflexivity and subjectivity, Braun and Clarke (2019) propose a modification to their 2006 paper. While their original version of TA in 2006 was claimed to be holistically flexible in its theory, the scholars argued that the 2019 RTA is an improvement and that the framework is still theoretically flexible but specific in the application and conceptualisation of encoding. They believe that the newer form of TA can ‘reflect different philosophical assumptions about, and orientations to qualitative research’ (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. para 13).

RTA requires the researcher to reflect on their own positionality and potential biases while being more systematic by constantly revisiting the data to refine and recategorise it. There are several advantages of applying RTA. First, RTA is suitable because the empirical data obtained is purely qualitative. Second, the thesis is to organise the nuanced thoughts on IC to build a comprehensive understanding. Third, the 2019 RTA focuses on the researcher’s reflexivity and subjectivity, while giving little attention to the positivist paradigm. Applying the analysis allowed me to manage data and thematise key insights and features (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019; Clarke & Braun, 2017). Nevertheless, the analysis has been criticised for lacking substantial evidence when compared to grounded theory, ethnography, or phenomenology (Nowell et al., 2017). Furthermore, it is not a complex method in comparison with discourse analysis (DA) (Johnstone, 2018) or critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2013; Rogers, 2011; Samovar et al., 2011). TA would not enable

the researcher to study language use with the same degree of depth as discourse analysis or content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006); however, such a goal does not pertain to the current thesis.

As for the document analysis of the MA dissertations, I applied RTA by initially arriving at seven initial themes that governed the dissertation topics. These were merged and reduced to four discussion headings in consideration of IC.

For the empirical data, I reduced the thematising process to five steps by combining some of the phases because they could not be separated (Table 4-2). These five steps were parred with Coding Cycles as proposed by Saldana (2021).

Table 4-2: Data Analysis Implementation Compared to the Suggested Steps (Saldana, 2021)

Steps Taken	Implementation with the PhD study	Suggested stages (Saldana, 2021)	RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2019)
1. Familiarising with the data	After retrieving the automated transcripts from Zoom conferencing software, the researcher read the entirety of the transcripts to make necessary corrections and checked for accuracy by verifying them with the recorded participants.	(1) First Cycle Coding Methods <u>Descriptive Coding (employed)</u> <u>In Vivo Coding (employed)</u>	1. Familiarising with the data
2. Generating initial nodes or codes (First Cycle and Second Cycle)	After pilot coding, the researcher read the transcripts and used NVivo software to code the entire data set into nodes or themes. By creating nodes, the researcher developed a coding scheme that could branch into sub-nodes.	(1.5) First to Second Cycle Coding Eclectic Coding <u>Grammatical, Elemental, and Exploratory Methods (employed)</u>	2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes (Second and Third Cycle)	The researcher explored any overlapping themes and merged them together.	(2) Second Cycle Coding <u>Axial Coding (employed)</u>	3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing nodes through code stripe, defining and merging themes	The researcher defined each node's meaning, evaluated how ideas were linked together, and defined the themes.		4. Reviewing and revising theme 5. Defining and naming themes

(Third Cycle)			
5. Writing up and reflecting the findings (Inductive approach)	The researcher wrote the report based on the coded data and themes with diverse depths and patterns while reflecting on the coding process. Both processes took place simultaneously.		6. Writing up

Qualitative coding refers to the process in which the researcher deeply thinks and reflects on the meanings of the raw data (Miles et al., 2020), while codes refer to salient and research-worthy ideas that encapsulate the essence of the data (Saldana, 2021). In this thesis, a code, as a word or a brief phrase, symbolically represents the significant gist of the language-based or visual information, while a theme is a longer phrase used to label a recurring notion or a cluster of ideas that evolves from interrelated patterns (Saldana, 2015). Codes called nodes on NVivo software. In the actual coding process, I was mainly guided by thematic analysis and the qualitative coding manual (Saldana, 2021) (See Table 4-2).

While keeping thematic analysis as the coding direction, I adopted multiple cycles of coding (Saldana, 2021) to illustrate layers of data reading and grouping. The First Cycle involved the analysis of emergent words, phrases, ideas, or sentences that could fit into themes. Similar to the pilot coding, I mainly incorporated two elemental methods: (1) *Descriptive Coding* for capturing ideas into a word or a group of words, and (2) *In Vivo Coding* for capturing direct words or quotations that require further probing. While the transcripts were the main data source, I consulted the video/audio recordings and research notes to remind me of any verbal and non-verbal cues that may be meaningful to data interpretation.

The Second Cycle involved the synthesis or grouping of codes to find overarching patterns or controlling themes. By conceptualising the similarities, the findings became more developed and manageable, as the relationships between each code grew more apparent. I re-examined the raw data for one more round to avoid misanalysing or overlooking significant data. Utilising Eclectic Coding, I primarily employed three layers of coding methods: *Exploratory, Elemental, and Grammatical Methods* (Figure 8). Holistic coding (exploratory) was employed as the first layer because the approach provides an overview understanding of the data. I used this as an initial glance over the data. The second layer, elemental methods, encompasses descriptive coding to explore the foundational patterns or the governing ideas of the data and In Vivo coding of which verbatim words or phrases. These were the quotations that represent the views of several participants or highlight powerful

<p>Elemental</p> <p>‘There’s no way that you can simultaneously interpret that word if you don’t know the concept and if you don’t know the context right away very well.’</p>	<p>Sunisa: I certainly, like the concept of <u>เกรงใจ</u> [being considerate]. Yeah, it depends on the situation, how you’re going to interpret that word <u>น้ำใจ</u> [water heart]. There’s no way that you can simultaneously interpret that word if you don’t know the concept and if you don’t know the context right away very well.</p> <p><u>กตัญญู</u> [gratitude], you see?</p> <p>Researcher: Wow.</p> <p>Sunisa: How are you gonna interpret that?</p>	<p>Holistic (exploratory)</p> <p>Contextualised heart concepts</p> <p>เกรงใจ Krieng-chai</p> <p>น้ำใจ Nam-chai</p> <p>กตัญญู Katanyu</p> <p>Elemental and grammatical</p>
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**Figure 8: Examples of Eclectic Coding**

emotions extracted from the transcripts (Saldana, 2021). Lastly, I used grammatical methods, particularly sub-coding, to give further details in the codes.

After that, I added another cycle, the Third Cycle, as I realised that some of the general themes and sub-themes overlapped and required further eliminating and combining (i.e., *Axial Coding*) (Saldana, 2021). I paid close attention to whether there were any overlapping themes and combined them accordingly. These steps were the structural guidelines I observed during coding, although the process involved constant (re)synthesising and revisiting of the data and rethinking of the themes.

#### 4.4.3.2.1 Preliminary Coding

I started the coding process by selecting three pilot transcripts. Each participant represented one level of experience: entry, intermediate, and highly experienced levels. Adopting the coding approach from Saldana (2021), I created a blank three-column Word document and placed the transcript in the middle column, Figure 9. The right column was for highlighting potential themes, or Descriptive Coding and Process Coding, while the left column was for research-worthy direct quotations and was done via In Vivo Coding. The contents of the middle column were colour-coded accordingly.

My initial codes were crosschecked and compared with the primary supervisor’s codes, who had coded the three transcripts without looking at my codes.

<p>'Because as an interpreter, you need to coordinate. That's right. And then make the communication go well, that's this right, too, but you should do it to like help to him'</p> <p>'This one is quite an issue'</p>	<p>Mark: The interpreter comes to the hospital and then just the the say the patient, he tries to discuss or talk to the interpreter about the personal life, like, where do he live in, where does he live in Pakistan? Which part, kind of things. But he insisted that he would only do his job for interpreting, not to discuss personal life and he goes to the to the desk to ask the staff to change the address for the patient, but he still said that he, the patient has to speak. And then he will interpret but not coordinate or anything like that. And after everything is done, completed. He asked for a ride from the interpreter, the interpreter said that this is kinda not my job. It's illegal to do that. Yes.</p> <p>Researcher: Right. So did you see any cultural differences that may become an issue in the Thai context?</p> <p>Mark: In Thai context. About the interpretation or anything I saw here.</p> <p>Researcher: Yeah, well, interpretation and in general as well.</p> <p>Mark: For me, if they if he asked me for helping helping him to change the address, I would be the one to coordinate and ask the kind of things, but not like that, not like tell him to speak and then just interpret only only that. I think, for me, this is not the way I do myself. Because as an interpreter, you need to coordinate. That's right. And then make the communication go well, that's this right, too, but you should do it to like help to him or assist him in changing address like this. And in the last part, I'm not sure about giving a ride. This one is quite an issue because also this is out of the job. This is not in the scope of the job. But for the last part, I'm not sure because I don't know if it's illegal, like really illegal or he just claims that so he could avoid giving him a ride.</p> <p>Researcher: Well, the context is, you know, it's in the UK. So, and it's very possible for the interpreter to work for the NHS the National Health Services. So there might be some, I don't know, rules and regulations that he has to adhere to. Yeah. Okay.</p> <p>Mark: Okay, if it's against the rules, I would do so as an interpreter.</p>	<p>Summarising the event, similar to the provided synopsis.</p> <p>Signalling that he can answer through two lenses.</p> <p>Disagreeing with the interpreter's strict approach.</p> <p>[there was a short pause]</p> <p>Feeling uncertain</p>
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**Figure 9: Pilot Coding of Entry-Level Participant**

This process was done to ensure that my understanding of coding was sound before starting the coding process on 40 transcripts on NVivo. The notion of inter-rater reliability or inter-coder reliability is a practice that helps ensure transparency and consistency, and it requires at least two coders (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Despite its controversy, it is a strategy that I employed to increase qualitative research rigour as the supervisory team and I were able to arrive at high levels of similarity in preliminary coding, as outlined below.

<p>I would ask the lawyer if I could help clarify something here. And if and if the lawyers still insist... the interpreter the interpreter, could not intervene or anything just sit there.'</p>	<p>Mark: Maybe in this current context, I would ask the lawyer if I could help clarify something here. And if and if the lawyers still insist, like insist that no you could not, like, the interpreter the interpreter, could not intervene or anything just sit there. I would do that. I would sit there. Because he insisted that we need to comply.</p> <p>Researcher: And in your experience, have you have you had to interpret something, you know, culturally, nuanced, difficult to interpret before?</p> <p>Mark: Yes, kinda. Yes. I have I have really but it's for some reasons. Yes, I have done it before, but that to two parts that I want to separate from each other. One part is literal Thai like this. The situation like this. And the second part is some words that the speakers just coined it there. They just coined the word up and it's in the Thai context. For this part, I think if I interpreted like directly like word by word like this, this would be hard for some audience to understand. So I would twist the word but still remain the, um, the meaning.</p> <p>Researcher: Can you still recall the example, the word?</p> <p>Mark: Yes, yes, because like, this is not this is what I know what I interpret, but the interpreter besides me, he was senior leader in Thailand. Yes, I have</p>	<p>Requesting more time to think.</p> <p>Ask for lawyer's permission &gt; if no &gt; keep interpreting</p> <p>Interculturally difficult interpretation</p>
	<p>Mark: Maybe in this current context, I would ask the lawyer if I could help clarify something here. And if and if the lawyers still insist, like insist that no you could not, like, the interpreter the interpreter, could not intervene or anything just sit there. I would do that. I would sit there. Because he insisted that we need to comply.</p> <p>Researcher: And in your experience, have you have you had to interpret something, you know, culturally, nuanced, difficult to interpret before?</p> <p>Mark: Yes, kinda. Yes. I have I have really but it's for some reasons. Yes, I have done it before, but that to two parts that I want to separate from each other. One part is literal Thai like this. The situation like this. And the second part is some words that the speakers just coined it there. They just coined the word up and it's in the Thai context. For this part, I think if I interpreted like directly like word by word like this, this would be hard for some audience to understand. So I would twist the word but still remain the, um, the meaning.</p> <p>Researcher: Can you still recall the example, the word?</p> <p>Mark: Yes, yes, because like, this is not this is what I know what I interpret, but the interpreter besides me, he was senior leader in Thailand. Yes, I have</p>	<p>Seeking clarity over interpreters' remit</p> <p>Addressing tricky interpreting scenarios</p> <p>- amend the words but retain the meaning</p>

Figure 10: Pilot-coding for Inter-rater Reliability

Figure 10 compares my initial coding (upper) and my supervisor's (lower) of a participant with entry-level experience. It can be seen that similarities can be drawn in the coding, such as 'asking the lawyer's permission' and 'seeking clarity over interpreter's remit.' Although my coding was more detailed than my supervisor's, the supervisory team and I were able to reach relatively high inter-reliability. The process was a reflective and learning one which taught me to approach the data more broadly as opposed to overtly focusing on the details.



#### 4.4.3.2.2 NVivo for Coding

Once the data had been securely stored, the next important milestone was preparing and analysing the data.

After transcribing the interviews, I used the qualitative analytical software NVivo to facilitate thematising the data based on the emergent themes. NVivo® software is a data management tool to assist in content analysis (Swygart-Hobaugh, 2019). It offers a coding stripe function to distinguish thematised clusters (Welsh, 2002) and nodes or codes, which are indicative points of the coding routes displaying a collection of connected ideas (Bryman, 2012; Richards, 1999). Castleberry and Nolen (2018) advocate that NVivo is user-friendly and assists users in creating visually striking, data-driven graphics. Bazeley and Jackson (2013) add, ‘The efficiencies afforded by software release some of the time used to simply “manage” data and allow an increased focus on ways of examining the meaning of what is recorded’ (p.2). Bazeley and Jackson (2013) imply that because NVivo can help facilitate data management. I, as the researcher, could devote more of my time to being critical of the collected data. Still, it is the researchers’ role to be fully in charge of the analytical process. Moreover, access to the software is vital and, fortunately, the University of Glasgow holds regular training courses on NVivo and offers licensed installation for on and off-campus computers (University of Glasgow, 2020).

During the subsequent coding phase, I developed a hierarchy of themes and sub-themes to guide the writing of the findings chapter based on the initial codes. Different codes were combined and developed into ‘themes’ while some of the smaller codes became ‘sub-themes.’ I intend to use the terms ‘themes’ and ‘sub-themes’ for codes that have been organised in a hierarchical order. The hierarchy of themes outlines the relationships between the coded themes (Nowell et al., 2017). This process was guided by inductive reasoning. Three reasoning approaches were considered: deductive, inductive, and abductive. The researcher applying deduction uses theoretically predisposed reasoning. The process requires the researcher to start with a hypothesis or deduce from a theory (i.e., theory testing) (Casula et al., 2021). Inductive reasoning involves specific observations of the empirical data and arrives at the most sensible explanation (Miles et al., 2020).

Abduction requires the researcher to have a hypothesis while observing the data with the aim of developing a theory (Flick, 2014; Igor, 2021).

The inductive analysis part of this thesis consisted of two steps. First, the writing structure was initially guided by the five savoirs of the ICC Model (Byram, 2021). Nevertheless, after a few attempts, it was evident that the analytical lens was developing into a reductionist framework. Hence, it restricted potential interpretations of the data (i.e., leaving out the interpreter/translator's role). On the second step, I began observing the data inductively in view of the research questions. I then began clustering and re-clustering the themes and created a hierarchy based on their similarities and differences. Although it could be argued that the process was no longer completely inductive due to the RQs or IC-focus, this process resulted in a more comprehensive observation and derivation of themes. Last, by considering the sample sizes and research questions, I ensured pertinence and relevance while avoiding investigating the topic open-endedly.

#### **4.4.4 Trustworthiness of the Findings**

This section demonstrates the steps taken to achieve research worthiness reflected in the research design (Amankwaa, 2016). Qualitative research worthiness or rigour is a way to determine that the research is worthwhile (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I will use three sets of benchmarks to evaluate and discuss this thesis's qualitative worthiness: trustworthiness criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), facet methodology (Mason, 2011), and data triangulation (Hastings, 2010).

First, by applying the four methods, the research materials conform to the notion of facet methodology in accordance with triangulation (Bryman, 2012). In theory, the term facet methodology entails using 'different lines of enquiry, and different ways of seeing' (Mason, 2011, p. 75). As I employed four methods, each method enabled me to visualise the purpose of the RQs as the gemstone or the research core. The research questions are the gist, whereas the researcher utilises the many facets or methods to reflect the research questions, which can yield more 'robust and compelling' findings (Davis et al., 2011, p. 467). At the same time, other

combinations of elements are put together as facets to support the gemstones to which the researcher's creativity and insight can largely contribute (Mason, 2011).

At the core of facet methodology lies the planning of a combination of data collection strategies to support and enhance the researcher's interpretation, as opposed to using a multitude of research means to corroborate research outcomes in mixed-methods studies (Brownlie, 2020). In practice, this PhD triangulates data from a multitude of sources for increased trustworthiness (Hastings, 2010) via two main sub-methods: document analysis (Bowen, 2009; Olson, 2010) and semi-structured creative interviewing (Edwards & Holland, 2013) through vignettes (Grey & Malson, 2018; Törrönen, 2018) and a drawing activity (Iantaffi, 2012). Triangulation can start from determining the data type to use in the research: primary or secondary (Gross, 2018). The secondary data from the Document Analysis informed the literary gaps and guided the writing of RQs and empirical research design, while the primary data from first-hand accounts in the form of interviews tried to answer the guided RQs (see 4.3.2, Creative Semi-Structured Qualitative Interviewing, Chapter 4, pp. 109–116).

Widely applied in today's qualitative work (Hays et al., 2016), the second set of criteria for achieving rigour I selected is the four sub-criteria for valuing research worthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). They comprise credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as elaborated in Table 4-3.

**Table 4-3: Achieving Qualitative Rigour by Lincoln and Guba (1985)**

Trustworthiness Criteria	How Each Criterion was Achieved in Research
Credibility - demonstrating the data accuracy of the results	Semi-structured interviewing was selected for accuracy and flexibility. The researcher made sure that the interview questions followed the intended objectives while allowing considerable leeway for the follow-up questions. The added creative methods, such as the vignettes and the RoE, meant that the participants could reflect on the questions and give answers more open-endedly. Triangulation emerged from creative interviewing through vignettes of video clips and photographs designed to create hypothetical situations to which participants were asked to respond. The research does not attempt to generalise the findings but rather to explore, analyse, and report the accounts experienced by the participants.
Transferability - demonstrating how the data can be applied in other contexts	The professional range of participants was diverse, and ranged from beginners to high-level professionals. The selection was made to investigate a particular set of people who share professional commonalities. The results, in terms of overarching concepts, may be conceptually relevant to other contexts except for case-specific details.
Dependability - demonstrating consistency and how the data can be replicated	Transcript checks underwent a three-step process: auto-generated transcripts by Zoom's auto-transcription feature with Otter integration, manual inspection by the researcher, and the interviewees' verification to monitor accuracy. Reviews of analysis were regularly conducted to ensure transparency and consistency (i.e., cross-checking with supervisors) that that analysis was accurate and up-to-date.
Confirmability - addressing researcher bias and subjectivity	Does the investigator influence the findings? The researcher's prior knowledge provided insights and reflexivity for creating interview questions; however, the semi-structured interviewing equipped the interviewer with the core structure yet flexibility to prevent any unnecessary intrusion and potential biases from the researcher as much as possible.

## 4.5 Concluding Thoughts

The thesis primarily orients to a constructivist approach, wherein I inductively explore the experiences of 40 Thai–English interpreters through data co-creation. Document analysis and creative semi-structured interviews are the two steps that make up the research methodology. The empirical inquiry incorporates semi-structured qualitative interviewing based on the viewpoint that the interviewer takes the role of a traveller whose exploration yields co-created insights with the interviewees, while the document analysis helped identify the research gaps and form the research questions. Employing a combination of these research tools was an essential step to address the research questions as they enabled the researcher

to rigorously design approach the data and the participants through triangulated techniques.

The data collection for the document analysis took place in December 2019, while the interviews started in July 2020 and were completed in January 2021 via Zoom. Before the main study interviews, I conducted two pilot interviews whose insights allowed me to test and adjust the interview schedule.

The coding was an inductive two-stage process guided by RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2019) and the coding manual (Saldana, 2021). First, I manually coded three interviews from all experience groups and compared them with the coding of a supervisor for inter-rater reliability. Second, I used the qualitative coding software NVivo with three coding cycles for the main study. Lastly, as a study that incorporated multiple layers of data collection and analytical tools, I applied three benchmarks to ensure qualitative rigour (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), facet methodology (Mason, 2011), and data triangulation (Hastings, 2010).

## 5 Chapter 5: Document Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the document analysis results of 36 Master's level dissertations of graduates of the Master of Arts Programme in Translation and Interpretation, Chulalongkorn Center of Translation and Interpretation under Chulalongkorn University of Thailand. The aim of conducting the document analysis is to understand the recent and current research interests of interpreting scholars in Thailand by examining 36 Thai interpreting dissertations while identifying the research gaps. In view of IC through reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019; Clarke & Braun, 2017), the four research themes that emerged from this analysis were (1) interpreter's roles, expectations, and working conditions, (2) dialects, accents, and the local knowledge, (3) various interpreting contexts in relation to intercultural mediation, and (4) mediation and code of ethics in Thai training.

Document analysis of the Master's dissertations facilitates the researcher in data triangulation, in conjunction with the empirical study, as the process helps determine the data type the research intends to explore (Gross, 2018). Utilising triangulated secondary data, this chapter aims to illuminate the mediating roles of interpreters within the IC context (RQ1) and on the current scholarly interests of Thai interpreting scholars (RQ2) (i.e., research and training focus and data collection tools) while underlining the significance of both research questions.

**Table 5-1: Document Analysis Themes and Sub-themes in View of IC**

Themes	Sub-themes	Addressing
1. Interpreters' roles, expectations, and working conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercultural mediation and intercultural narratives</li> <li>• Intercultural mediating roles and in various interpreting contexts in relation to training</li> </ul>	RQ1 RQ2
2. Dialects and local knowledge		RQ1
3. Various interpreting contexts in relation to intercultural mediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical interpretation</li> <li>• Diplomatic interpretation</li> <li>• Accented English interpretation</li> <li>• Religious interpretation</li> <li>• Humour interpretation</li> </ul>	RQ1
4. Mediation and code of ethics in Thai training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpreter training for skilled labours: acknowledgement of culture and training curriculum</li> </ul>	RQ2

Employing RTA, I reflexively arrived at seven initial headings: (1) culture, (2) training needs, (3) equipment, (4) job market, (5) speech analysis, (6) machine translation, and (7) interpreters' roles, expectations & working conditions. In view of IC, the overlapping themes were systematically combined into four themes as shown in Table 5-1.

As of October 2022, six more students had graduated from the programme. Their titles suggest that four dissertations add to the topic of machine translation/interpretation, one about note-taking/equipment and the other about interpretation problems. The addition brings the total number of dissertations to 42 as of 2022. However, their studies have yet to be published.

In reviewing the dissertation documents, there are continued noteworthy arguments and dialogues on culture among other governing themes, although Tepatanapong (2014) is the only dissertation that extensively studies culture in interpretation. First, the document analysis will address the language of conversation, followed by an overview analysis of the themes, conceptual frameworks, and data collection. The analysis is predicated on the notion of culture without being restricted to the seven initial headings so that the dialogue on culture can flow across the disciplines.

After analysing the titles, I found that the most researched area on the interpreter's roles was working conditions and expectations in consecutive interpretation. There were several studies on simultaneous interpreting, such as Khuprasert (2008), Mangkalee (2014), Manuwong (2014), Pewnim (2017), Rattanabutr (2019), and Tepintrapirak (2014), with research areas on spontaneous cognitive performance, speech analysis, teamwork, equipment, and machine translation, but there were no direct references to intercultural mediation.

According to the review of languages used for documenting the dissertations, it emerged that from 36 dissertations, one dissertation was written in Thai with a Thai abstract, five in English with abstracts only in English and a majority of 29 in Thai with Thai and English abstracts. Whereas it is a fundamental stepping stone to populate the literature in the local language for national dialogues to develop, the use of English in these works suggests that English is still the academic lingua franca in the interpreting field of Thailand. In other words, it seems that academic arguments about Thailand are being justified, advocated, refuted, and rebutted in English, arguably because conversations in English can contribute to larger target audiences and publishers of English papers also receive more recognition from their peers (López-Navarro et al., 2015).

Moreover, regarding the impact of academic work on a global scale, publications in English are cited more than in other languages (Di Bitetti & Ferreras, 2017). Hence, despite this particular research collection being obtained from a top-tier interpretation and translation programme concentrating on Thai–English, the choice to use mainly Thai suggests that these Thai academics may have missed a great opportunity of exchanging ideas and establishing recognition for Thai academia at a macro scale, which is particularly important for such a new and small circle of academics.

In terms of data collection, traditional interviews and questionnaires are the primary data collection tools. Of 36 dissertations, 31 incorporated interviews, 12 administered questionnaires, seven used observation, four relied on speech analysis, and others on document research. Regarding the interview method, the studies used conventional interviews (e.g., unstructured, semi-structured, and in-depth



interviews), but none incorporated creative interviews (Mason, 2010). Furthermore, although all 36 dissertations have literature review sections, they all illustrate a recurrent pattern, which shows the collected data being reported and explained with scholarly theories, or there is a replication and adaptation in data collection tools. For example, in Sae-heng (2010), the results were compared with Corsellis (2008), Tepatanapong (2014) with Hall (1976) and Gesteland (2002) or Kraikhunthot (2012), which replicated an expectations survey from Kurz (1989) and Moser (1995). The majority of the research evaluated seemingly failed to specify their analytical approaches. Two dissertations used thematic analysis (Chulamokha, 2017; Hiranprueck, 2017), while one dissertation used thematic analysis and grounded theory (Sudthangtum, 2017). There seemed to be an insufficient theoretical contribution in any of the dissertation documents, even though they are the products of the best university in Thailand.

### **5.1.1 Overview: Where is Culture in the Dissertation Documents?**

The references to culture will be grounded on the interactions within the boundary of IC or shared interactions between two or more cultural contexts (Bowe & Martin, 2014). Some dissertation documents mentioned IC, but it was not specifically discussed as the main research topic.

In view of RQ1, the section below presents the research by Tepatanapong (2014) titled *How Differences between European and Thai Cultures Impact the Ways of Interpretation in the Foreign Embassy Context*. It is the only dissertation with a concentration on culture, which suggests that the Thai interpreting field requires further scholarly attention in consideration of IC, particularly at the higher education level.

Tepatanapong (2014) investigated the cultural challenges and working conditions experienced by embassy staff in Thailand. Interviews were administered for data collection. It surfaced that ad hoc assignments had been regularly assigned to six high-level Thai staff and three foreign embassy staff. They have worked with Thai interpreting staff on consecutive and whispered interpretation at European

embassies in the country. All Thai participants reported seeing cultural differences as a challenge.

The study determined three main causes for the staff's cultural challenges. First, sensitive discussion topics, such as Thailand's prosecution system and its stringent lese majeste law. Second, a clash between the European deal-focused and the Thai relationship-focused orientation. Third, problems of perspectives and how each country emphasises different issues (e.g., how the Thai correctional system views psychiatric patients vastly differently from its European counterparts).

The author cites seminal work by Edward Hall on low-context and high-context cultures (1976, cited in Tepatanapong, 2014), and four from seven cross-cultural dimensions of business behaviour by Gesteland (2002, cited in Tepatanapong, 2014). The dimensions between Thailand and Europe are relationship-focused cultures versus deal-focused, formal versus informal cultures, rigid-time versus fluid-time cultures, and expressive versus reserved cultures. For example, the relationship-focused approach is more prevalent among the Thais, while Europeans tend to be more deal-focused; because of this reason, outcomes and expectations of Thai and European meeting attendees may vary between having meeting goals achieved and maintaining relationships. Flexibility makes a substantial contribution to Thai culture more than European culture.

Regarding research gaps, Tepatanapong's (2014) interpretation does not seem to consider that European cultures are being collectivised into one singular culture instead of pluralistic cultures. Scollon et al. (2012) describe the lumping fallacy as classifying two groups of people as identical. In Tepatanapong (2014), the interview data with the participants working for the European embassies are approached as one lumped European cultural group. Tepatanapong makes no attempt to define which particular European culture(s) she aims to compare with the Thai culture. Consistent use of lumping adjectives like 'foreign' and 'European' can be detected throughout the results section. The data seemingly represents the whole European culture as an entire unit; hence, an overview comparison of Thai and 'European' culture.

In my opinion, Tepetanapong's interpretation of 'the European culture' contradicts the research which intends to investigate the cultural challenges that arise from cultural differences in the diplomatic interpretation context. Although her results suggest conflicting discrepancies, as discussed earlier, Tepetanapong (2014, pp. 11–13) consistently elaborates on the challenges with generalised terms such as 'foreigners' or 'European.' The study could have been more focused if it had included specific cultural challenges: for example, the French diplomatic approach in contrast to the Thai diplomatic approach.

### **5.1.2 Interpreters' Roles, Expectations, and Working Conditions**

The themes of role, expectations, and working environments of interpreters are the most researched ones, with a total of 23 dissertations covering these topics. Because of the diversity and breadth of topics, these three themes will enable readers to understand the industry from an overview standpoint. Under this grouping of themes, the studied fields comprise human trafficking (Fargrajang, 2010; Prousoontorn, 2010; Sirithanachai, 2010), telephonic interpretation (Sujariyasai, 2017), court interpretation (Onlaor, 2010; Sripattanarat, 2010; Sudthangtum, 2017), NGOs (Premruedeelert, 2008), religious interpretation (Vechakij, 2008), diplomatic interpretation (Bharntong, 2010), migrant workers (Rassiri, 2008), business interpretation (Markomol, 2010), medical interpretation (Sreenirach, 2012; Tantiwatana, 2012), journalism and entertainment business (Amratisha, 2008; Kraikhunthot, 2012; Mianlamai, 2012; Sureeyathanaphat, 2012), and other fields (Charoensupkul, 2008; Chulamokha, 2017; Maneerat, 2010; Rattanabutr, 2019; Wuttiwong, 2014). I will review these themes with two sub-headings: (1) intercultural mediation and intercultural narratives and (2) intercultural mediating roles in various interpreting contexts in relation to training.

#### **5.1.2.1 Intercultural Mediation and Intercultural Narratives**

Numerous Thai scholars have acknowledged the presence of intercultural mediation. Nevertheless, actual accounts of the mediation process in situations that demand intercultural understanding has been seemingly overlooked.

One dissertation that provided narratives of intercultural mediation was a deductive study on the effects of first-person pronouns and politeness ending particles by Laojariyakun (2017). The researcher focused on the abundance of available pronouns in Thai and the effects of the reduced number of pronouns when Thai is interpreted into English. In other words, when interpreters render Thai pronouns into English, the number of available pronouns will be substantially smaller; essentially, they metaphorically travel down through an inverted pyramid of rendition (signifying fewer word choices). The study was conducted on a consecutive interpretation session at a Bangkok cooking school. It found that the audience favoured the gender-neutral form of /jef/ or chef, while the interpreted rendition—without inserting politeness particles—was deemed not necessary. The researcher admits that the interpreter's visibility in the class significantly contributed to the results. He adds that the research would have presented other findings had the chosen interpretation mode been simultaneous, where the interpreter is physically distant and fortified by the interpreting booth. Laojariyakun (2017) demonstrates research-worthy and complex insights into the use of pronouns and politeness in CI, which are relevant and applicable features for other studies of Thai culture. However, the use of pronouns and politeness particles was pre-determined and deductively approached, which certainly ascertained the research scope but confined the extent to which culture could have been further implied. Laojariyakun (2017) restricted the focus of the research to politeness particles in Thai used in a culinary school, which is research worthy in its own right. Nevertheless, it implies that other significant IC differences, such as other politeness etiquette or mediating skills, which may have unfolded during the intercultural exchange, were not regarded in the study.

Furthermore, intercultural narratives have been manifested in other research on roles and working environments. Sureeyathanaphat (2012), for example, researched interpreters assigned to work in loss-adjust cases in inundated industrial parks. The findings showed that mitigating the cultural gap is among the many roles interpreters must perform—a statement agreed upon by six of eight interviewed interpreters. One interpreter suggested using a tactical lead-in statement by asserting before performing their cultural mediation, 'What I am about to say is not precisely what the speaker has just said but what he means is' (Sureeyathanaphat, 2012, p. 38).

Sureeyathanaphat (2012) also elaborates on an anecdote describing the Japanese concept of punctuality and how to navigate tardiness appropriately. One participant explained that punctuality is an important matter for Japanese people and that an apology would be expected from those who have had to wait. The scholar also points to an unusual professional practice. According to the seven participants, interpreters state that their working languages are Thai–Japanese–English despite the fact that they all have a background in Japanese.

Based on my professional experience, it is not uncommon for interpreters of other language pairs to attach English to the working languages in their resumes or through self-introduction. Without assuming their experience and proficiency, the reasons may be owing to the status of English in Thailand and as a compulsory subject in Thai schools (Baker, 2012). The following points can be inferred. First, attaching English as an additional language seems to validate that English has a privileged position. Second, it may be that professionals interpreting in English are more qualified in other languages and cultures. For example, what if the applications of intercultural knowledge are borrowed and shifted from the most familiar framework, for instance, that of the Japanese? How would that factor affect Thai–English IC understanding and, ultimately, the quality of interpretation? This thesis intends to shed light on the issue if the recruited participants have interpreting languages other than Thai and English.

#### **5.1.2.2 Intercultural Mediating Roles in Various Interpreting Contexts in Relation to Training**

Although the dissertation documents show that only one dissertation was dedicated to the notion of culture, mediation appealed to several of the Thai researchers because culture was perceived as a matter to be mediated. The element of culture has been discussed throughout many professional research spheres (e.g., in diplomatic interpreting [Bharntong, 2010], healthcare interpreting [Tantiwatana, 2012], trafficking [Prousoontorn, 2010], migrant workers [Rassiri, 2008], and business [Markomol, 2010]).

In the context of Thailand's non-governmental organisations, Premrueeelert (2008) offers an outlook advocating interpreters as cultural mediators. The scholar argues that decoding culture is the most crucial goal, as it was underlined that 'even interpreters with high proficiency may not be able to speak or understand [the local culture]. These volunteers have to learn by spending time with the villagers' (Premrueeelert, 2008, pp. 16–17, translated). The study was conducted in Northeastern Thailand, where a regional dialect is spoken. According to the findings, four of five interpreters received no formal training and had little to no professional expertise. One interpreter reported having no prior professional background and no record of training. The combination of the local dialect and the use of proverbs and metaphors in their speech are the cultural challenges that the participants faced. The solution was to prepare the speech with the speaker beforehand. Although one might argue that these interpreters managed to solve the problem by themselves, the solution seems intuitive. It does not align with the systematic cultural problem-solving that Thailand lacks. While spontaneity in approaching and solving problems is critical, some issues could have been alleviated or mitigated had the interpreters known and prepared prior to the session. For instance, prior training may have encouraged interpreters to educate themselves about local slang or jargon to avoid being caught off guard by newly introduced local phrases.

Furthermore, mediation was identified in other contexts. The role of business interpreters was observed and extended to include that of a facilitator, which occurred during the bookings of hotels, flights and restaurants for clients in Markomol (2010). This research suggests that translation agencies arrange more training for business interpreters.

Sujariyasai (2017), meanwhile, explored telephonic interpretation for Thai tourist police and found that interpreting agents must sometimes take a mediating role, mainly when there is an argument between tourists and locals. Telephonic interpretation entails interpreting via the telephone without seeing the other party (Lee, 2007).

In interpreting for trafficked persons, Fargrajang (2010) found that 100% of her participants agreed that they expect interpreters for trafficked persons to explain

cultural differences when a misunderstanding arises. This signifies that an interpreter's ability to deal with cultures is just as important than an ability to simplify technical terms. Clients expect interpreters' roles to extend beyond translation, but accuracy is to be maintained.

Also investigating trafficked persons, Prousoontorn (2010) reports that inquiry officers believe that interpreters who work in the Human Trafficking Division should be knowledgeable in the cultures of the victims and witnesses. Inquiry officers expect interpreters to have attended training.

Thus far, I have shown that the discussion of culture is embedded within diverse fields of interpretation and identification of cultural problems, and that one conclusion is to establish training courses to increase IC mediation among interpreters.

The documents indicate that mediation is preferred and performed on many grounds; however, the act of mediation is not without contentions. Interpreting and mediating must be performed with ethical responsibility, especially when interpreting for disadvantaged individuals. A study by Rassiri (2008), for instance, shows how mediation can be used to exploit migrant workers. Rassiri (2008) investigated the demands of interpreters for migrant workers, their working conditions, and roles in Muang District, Samutsakorn Province of Thailand. In most cases, illegal migrant workers are smuggled through the borders by brokers who are typically fluent in Thai. There are two exploitative ways that these so-called interpreters can take advantage of the workers. First, when the workers need to contact an official body, the pay would depend entirely on the interpreter. Second, the brokers secretly inform the police to raid the workers' homes, who are later forced to pay a bribe. In this case, the brokers are allegedly working with the police. In their exact words, many participants said, 'actually, the police do not really need an interpreter, but they just need someone to tell the illegal migrants that they need to pay the bribe' (Rassiri, 2008, p. 43).

In summary, mediation is performed in a variety of professional settings. However, as shown in Rassiri's (2008) study, mediation can pose a risk of being misused if not in line with a code of conduct and ethics.

### **5.1.3 Dialects, Accents, and the Local Knowledge**

In the dissertation compendium, the difficulties and challenges of interpreting dialectic or minority languages are discussed in *Working Conditions and Roles of Interpreters in the National Intelligence Agency* (Wuttiwong, 2014) and *User Expectations of Interpreters: A Qualitative Study of Three User Groups in Thailand; Patent Litigation, Public Health, and Cultural Heritage* (Chulamokha, 2017).

First, in Wuttiwong (2014), the term intercultural mediator is employed to describe intelligence interpreters' roles when performing at the Thai border area. In doing so, a sound knowledge of the local dialect and the victims' culture is paramount because it enables interpreters to interpret more effectively.

Second, Chulamokha (2017) takes a more in-depth examination of the domains of Thai patent litigation, public health, and cultural heritage. The research shows two areas associated with IC: dialects and transliteration. Interpreting local dialects would need knowledge of the local accent and jargon, while transliteration requires the interpreters to preserve local cues for the target audience.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, transliteration is defined as '(1) The action or process of rendering a word or text into the closest corresponding letters or characters of another alphabet. (2) A word or text produced by rendering the letters or characters of one alphabet in those of another' (OED, 2019c). Regmi et al. (2010) assert that transliteration is 'a process of replacing or complementing the words or meanings of one language with meanings of another as sometimes the exact equivalence or exact meaning might not exist' (p. 18). In other words, transliteration retains the original sound in the target language instead of giving up all the original nuances. Arguably, transliteration makes interpreting less straightforward, requiring interpreters to be interculturally knowledgeable.



In summary, the aim of Chulamokha (2017) was to explore users' expectations and determine the importance of interpretation accuracy. The findings indicated that users preferred messages to be delivered correctly. The findings also signified that at least two to three minority groups, Mhong, the Yong dialect, and Karen, have yet to receive the research attention they deserve in terms of socio-political complexity.

Pertaining to this thesis, the quote, 'A language is a dialect with an army and a navy,' often attributed to the Yiddish linguist, Max Weinreich (in Maxwell, 2006, p. 142), shows the complexities of socio-cultural and political facets rooted in a language. The quote suggests that a language could simply be a dialect whose speakers are of a dominant socio-economic position. It contends that a present-day dialect may have once been a language in its own right whose influence has been defied and superseded by other stronger dialects. Being acquainted with the cultural and historical knowledge of the dialect helps the interpreter know how the dialect was formed, where it currently is, and the direction it is headed to. This aspect will be incorporated in my vignette method (see 9.1, Appendices, pp. 410–414).

#### **5.1.4 Various Interpreting Contexts in Relation to Intercultural Mediation**

This section further discusses the concept of mediation; see further discussions in Davidson (2000), Farini (2012b), Katan (2013), Liddicoat (2016a, 2016b), and Wadensjö (2017).

When interpreters interact, they bring along their self and personality; therefore, true neutrality is difficult to achieve (Angelelli, 2004). As interpreters encounter uncontrollable factors, their decisions to intervene are always negotiated and renegotiated (Ozolins, 2016). This indicates that their roles are complex, field-dependent, and situational. For example, in a dissertation investigation of four Thai courts, Onlaor (2010) provides a conversational exchange between a lawyer and a witness in which the subject has been omitted. Thai is a pro-drop language which exhibits null use of pronouns or omission of subjects and objects (Hoonchamlong, 1991; Phimsawat, 2011). This is why the phrase 'who meet?' in Thai, regardless of the connoted meaning, had to be further mediated and clarified by the interpreter

to ‘Who meets whom?’ in English (Onlaor, 2010, p. 17). On the other hand, in the Australian legal context, Hale (2015) illustrates that there is a predominant perception held by legal professionals that it is feasible for interpreters to transfer words from language A into language B magically. The rendering process is seamless and complete.

Other studies that examine intercultural mediation will be discussed in line with the five following sub-themes: (1) medical interpretation, (2) diplomatic interpretation, (3) accented English interpretation, (4) religious interpretation, and (5) humour interpretation. In spite of these diverse sub-themes, the common theme is the notion of intercultural mediation. By making use of these sub-themes, readers will be able to observe the application of mediation in a multitude of interpretation contexts.

#### **5.1.4.1 Medical Interpretation**

The necessity for Thai interpreters to interact with increased numbers of foreign patients may be due to Thailand’s increased medical tourism initiative. According to Cohen (2008), patients who participate in medical tourism are ‘people who travel to another country for medical treatment, often combined with a vacation, or take the opportunity to receive such treatment in the course of a vacation’ (p. 266). Medical tourism has been presented as one of the country’s driving economic policies (Noree et al., 2014). In 2007, there were 1.7 million medical tourists, with medical tourism accounted for 0.4 of Thailand’s gross domestic product in 2011 (Naranong & Naranong, 2011), with Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) (2018) forecasting a 16 per cent annual growth from 2017 to 2020.

In Tantiwatana’s investigation on medical interpreters (2012), the Muslims’ practice of covering their bodies with a niqaab, or a full-body garment cover, was explained to the physicians—Muslim patients strictly practise this custom which seemingly makes the medical examination cumbersome for the doctors. Furthermore, professional male interpreters must perform their interpretation in an area separated by a curtain or by positioning their backs to the patient if a female patient is being examined. The interpreters were identified as playing an intercultural

mediating role by ensuring that the patients were satisfied, because the interpreters are the only people who can connect with the patients. Contrary to the details provided, the main conclusion broadly stated that the expectations are for interpreters to use simple language and medical terminology when performing their task.

Another research study on medical interpretation is Suwanakitti (2008), which reviewed interpretation demand at three hospitals in Bangkok in terms of interpretation problems and working conditions. Arabic is reported as the most demanded language, followed by Japanese, English, Mandarin, and Burmese. The relative ranking of each language's popularity corresponds to the statistics of medical tourists in Thailand in 2010, with reports that non-Thai patients come from the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Europe, South Asia, and North America (Noree et al., 2014). Suwanakitti (2008) also states that cultural sensitivity and patience are two recommended qualities in medical interpreters. This covers issues such as speaking to an opposite-sex patient from some country or religion that must be performed with care. In order to mitigate the cultural gap, it was reported that hospitals should provide a circular document to inform all staff of cultural differences that foreign patients may bring. Although discussed in this study, neither English nor culture is the objective of Sumanakitti's (2008) study.

As illustrated above, the notion of culture was touched upon in Tantiwatana (2012) and Suwanakitti (2008). Yet, solutions to cultural issues appear to be either personal or arbitrary, as issues are dealt with on individual terms. For instance, in Tantiwatana (2012), when a speaker raises a question about the Thai justice system regarding the *lèse-majesté* law, which 'prohibit insults, defamation, and criticism towards royal sovereigns of States' (Baber, 2014, p. 693), the interpreter decides to use transliteration (see p. 151 for definitions) and non-verbal communication to avert conflicts. Although spontaneous problem-solving skills are crucial, the interpreter arguably becomes more susceptible to risks. What is needed for interpreters to alleviate these intercultural problems is a more systematic problem-solving approach.

#### 5.1.4.2 Diplomatic Interpretation

When interpreters work on diplomatic missions, filtering political opinions can be a form of mediation. A diplomatic interpreter is ‘a person who serves interpreting service for high-level country representative’ in state meetings, bilateral or multilateral meetings, and banquet meetings (Bharntong, 2010, p. 4).

Bharntong studied the working conditions, roles, and other related problems of diplomatic interpreters. Diplomatic interpreters can take the roles of interpreter and official at the same time. Interpreters, therefore, need to be highly aware of political, economic, social, and cultural differences. Addressed by the participants, the following are two examples of sensitive messages that call for special attention. First, if the speaker says that ‘the relationship between Thais and Chinese are that of brothers’ (p. 25), the message may be understood negatively, implying a lack of friendship. Second, interpretation before the collapse of the Soviet Union was a tense period. After this sentence delivered by the speaker to a Soviet diplomat, ‘Thailand supports the independence of the (Soviet) states,’ (p. 28) the interpreter had no other option but to filter the message before interpreting. The interpreter then informed the speaker of the potential conflict that this opinion could have provoked, and thus attempted to avoid compromising diplomatic relations between Thailand and the Soviet Union. In view of IC, filtering such a message suggests a sort of intervention through the visible role (see 5.1.2 Interpreters’ Roles, Expectations, and Working Conditions, pp. 146–151) because doing so can potentially jeopardise the authenticity and truthfulness of the original meaning.

#### 5.1.4.3 Accented English Interpretation

The following provides a brief description of the development of English status in relation to accented English in Thailand.

Nearly four decades ago, Quirk and Widdowson (1985) placed and defended British English as the model for the learning of non-native English. This idea was challenged by Kachru (1985), who proposed the notion of World English to represent the reality of Englishes around the world. According to Kachru (1985); (1992), three concentric circles represent the global spread of English. First, the Inner Circle refers to those

countries that traditionally use English as their first language or countries that provide the learning norm for others, such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, and Canada. Second, the Outer Circle encompasses post-colonial states where English was enforced on the local population and is now an official or institutional language. These countries are deemed ‘norm-developing’ such as India, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore. Lastly, the Expanding Circle includes countries whose learning of English depends on the first two circles such as China, Korea, Russia, European countries, Japan, and Thailand. The circles are seconded by Crystal (2003) who continues that the global status can be achieved when a language is titled with an official status or institutionalised, and when it is prioritised in the curriculum of the country’s foreign-language teaching.

Understanding World Englishes allows us to grasp where Thailand’s use of English, English education included, has been positioned. For example, in a dissertation by Markomol (2010), the author explores clients’ expectations of business interpreters in Thailand. It is reported that the interpreters found the accented English of Japanese speakers most challenging to grasp. From this example, it is indisputable that speaking English is not solely confined to people who speak it as their first language.

Referencing Kachru’s circles, Japan and Thailand are both in the expanding circle. Quirk et al. (1985) forecasted that ‘English is likely to be retained generally as the medium for higher education as long as the major English-speaking countries retain their economic and political status’ (p. 10). In recent years, the notion of ‘Englishisation’ of HE or English-medium instruction (EMI) for non-language classes, predominantly in East Asia, has been discussed by Galloway and McKinley (2021) and McKinley et al. (2022), because it arguably improves career and academic prospects for students and boosts universities’ rankings, revenues, and funding. The drawbacks include students having difficulty following class content, lagging behind their peers, and diminishment of cultural variety in and outside the classroom.

Today, English is recognised as the world’s common language (British Council, 2013). In other words, English is a global language and has gained popularity through socio-

economic power as English-speaking nations grow. In view of this PhD thesis, interpretation of English is no longer limited to a Thai person speaking to an English person from London; the anticipated data can derive from the participants who use English as a second language and as a medium to converse.

#### 5.1.4.4 Religious Interpretation

The role of religion is crucial in many people's lives. The following section presents two studies that investigate the religious promulgation processes of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam through missions and preaching. The results of Vechakij (2008) are discussed based on the Iceberg Model (Hall, 1976) and the Big C and Small C analogies (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993). In Sripattanarat (2010), interpreters act as a linkage between people who speak other languages and Thai dharma practices. The study broadly concludes that interpreters help non-Thai followers build an understanding of Buddhist principles through interpretation and translation.

Examining the working conditions of interpreters in churches and mosques in Thailand, Vechakij (2008) offers comprehensive insights concerning roles and cultures. In the results, clients expect interpreters not only to interpret but also to pass on religious concepts. An example is given by an Islamic interpreter who says, 'interpreting the Quran requires an in-depth knowledge... Verbatim interpretation of the Quran will not suffice' (Vechakij, 2008, p. 23, translated). Most participants in the study stated that religious interpreters should become a follower or a believer of that religion (Vechakij, 2008). For instance, interpreters working in mosques often take on the role of preaching. Not only do they interpret, but also their linguistic and religious knowledge help connect the imam or the Islamic priest and the worshippers.

The term *faith* can be analysed through the Iceberg Model (Hall, 1976) and the Big C and Small C analogies (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993). The Iceberg Model has two parts: the visible external tip and the hidden internal underwater part. Surface culture involves superficial manifestations (e.g., food, arts, language, music), while deep culture is housed in the underwater ice (e.g., beliefs, values, and thinking patterns). Faith would thus be immersed underwater in this model. In the other

model, Big C culture contains the more visible components of culture—what meets the eye (e.g., food, literature, or art). In contrast, little C components are implicit, less visible, and require immersion into the culture (e.g., norms, behaviours, communication styles, values, beliefs, and so on). Both analogies signify that subtle intercultural components govern the expectations of religious interpreters. The idea that religions and lives in Thailand are highly intertwined (Yong et al., 2009) turned out to be the case in the interview findings.

#### 5.1.4.5 Humour Interpretation

Oshima (2018) postulates that a person must possess skills and dexterity similar to the mastery of IC to construct humour. Humour often functions as ‘a social lubricant’ and to support cultural expectations (Oshima, 2018, p. 205). For reference, Pavlicek and Pöchhacker’s (2002) work on humour in German–English simultaneous interpretation postulates that humour is injected as personal anecdotes, ironic statements, and/or jokes. Moreover, they state that humour is more prevalent in English than in German, and that it is used for introductory purposes, relieving stress, or phasing through difficult topics. However, to the best of my knowledge, there has been no attempt to investigate humour in Thai interpretation.

The following two dissertations implicitly touch upon intercultural humour.

Amratisha (2008) presents an overview of interpreting types in the entertainment industry. In her findings, Thai–English emcee/interpreters express that humour is complicated and culturally specific. If jokes are interpreted verbatim, the humour may not be translated to the audience. She provides an example of live broadcasters/interpreters who must be proactive to construe and quickly reconstruct the original meaning into the target language. The interpreter can either avoid translating or choosing a local cliché or joke that the audience would always find humorous (Amratisha, 2008).

Phimtan and Tapinta’s study (2011) focuses on translating American humour into Thai by translating the subtitles of an American film, *50 First Dates* (Segal, 2004). Six strategies were employed: (1) cultural substitution, (2) word-for-word

translation, (3) interpretation, (4) the mixed methods of translation, (5) transliteration, and (6) the use of the pun. According to the independent studies dataset, the technique employed by Amratisha (2008), which involved using a local cliché, matches the category of cultural substitution. Moreover, Phimtan and Tapinta (2011) illustrate that Thai slang was employed in the translation of ‘You’ll be stuck here, waking up next to *the same old, ugly broad*, just like Ula’ (p. 85) is ‘พะโล้หม้อเก่า’ pronounced ‘Pa-lo-mor-kao’ which literally means ‘the old pot of stewed pork.’ It is used to imply that the wife is fat even though the translator could have conveniently converted ‘the same old, ugly broad’ into Thai.

From the above examples, humour seems socio-culturally inspired and constructed. Those interpreting must be able to establish this relationship for the two groups (i.e., deciphering the message and evaluating what fits in the new context).

### 5.1.5 Mediation and Code of Ethics in Thai Training

As discussed previously, the notion of mediation has been identified in the discussions of many scholars, such as in court interpreting (Onlaor, 2010) or medical interpreting (Tantiwatana, 2012), as well as among Thai immigration officers (Wuttiwong, 2014) and Thai tourist police (Sujariyasai, 2017). Yet, how is mediation perceived regarding professional ethics?

The International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIC) places emphasis on impartiality and neutrality (Baker, 2015). In Thailand, this view is shared by the Thai Court of Justice, whose Code of Ethics writes the five values (Office of the Judicial Commission, 2012, pp. 1–4, translated); for example, one’s duty must be performed with honesty, impartiality, and without prejudice.

The idea that interpreters should mediate has been contested by Sudthangtum (2017), who researched privately retained, court interpreters. Sudthangtum (2017) defines privately retained, court interpreters as ‘[those] who are hired by a particular party (...) to perform duties as an interpreter in communication between the employer parties and those involved in the litigation, for the lawyer of the parties and the judge in the case’ (p. 3, translated). The findings illustrate that



interpreters must not perform mediation beyond the extent of their assignment because transparency and verbatim are expected in court interpretations. Similarly, in psychiatric interpretation (Sreenirach, 2012), when asked if their role as an interpreter includes a cultural coordinating role, one out of five interviewed interpreters believed that an interpreter is not obliged to perform any other task beyond the patient's therapy, whereas the other four interpreters concurred with the statement (they are expected to interpret word for word). What contradicts the expectation is the sentence, 'Both psychiatrists and interpreters agree that interpreters should bridge the gap of cultural differences and control their emotions while working' (Sreenirach, 2012, p. 5). The contradiction casts doubt on a preconceived understanding of cultural bridging and mediation (i.e., the interpreter intervenes, adds, or omits accordingly). Therefore, it invites further dialogue on intercultural mediation (RQ1).

The last section of the document analysis will end with the topic of interpreter training (RQ2).

#### **5.1.5.1 Interpreter Training for Skilled Labours: Acknowledgement of Culture and Training Curriculum**

Whereas learning to interpret is a process of competence development (Kalina, 2000), the theses report that skilled and unskilled professionals are often put on the job because of their language proficiency without training. This implies a public misperception that people who are not monolingual are, by nature, equipped with interpreting skills. High levels of bilingualism are indeed required as a foundation for interpreting, but being bilingual does not automatically translate into an ability to interpret (Angelelli, 2012).

While it has been presented in Chapter 2 that there is a shortage of interpreter training for unskilled labour, as reported by Surapongpitak et al. (2017) and Pungbangkadee and Nakagasien (2019), the lack of programmes is not specific to the unskilled population because the same can be said about skilled professionals. Hence, this section describes a failure to provide training in a wide array of professional spheres (e.g., in non-governmental organisations [Premruedeelert,

2008], interpreting for migrant workers [Rassiri, 2008], the Royal Thai Armed Forces [Maneerat, 2010], diplomatic interpreting [Tepatanapong, 2014], court interpreting [Onlaor, 2010], civil servants [Wuttiwong, 2014], and telephonic interpretation for Thai tourist police [Sujariyasai, 2017]). The lack of interpreting provisions raised in these studies results from personnel shortages, temporary staff contracts, and, more importantly, the interpreting profession not receiving social recognition.

One explanation for the absence of interpreter training in Thailand comes from Wuttiwong (2014), who investigated the roles of and expectations for interpreters working in police interrogation at the Thai National Intelligence Agency. Wuttiwong's (2014) findings suggest that interpreters must know the culture of the victims. For instance, the ability to speak the local dialect for interpreters at the border is considered an essential set of skills. Alternatively, speaking the local dialect becomes especially useful when there is a press visit to the local area. In such instances, border interpreters may be in charge of not only interpretation but also the translation of local newspapers, brochures, and leaflets, which are predominantly produced in the local dialect.

Concerning available training, Wuttiwong (2014) points to issues of status and recognition from institutions, meaning the professional title of working interpreters is not given the same level of importance as other professions. Intelligence agents are considered a prestigious position; yet, there is no appropriate training provided for interpreters working in this field as they are not deemed agents. Aimed at increasing the bargaining power of the interpreting profession, the author suggested a training programme that equips interpreters with important intelligence terms and contexts, producing a person who is versatile in language and cultural knowledge of the context.

In another study by Fargrajang (2010) on quality and role expectations of interpreters working to protect trafficked persons, 100% of participants agreed that interpreters are encouraged to explain any differences between cultures when they notice that the ongoing communication may cause dissatisfaction. The results indicated that clients expect interpreters' roles to extend beyond translation while still maintaining accuracy. Eighty percent of the interviewed interpreters agreed

that message simplification and jargon explanation are necessary, while 60% stated that forewarning the clients of the possible misinterpretation as a result of mediation is advised. Fargrajang (2010) gives an example of two Burmese interpreters who needed to simplify technical terms. These simplifications were for the benefit of a lesser educated Burmese audience from a rural area who regularly met with government officers and private development personnel officers. I believe that for some cases, altering the information to accommodate the audience's needs is vital. The process, however, should be done in parallel with accuracy. This is a challenging balance that interpreters need to preserve.

In both studies, interpretation training has been addressed as suggested further action. First, reflecting on her research, Fargrajang (2010) asserts that the findings can be used for the design of Thai human trafficking interpreter training. Her results suggest that the unfolded mediating position be aligned with message accuracy and completeness. I agree with Fargrajang (2010) because professional and ethical adherence does not have to come into conflict with practical mediation. Rather, they can function to complement each other. Similarly, Wuttiwong (2014) advocates an establishment of training intended to improve the language proficiency of national intelligence officers. However, contrary to what is emphasised as important in both studies, they fail to specify two issues. First, it is unclear what elements should be included in the training details. Second, both show no element of culture despite the fact that culture is regarded as an essential set of skills to be acquired. To conclude, I believe that the much-needed training would consist of cultural components that have been identified as important. This is because foci have been placed on improving language proficiency in Wuttiwong's study (2014) and building a language repertoire of human trafficking and peripheral matters, such as the knowledge of human rights, in Fargrajang's study (2010).

Nevertheless, there have been studies done in Thailand which have considered training in more detail. In 2008, for example, a rare collaborative project was implemented in the context of military interpretation, where professors from Chalermprakit Center of Translation and Interpretation, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University organised training for the Royal Thai Armed Forces interpreting staff (Maneerat, 2010). The training needs for interpreters in Thailand

have also been considered in the context of human trafficking victims, as addressed in Sae-heng's (2010) study, in which the given reasons for the lack of training pointed to an insufficient budget and a lack of motivation seemingly due to substandard income security. In the findings, one interpreter reported having attended a training session organised by the government, while the other two interpreters had previously joined some training on sign language and local dialect. The research provided a list of teaching topics for two types of interpreter training. The first list is for training interpreters who help and give protection to human trafficking victims in Thailand (Sae-heng, 2010, p. 34, translated). It can be observed that the list does not contain any specific bullet points to IC, but the focus is more on the knowledge of the field and interpretation issues.

1. General knowledge of human trafficking.
2. Legal knowledge and cases related to human trafficking.
3. Thai language - foreign language skills.
4. Translation techniques.
5. Problems and solutions in translation.
6. Knowledge and conduct in accordance with interpreters' ethics.
7. Roles and behaviours of the interpreter.
8. Teamwork skills.

The second list is for the training of interpreters in the field of human trafficking arranged by non-governmental organisations (Sae-heng, 2010, p. 35, translated). Similar to the first list, the following list does not seem to pay attention to IC components.

1. General knowledge in human trafficking.

2. Roles and behaviours of the interpreter.
3. Qualifications and ethics of the interpreter.
4. Job characteristics of government officials and social workers.
5. Expectations of government officials and social workers.

After (re)categorising and integrating the teaching topics, I found no explicit labelling of IC, intercultural mediation, or culture, even though all have been mentioned as beneficial qualities of interpreters in the document analysis studies. In practical terms, a knowledge of IC equips interpreters with the repertoire for intercultural mediation (i.e., knowing what, when, why, how, and with whom to mediate). However, one needs to take into consideration that culture may be represented under items such as roles and behaviours or interpretation/translation strategies. In the two analysed training lists above, however, it is quite a contradiction to find no mentioning of culture, at least not in a categorical sense. Furthermore, the training attendees were not required to pass any test before the application or after they had completed the session. Although the dissertations showed considerable discussion of culture in interpretation, no single study inquired into Thailand's top-tier domestic interpreting training schemes to evaluate whether the same procedure has been applied in curriculum development. Additionally, a reasonable approach could be to create a dialogue on the necessity and direction of curriculum amendments.

With regard to the education of interpreting studies in Thailand, the teaching of interpreting courses can be identified in several top universities in Thailand. According to QS Rankings (2022), the same ten universities have occupied the top-ten rankings of universities in Thailand since 2020 (except for the year 2020 with ranking details of nine universities). Interpreting classes are available in six of the top-ten universities (see Table 9-7, pp. 453–455). To my knowledge, with the exceptions of Chulalongkorn University and Thammasat University, the courses offered by the other four universities are partial fulfilment of degrees in English, not as full interpreting degrees (the universities are Mahidol University, Chiang Mai

University, Khon Kaen University, and King Mongkut's Institute of Technology, Ladkrabang).

In terms of courses outside of universities, Table 5-2 below shows a training programme offered by the Thai Translator Interpreter Association, according to TIAT's website (TIAT, 2022). In element 1.2, IC is listed as a discussion topic. This suggests that the Association may have recognised the importance of IC for interpreter trainees and implemented it in their curriculum.

**Table 5-2: Translators and Interpreters Association of Thailand (TIAT) Professional Interpretation Course (TIAT, 2022)**

Course Details	Translated Course Details
หัวข้อการอบรม องค์กรประกอบ 1 หลักการปฏิบัติงานล่าม  1.1 การแปลแบบตีความ 1.2 การสื่อความข้ามวัฒนธรรม 1.3 การปฏิบัติงานล่ามแบบต่างๆ 1.4 หลักจริยธรรมและมารยาทของล่าม  องค์กรประกอบ 2 ทักษะการล่าม (ปฏิบัติ) 2.1 การแปลแบบ Sight Translation 2.2 การแปลล่ามแบบพูดตาม (Consecutive Interpretation) 2.3 การอบรม สัมมนา Liaison 2.4 การแปลล่ามแบบพูดพร้อม (Simultaneous Interpretation) 2.5 การประชุม อบรม สัมมนา การใช้อุปกรณ์แบบ Tour Guide การล่ามแบบกระซิบ  องค์กรประกอบ 3 การฝึกนอกสถานที่ ฝึกปฏิบัติ การจำลองการปฏิบัติงานล่ามนอกสถานที่ (ใช้อุปกรณ์ Tour Guide)	Training topics Element 1 Interpretation principles  1.1 Interpreted translation 1.2 Intercultural communication 1.3 Various interpreting operations 1.4 Principles and etiquette of an interpreter  Element 2 Interpreting Skills (Practice) 2.1 Sight Translation 2.2 Consecutive Interpretation 2.3 Liaison Seminar/Training 2.4 Simultaneous Interpretation 2.5 Training, seminars, using tour guide equipment, whispering interpretation  Element 3 Field Training (Practice Training) Simulation of off-site interpreters (using Tour Guide equipment)

## 5.2 Concluding Thoughts

The document analysis offered considerable evidence that Thai interpreters are expected to recognise cultures and, at times, intervene in a conversation to create a shared understanding between the two parties. Nevertheless, the dissertations have yet to touch upon the IC process that takes place during conversations.

In consideration of RQ1, the analysis suggests that an understanding of IC is required to circumvent foreseeable intercultural conflicts. The review concluded by directing the discussion toward mediating roles and codes of ethics, which covered the current training programmes in the Thai job market. The dissertations ascertain that mediation remains a significant component but fails to explicate the detailed narratives.

For RQ2, the concept of IC is yet to be realised in the provision of training programmes, although a well-trained interpreter carries a better bargaining chip in both skills and negotiation.

To summarise, first, this document analysis has reemphasised the relevance of the research questions since the data suggests that interpreters practice IC in various interpreting fields by performing mediation. Second, based on the examination of 36 MA dissertations, which primarily focused on Thailand's interpreting practices, inferences can be drawn from a few of these individual studies that intercultural competence is a fundamental skill for Thai interpreters. However, what the research lacks is actual accounts of intercultural encounters that can corroborate what constitutes intercultural competencies, which I see as critical for interpretation.



## 6 Chapter 6: Findings

This chapter focuses on the empirical interview findings. These will be presented under three sub-themes to address RQ1 and will end with one sub-theme in view of RQ2. The findings come from interview data, vignettes and primary questions, and the drawings from the River of Experience activity. First, I will introduce the demographic information, while explicating the current context of Thai interpreting practices, particularly in view of existing professional requirements. The section discusses intercultural aspects concerning interpretation and seeks to address RQ1 in light of three themes: (1) a journey to becoming an interpreter, (2) culture-related practices and challenges for interpreters, and (3) core ICC characteristics. Lastly, it presents IC education aspects to address RQ2 in light of one theme: intercultural communication education with four sub-themes—interpreters' prior understanding of ICC, levels of interpreting training received, studying intercultural communication, and teaching interpretation and intercultural communication.

### 6.1 Demographic Data

The participants were 40 professional Thai–English interpreters. I define ‘professional’ as an individual who receives remuneration for undertaking interpreting work. I categorised the participants into three experience levels. Years of experience were not treated equally to expertise. This understanding is due to the lack of a governing certification body in Thailand (Australian Embassy in Bangkok, 2016), implying that the categories required a reference system. In the process of regrouping, participants were classified into 1–4 years of experience as *beginner*, 5–15 years as *intermediate*, over 15 years as *highly experienced*, and those with *overseas qualifications* (levels of experience specified). However, participants may be categorised according to their roles as students, trainers, and/or interpreting specialisations and languages, relevant to the research questions. Participants were asked for their preferred pseudonyms; however, some asked to be randomly assigned a name (See Table 9-1, Appendices, pp. 406–410).

Categorising interpreter roles turned out to be far more complex than expected (i.e., part-time or full-time, volunteering for charitable causes, having a partial role

as an interpreter within broader working roles). Some participants reported having interpreted sporadically, which signifies that the three levels of experience offer approximate reflections of their skills and aptitudes (See Table 9-1, Appendices, pp. 406–410).

## 6.2 Current Interpreting Contexts in Thailand

The following discusses the Thai interpreting landscape and several distinct features that characterise its uniqueness: (a) journey as ‘ad hoc interpreters,’ resulting in an accidental career path; (b) newness of training programmes; (c) lack of career path; and (d) linguistic diversity amongst Thai interpreters.

First, regardless of the language pairings, the interpreter’s career is generally underdeveloped in terms of acquiring licensing. There are no license requirements in Thailand for translators (Australian Embassy in Bangkok, 2016) or interpreters, and this was reflected in the interview data. The data indicates that one-fourth have been appointed to work as ad hoc interpreting staff, mostly in public sectors, simply because of their English skills. This is despite these interpreters having no prior interpretation background.

The second characteristic of interpreting in Thailand is the newness of training programmes. Limited access to education begets complicated trajectories for those wishing to become professional interpreters in Thailand. For example, not knowing which degree to pursue or having limited access to education outside Bangkok (Chalermprakiat Center of Translation and Interpretation, 2020).

Informed by both the secondary and empirical data, the third feature of interpreting in Thailand is a lack of career advancement, forcing most interviewees to work as freelancers with little to no career advancement. This is confounded by a heavy reliance on informal networks that can lead to ineffective job finding (Nuchanong, 2008), and inadequate work hours for specific languages that can lead to an inability to apply for accredited certifications.

Fourth, according to the participants' demographics, Thai–English interpreters are linguistically and disciplinarily diverse because limited jobs have necessitated interpreters of other languages to do Thai–English interpreting jobs. Thai interpreters of other languages include Spanish, Korean, Italian, Lao, Japanese, Mandarin, German, and Portuguese, listed in no order of importance. Such replacement suggests that there are interpreters with arguably less training experience in English interpretation working in Thailand. They also reported as having worked in various disciplines.

In terms of interpretation modes, most of the participants have experienced SI and CI. Seventeen have done whispered, and one has experience in sight translation. The former means that the interpreter is located near the participant(s) and simultaneously whispers interpretation directly to the participant(s) or into a bidule or a handheld device (Diriker, 2015), while the latter is the verbal translation of a text in written form (Chen, 2015).

In what follows, I present the table of themes and sub-themes.

Table 6-1: Table of Themes and Sub-themes

RQs	Sources of Data	Main Themes and Sub-themes The writing order will start from theme A > B > C and ends with theme D in section 5 in order to explain where IC lies in interpretation as a career (RQ1) and explore the current lack of IC education (RQ2), respectively.
	Section 1 (Interview section)	Demographic classifications
RQ 1 What does intercultural communicative competence entail in the interpretation industry in Thailand?	Section 4 (River of Experience)	<b>Theme A: A journey to becoming an interpreter</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A starting point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educational path</li> <li>● A non-conventional path <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doors of opportunity (Mentoring &amp; Networking)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Critical crossroads</li> <li>● Heightened exposure to foreign culture</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General challenges</li> <li>● Covid-19 challenges</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Rewards of the interpreting profession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Intrinsic rewards</li> <li>● Extrinsic rewards</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Section 2 (Vignettes)	<b>Theme B: Culture-related practices &amp; challenges for interpreters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conveying deeply-embedded Thai practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Common Thai societal features</li> <li>● Thai superstitions and spiritual investments</li> <li>● Seniority and hierarchy</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Cognitive dissonance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Socially-led expectations</li> <li>● Professionally-led expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Humanitarian act</li> <li>- Legal and professional practice</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Ethics in interpretation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ethical, legal, and diplomatic interventions</li> <li>- Equivalence vs amendments in interpretation</li> <li>- Minimising misunderstandings and uncertainties</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Interpreters' lack of familiarity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interpreting regional dialects</li> <li>● Conveying humour</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<b>Section 3 (Research-focused questions)</b>	<b>Theme C: Core ICC characteristics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understanding of nuances and cultural references</li> <li>○ Open-mindedness and adaptability</li> <li>○ Intercultural experience and exposure</li> <li>○ Research skills</li> </ul>
<b>RQ2</b> What is the importance of intercultural communication in interpretation classrooms and training programmes?	<b>Section 5 (Research-focused questions)</b>	<b>Theme D: Intercultural communication education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interpreters' prior understanding of intercultural communicative competence</li> <li>○ Level of interpreting training received             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formal training</li> <li>- Informal training</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Studying intercultural communication             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of intercultural communication in education and alternative learnings</li> <li>- Intercultural communication: practised, but not explicitly realised</li> <li>- Intercultural communication knowledge for the interpretation classroom</li> <li>- Practical insights into delivering intercultural communication lessons</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Teaching interpretation and intercultural communication             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching license requirements</li> <li>- Intercultural communication curriculum designing and teaching examples</li> <li>- Teaching limitations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 6.3 A Journey to Becoming an Interpreter

The journey to becoming an interpreter is my point of entry into an exploration of RQ1. I will present the findings by elaborating on the participants' journeys and the challenges and obstacles they encountered en route to their respective career attainments (theme A). While the section will help the readers understand the motives behind their entries into the profession, the primary objective is to underline the role of culture, which often influenced and shaped their journeys.

The first sub-theme I discuss is *a starting point* through the River of Experience (RoE). The participants were asked to reflect on their journeys as interpreters through a drawing of a river, with each riverbank representing a personal or professional milestone. Thirty-six out of 40 participants drew RoE diagrams and explained the meanings of their respective drawings. As a heightened flexibility method (Iantaffi, 2012), their drawings complemented the findings by providing nuanced insights into their journeys.

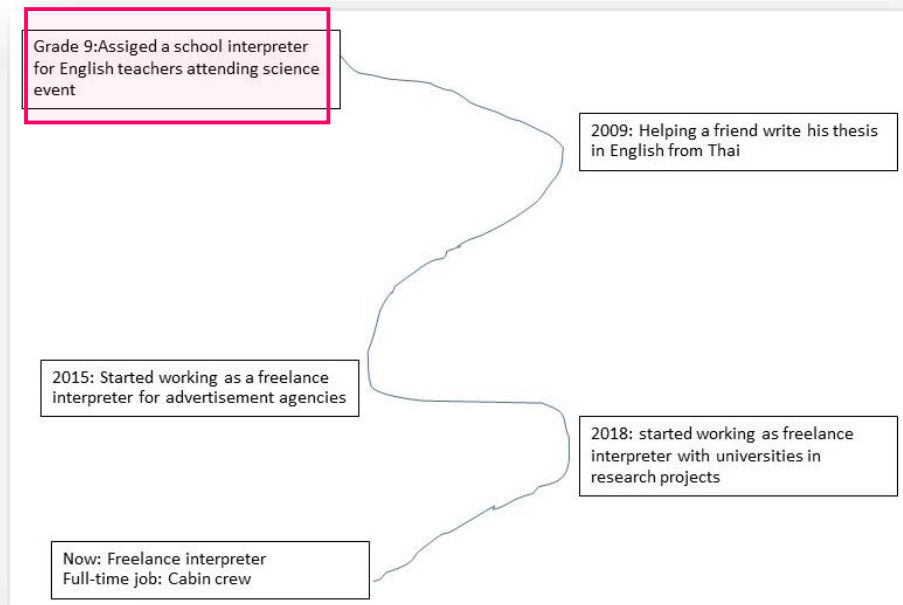
### 6.3.1 A Starting Point

While about a quarter of participants pointed to the English education they had received, nearly three-quarters of them reported their entrance into the interpreting world was an unexpected opportunity.

#### 6.3.1.1 Educational Path

All the experience groups expressed that engagement with English through privileged education and early nurturing at home had possibly influenced their career choice. For example, in the following extract, Magnus, as intermediate level interpreter who has worked in marketing and academic research fields, tells me about his experience growing up in a bilingual household:

I have grown up in a family where they speak.. Thai and English interchangeably... that makes me... outstanding in Thai public school.  
(Magnus\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)



**Figure 11: Magnus' Nurturing with English Being Put to Test for the First Time**

From the quote, we also see that a routine of speaking English at home suggests that Magnus may have had a more natural language acquisition than most Thais. Indeed, his English skills could be considered exemplary in grade 9, as he was the school interpreter for special events that foreign teachers attended (see Figure 11). Likewise, Cherry, a beginner interpreter, emphasised that she was 'lucky' to have received special weekend English classes, giving her a competitive edge.

These two interpreters' first exposures to English seemed to have contributed to sharpening and building their language expertise, which was later formulated into professional interpreting skills.

When analysing the by-product benefits of English education, some interviewees reported that their proficiency in English empowered their career opportunities:

I never did any translation or... interpretation before... Maybe because of my international qualification and... my experience abroad, my boss assigned me to do... a lot of consecutive interpretation.  
(Paul\_beginner\_4\_yrs)

I just want to do [an undergraduate degree] anything that's in English... I guess I picked up a lot of English proficiency.

(Claire\_intermediate/NAATI\_15\_yrs)

In the first quote, Paul's superiors, in assigning him to interpret, demonstrated their trust in his linguistic proficiency and enhanced cultural understanding from overseas study. Likewise, in the second quote, Claire enrolled in an international programme in Thailand because she wanted to study English. Regardless of the disciplinary discrepancy, she is now applying her linguistic skills as a NAATI interpreter in Australia. In Claire's case, then, fifteen years as an interpreter may not be entirely attributable to an English-taught course, but the course seemed to have led her in the professional direction in the years that ensued. Overall, both participants' insights attest that the learning of and upbringing with English had placed them in a higher professional position than others, while successful inculcation of English, informally or formally, had wisely been converted into a professional advantage later in life.

Only five out of 40 subjects from beginner and intermediate groups learned interpreting at the undergraduate level—an uncommon example of individuals who studied a Bachelor's course in interpretation and still practice interpreting. The following extract is a beginner interpreter Fabia who elaborates on her experience as an interpreting student (Figure 12).

I took the liaison interpreting course... I found it very interesting... I also took conference interpreting course because I would like to challenge myself. (Fabia\_beginner\_4\_mths)

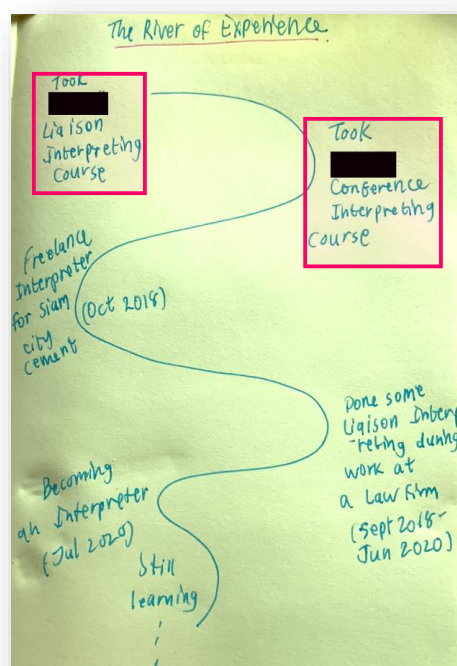
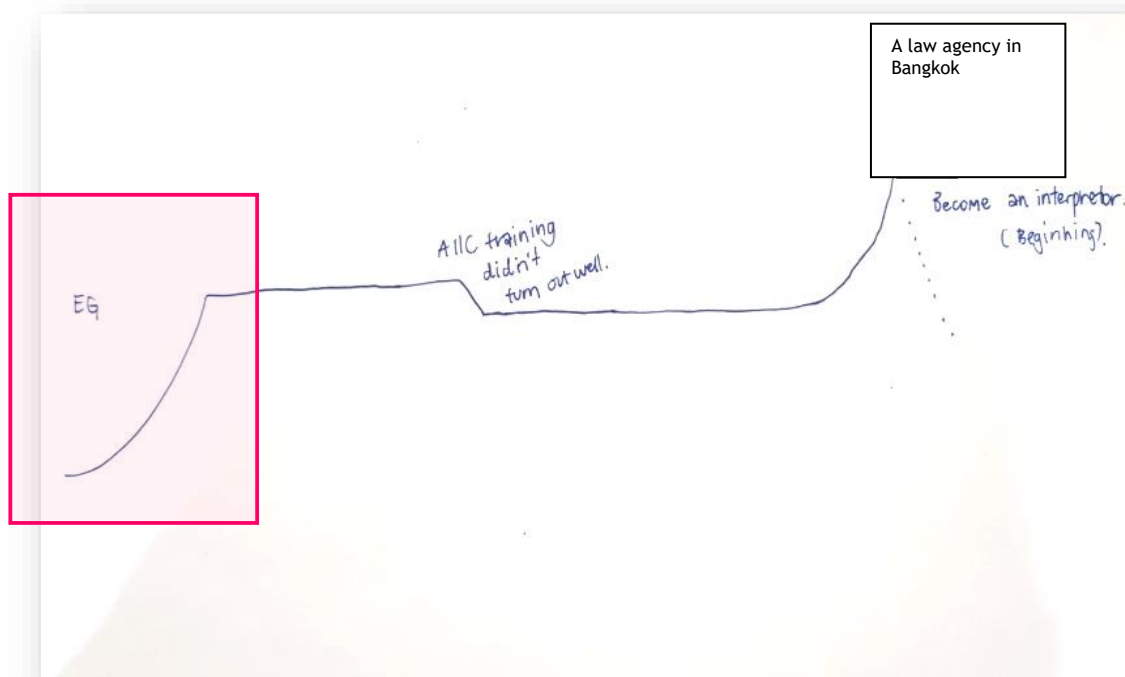


Figure 12: Fabia's Undergraduate Classes

Despite her regret for taking the classes, Fabia became a professional interpreter for a Thai beverage conglomerate immediately after graduation.



Patricia, an intermediate level interpreter, reminisces about her days being an interpreting student.



**Figure 13: Patricia's First Graph 'Increase'**

For a comparable student experience, the interpretation courses for Patricia, meanwhile, provided a hands-on positive practice experience. 'An increase' in her life graph (Figure 13) signifies tremendous benefits from attending the programme. It may be argued that undergraduate classes are effective for beginner and intermediate levels.

However, Jeff, a highly experienced interpreter, highlights why undergraduate classes are exclusive to beginner and intermediate individuals in the following:

Now you have to remember that 20 years ago, there was no teaching of interpretation in Thailand at all.... At the moment, there are people like me who teach interpretation, whereas, in the past, there were none. (Jeff\_highly\_experienced\_22 yrs\_translated)

Jeff attributes it to a lack of educational structure in the country, approximately from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. No subjects with over 15 years' experience or international certifications were educated in Thailand.

Furthermore, the following figure shows a combination of specific expertise and language proficiency which was found to be crucial to Tammy's, an intermediate full-time freelance interpreter, success:

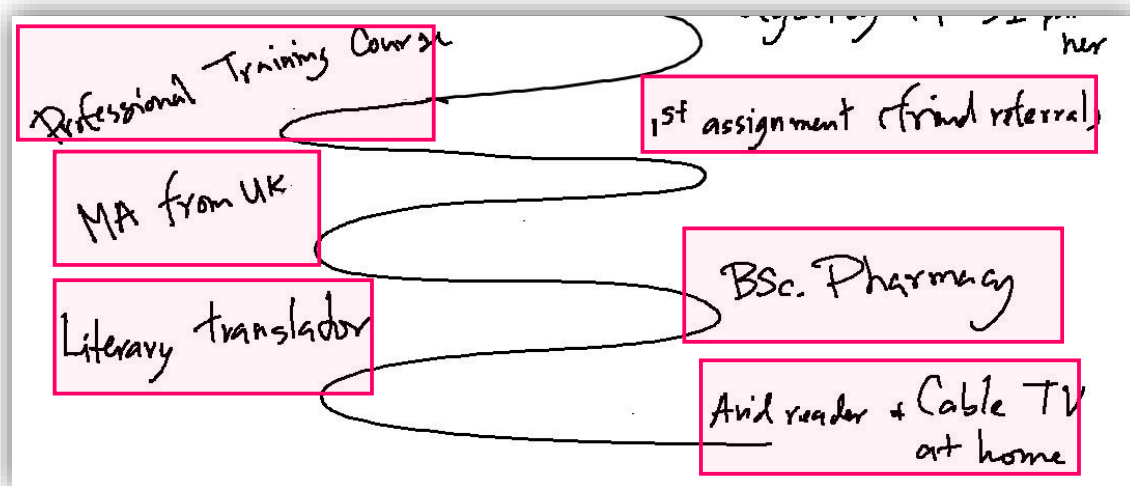


Figure 14: Tammy's Combined Knowledge of English and Pharmacy

As shown in Figure 14, after earning a Bachelor's degree in pharmacy and a UK Master's degree, Tammy's friend referred an interpreting job to her because of her 'unique' knowledge of pharmaceutical topics. This participant's journey is a series of 'building blocks' where the following pieces are assembled to make a well-rounded interpreter: extensive reading of English texts, consistent exposure to English, and advanced knowledge of the pharmaceutical language. This illustrates that her specialisation opened doors to an interpreting career.

Similarly, Jeff's, a highly experienced interpreter, interview data revealed that a secondary education in automotive mechanics and welding was a unique skillset that paved the way for him securing an interpreting job in mechanical fields.

Both Tammy's and Jeff's insights point to the early inculcation of a foreign language and a specialised branch of knowledge leading to a privileged position in the interpreting job market. No beginner participants, however, experienced such a trajectory the educational system has recently improved, providing a more direct career pathway. When comparing the number of those who have an undergraduate degree to the graduate level, three participants earned a graduate degree in interpreting. Two of which are domestic degrees and one from overseas.

Overall, seven participants attended short training programmes, accounting for the most frequent number. For a few others, the credit for introducing them to the interpreting sphere came from discipline specialisations and not any particular interpreting degree.

### 6.3.1.2 A Non-conventional Path

Approximately three quarters of participants reported their entry to interpreting as being unplanned and based on the incidents that introduced or forced them into the profession. Participants used descriptive words to elaborate on the uncertainties and constant fluctuations in their drawings (e.g., messy, long and winding, full of inlets, up and down, wavy, and sharp curve).

A salient characteristic that emerged from the drawings was the unanticipated undertaking of a small interpretation task or an opportunity that offered participants access to the interpreting profession. The data demonstrates that the presented opportunities resulted from their position, professional connections, or simply from a windfall career opportunity, as illustrated in the following quote from Lily:

When [her colleague] resigned, I had to do the solo interpretation... I had opportunities to do it on my own. (Lily\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)

A colleague's unexpected resignation meant that Lily had to fill the vacant position. After being in this inadvertent position, her confidence as an interpreter was boosted.

When analysing the beginning of the timelines, impactful events at a young age acted as inadvertent agents of inspiration for some participants, which encouraged positive consequences, such as highlighted in the following quotes:

the first time I have seen the interpreter,  
the simultaneous one sitting in the booth...  
that inspires me... kind of sparked me...  
I was thinking... were they even human?  
How... they could do that?...  
How you could listen and speak at the same time?  
(Mark\_beginner\_1.5\_yrs)

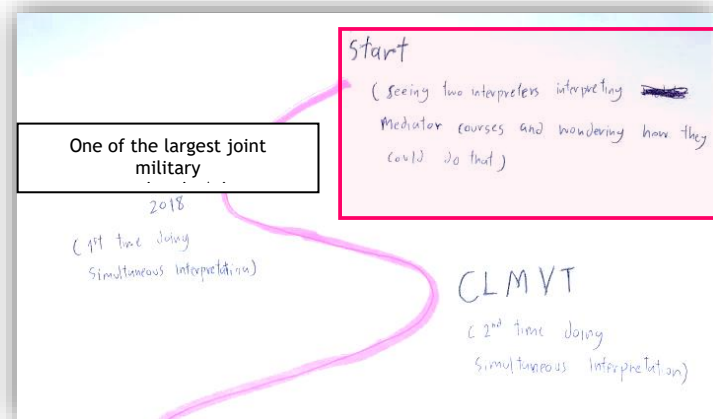


Figure 15: Mark's Beginning

Somebody hired me to translate love letters. And I got paid like 100 or 200 baht for love letter (£2-4). (Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_30\_yrs)

The positive consequences highlighted in the quotes result from the position, professional connection, or a windfall career opportunity. Mark, for instance, was fascinated by the brain's interpreting mechanism after observing a simultaneous interpreter (Figure 15), whereas a US-certified court interpreter, Sunisa, reminisced about her days as a 16-year-old student being hired to translate for a small amount of money. Such modest but significant moments demarcated the beginning of Mark's career and Sunisa's well-established career over three subsequent decades. Such observations suggest that early engagement with interpretation experiences may have been a catalyst for subsequent career decisions for most Thai and non-Thai participants from all experience levels.

A quarter of the interviewees built further successes on the basis of their first work opportunities. More than half of this group suggested that taking on an interpreting job resulted from their work experience, an important step that either bolstered their interpreting skills or boosted their confidence. A quote from Clara, a beginner level interpreter, highlights this phenomenon:

I failed miserably on my first try [interpreting SI]... I understand English, but I couldn't translate anything into Thai... I felt that maybe SI wasn't for me. (Clara\_beginner\_4\_yrs)

Clara's first attempt with SI was far from a success. However, once she paired the type of interpretation with her expertise and the topics related to construction and

materials, she began receiving travel opportunities to interpret overseas events (i.e., embassy events and travelling to neighbouring countries). Her experience characterises a common theme among the participants, where accumulating work experience fosters potential and skill development in interpretation.

Still, there were unexpected insights where stories implied that interpreting could segue into other career opportunities in the following extracts from Harris, a beginner non-Thai interpreter, and Jeff, a highly experienced Thai interpreter:

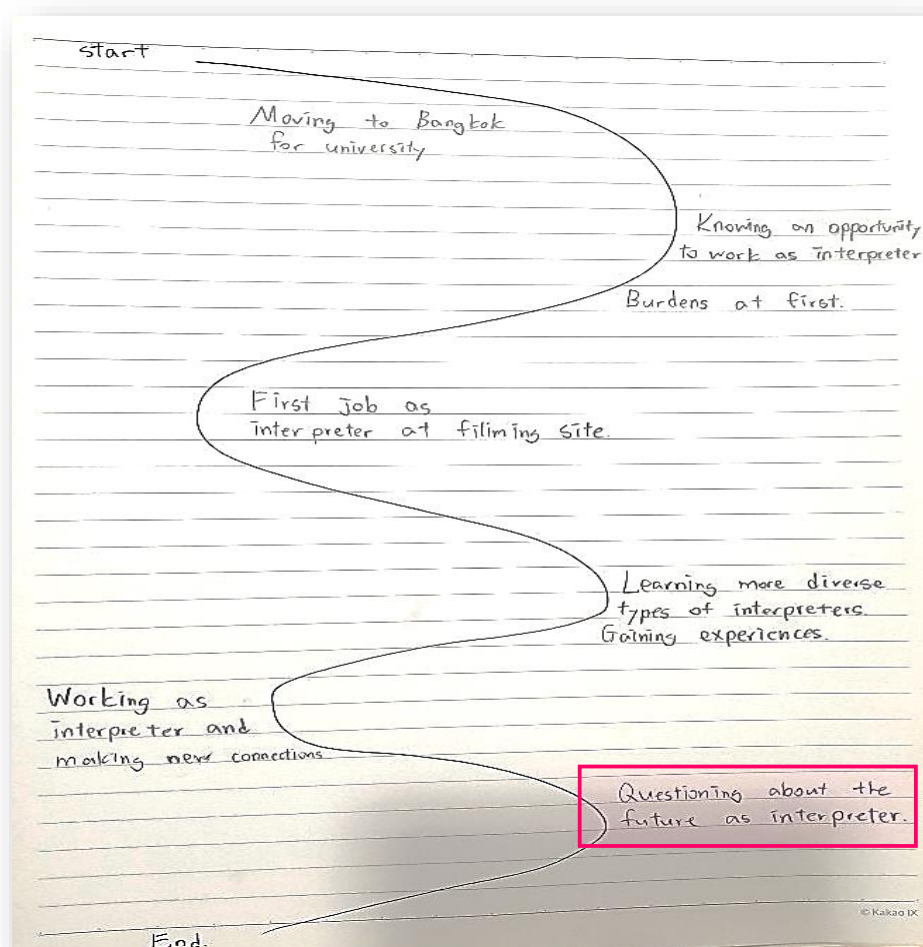


Figure 16: Harris' Unexpected Discovery

I get to know the business people...  
 that also made me open my eyes to...  
 another type of jobs that there are in the world.  
 (Harris\_Korean\_beginner\_3\_yrs)

After I interpreted for... [a company] for three or four years, they started their factory. And when the business started operating, they asked if I could help them.  
(Jeff\_highly\_experienced\_22\_yrs\_translated)

As Harris acquired the ability to interpret, he observed the professional connections attached to the interpreting role (i.e., whether interpreting should remain a long-term career or a greater opportunity awaiting him—the final curve in Figure 16. Correspondingly, Jeff turned his interpreting role into that of a business partner. His interpreting expertise in a technical discipline became an indispensable contribution to the company's operations with regard to locating customers and dealing with employees. Overall, these participants' insights illustrate a focus on advancing to other possibilities.

#### 6.3.1.2.1 Door of Opportunity (Mentoring and Networking)

This section will elucidate and exemplify how acts of mentoring and referring may pave the way for new networks and other opportunities. The following quotes are shared by Hector, an intermediate part-time interpreter, and Rawee, an AICC interpreter.

I was not there [at the UN Conference] because I was good [at the English language]... I was there because I happened to... know someone... who was leading a team there.  
(Hector\_Intermediate\_10 yrs)

...my translation and interpretation jobs happened by accident. I wasn't really looking for them. A friend asked me to help him during a group discussion with some people in a small room. (Rawee\_AICC)

Hector genuinely admitted that his first experience was merely due to his connections and others' perceptions of his English proficiency. Likewise, an interpretation job for Rawee seemingly came about 'by accident' as she was approached to assist in SI for a small group discussion. Such a small step led to her discovering a talent for translation and a new career path—Rawee is now professionally licensed by a world-renowned certifying body.

In similar ways, ad hoc interpretations also tend to be a frequent occurrence in higher education, as illustrated in the following two quotes from Ava and Omaki who are both interpreting lecturers at a Thai university:

I was assigned to interpret... ad hoc at certain meetings, but I didn't do well at it. I had no training. I had no idea what to do. So, I was just pairing up words. (Ava\_AIIC)

...the Department wanted to... train the teachers... [to] prepare them to teach the course. (Omaki\_Beginner\_3 yrs)

In Ava's case, the opportunity presented was initially hindered by her lack of expertise. In turn, the opportunity did not initially lead to the anticipated purpose but to a feeling of remorse for her poor performance, which she put down to a lack of training. Likewise, Omaki admitted the need for further teacher training with a view to delivering the course more effectively. Undertaking a teaching position due to the lack of staff, she signed up for an interpreter teacher training programme while acknowledging that she 'knew very little' about interpreting. Although both Ava and Omaki had to teach out of necessity, they have subsequently produced quality graduates who became practising interpreting professionals.

A few participants articulated that they entered their interpreting career because of the study programme they were attending, such as Alan, who conveys this through a part of his RoE as shown in Figure 17.

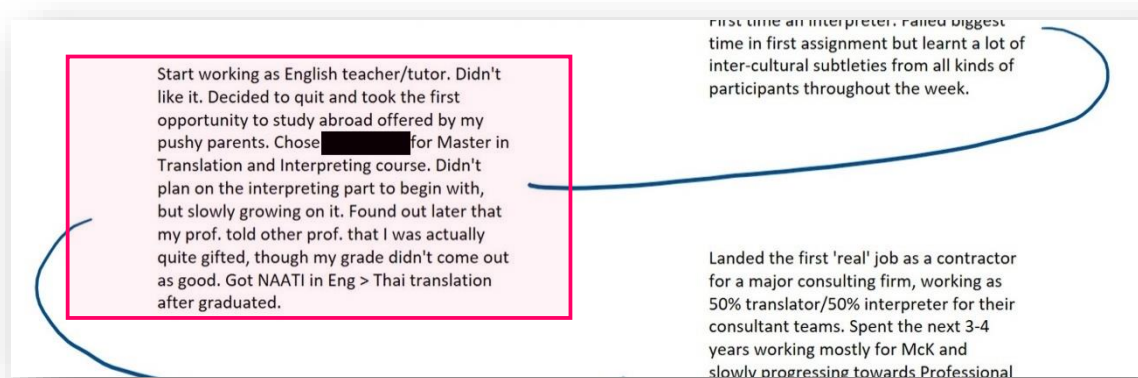


Figure 17: Alan's Journey (intermediate/NAATI\_12\_yrs)

Having obtained a Master's degree in translation and interpretation from an Australian university, Alan wrote as a milestone [the highlighted inlet] that the

initial plan was not to be an interpreter after graduation. The subsequent shift in his plan was due to a professor's compliment that propelled him to pursue a career as he 'slowly [progressed] towards professional interpreter path.'

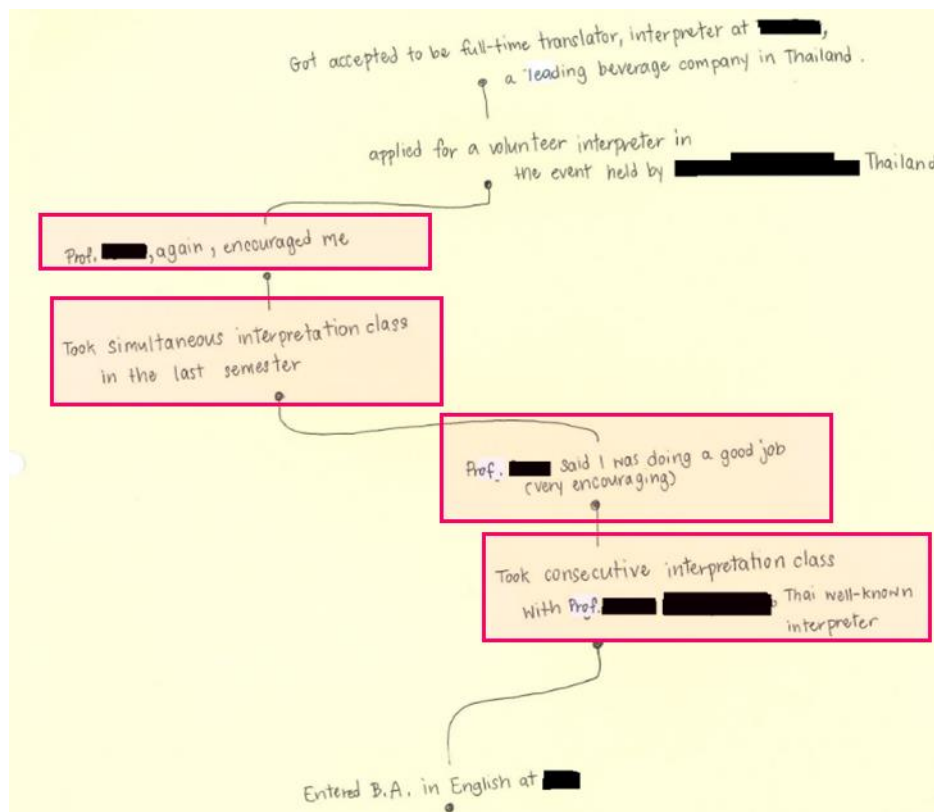
Sunisa, on the other hand, had to develop advanced Japanese to produce a dissertation while studying in Japan. As her Japanese became proficient, she used the skills to interpret for the local government offices (e.g., when dealing with Thai labourers or sex workers).

Both of these participants illustrate the salient expansion of a received education, which arguably led to a practical application of newly gained linguistic and interpreting abilities. Additionally, interpreting in overseas locations at a young age could lead to an understanding that the participants would have almost certainly required more intrepidity and self-initiation to bring their skills to the test.

Nearly a quarter of the interviewees fall into the category of being mentored (i.e., having an experienced interpreter recommend work techniques and job-finding tips). Daisy tells me about her experience being in the classroom in the following extract:

it was the professor's encouragement. That's the biggest bend [milestone]... if I wasn't happy in that class, I wouldn't... go any further.  
(Daisy\_beginner\_1\_yr)





**Figure 18: Daisy – ‘Prof. [...], again, encourage me’**

Daisy mentioned the name of the same professor multiple times, emphasising that the professor gave her emotional support that led her to pursue a career as a beginner interpreter (Figure 18). It is fascinating that the mentioned professor, Ava, who was actually one of my other participants, shared a similar career path and speaks highly of her former mentor, as shown in her quote below. The mentoring and career guidance Ava received was necessary because those wishing to participate in the Thai job market must ‘know the right people’ through ‘word of mouth or references on the CV.’

The interpreting market is not a job market where you walk into a company, and you say, I want to apply for a job... you need to associate yourself with the right people, provided these people want to associate with you. It’s very very difficult to get that chance. (Ava\_AIC)

Similarly, Olivia, a university professor at a top-tier Thai university, and Gary, an interpreter trainer at a renowned institute, had been mentored by their own professors before they began interpreting. On the one hand, their insights express

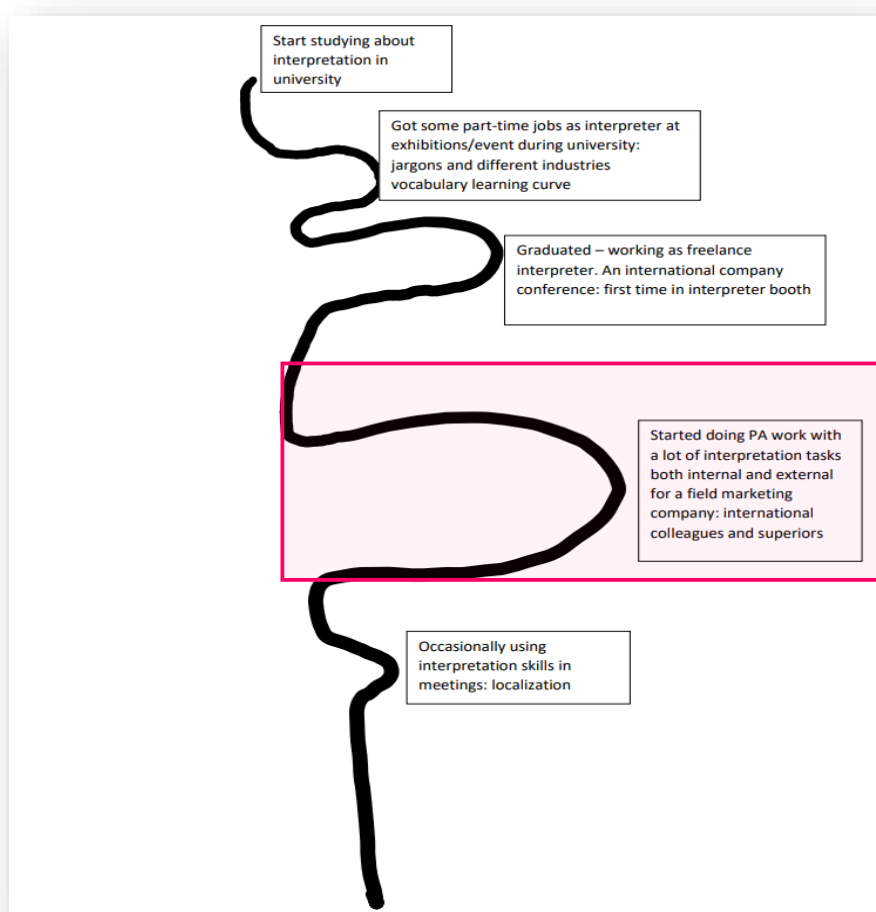
that the interpreting sphere in Thailand may be grounded on networks of highly educated connections, specifically for a small percentage of the data, whereas a substantially larger group did not receive the same opportunity. Despite the small number of mentors and mentees in the data, former mentees eventually developed themselves to be interpreters or mentors, creating another learning chain.

In summary, those interviewed took advantage of the opportunities through two reported pathways: the educational path and the non-conventional path. Whether interpreting abilities are acquired entirely by accident or through strategy is a topic for further debate (read seminal works of Nida [1981] and Mackintosh [1999]). However, in the EU context, European professional interpreter characteristics are formulated in HE classroom training (Runcieman, 2018) although their competence may be gained later and improved through working in the context (Duflou, 2016). In Thailand, coincidence appears to be at the core of reasons for all experience levels (e.g., being asked to interpret on the spot without preparation or being hired to do small translation or interpretation tasks). Most RoE stories demonstrated a necessity to interpret despite some of the participants' lack of confidence and experience in interpretation. Nevertheless, the RoEs also revealed that meaningful events at a young age were a healthy source of inspiration for future career directions. These observations illustrate Thailand's current hiring situation in the interpreting studies context, which suggests that having connections may be equally crucial to being equipped with professional skills. Conversely, taking the first steps to self-learn interpretation requires individual courage and dedication. Their accounts show their journeys were practical and realistic (i.e., introducing and referring jobs to potential interpreters who are deemed to have the qualities required to interpret).

Consequently, to embark upon an interpreting career in Thailand, a person seemingly has to start without much establishment in place. Here I argue that it brings great hopes for Thailand because for a country to systemise career paths for interpreters, it is normal to undergo a phase of trial and error; see the first time SI was introduced at the Nuremberg Trials (2.1.2.1, pp. 35–37). Given the reported lack of uniformity in how interpreters were initiated into the profession, this suggests that a River of Experience for Thailand would have considerable room for reform in regulatory, curricular, and practical domains.

### 6.3.1.3 Critical Crossroads

Critical crossroads consist of moments when participants made important decisions that somehow caused a sudden change in their lives. For nearly 50% of participants, the first critical crossroad involved a decision that altered the course of their career trajectories (i.e., undertaking an interpreting job/a training course or resigning from a permanent position). The following drawing and quote are from Scarlett, an intermediate level interpreter, who elaborates on her transition of her role as a part-time to full-time interpreter.



**Figure 19: Scarlett's 'big curve'**

I drew a big curve there because it [interpreting] has become... my full-time job before it was [just] a part-time. (Scarlett\_intermediate\_10\_yrs)

The curve highlighted in Figure 19 signifies the moment Scarlett took on a new role with field marketing responsibilities where interpretation would be integral. The critical crossroad that provided her with interpreting opportunities for international colleagues and superiors was the switch from being a freelancer to a full-time employee.

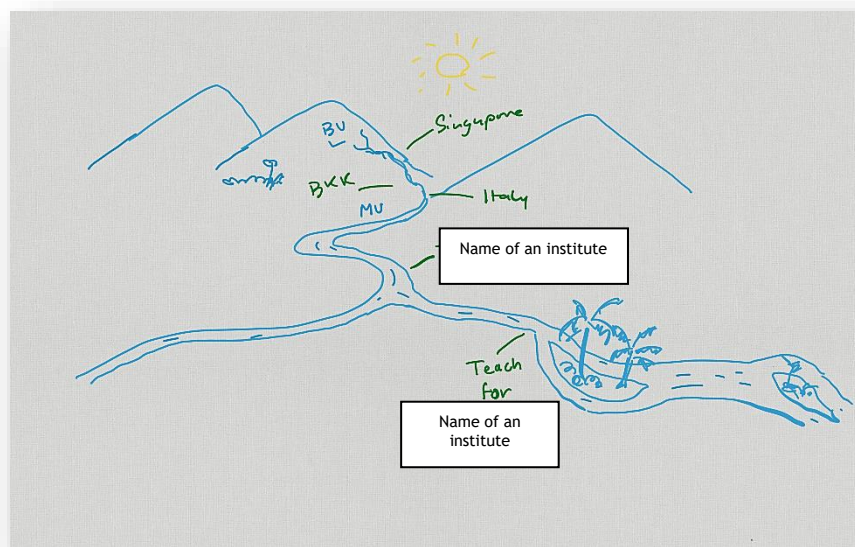
Another participant, Rawee, shared two critical crossroad points that greatly affected her life, each of which are shown in the following extract from her interview:

Leaving the [office].... Because I was unhappy working as a government official.

There were no members [AIC] in Thailand... One AIC member... listened to my translation at one international conference. After the meeting, he... told me to start to collect records of the works that I had done in the past. (Rawee\_AIC)

The first crossroad for Rawee was deciding to move on from a government position. As the participant is one of the country's most senior interpreters, a government position may have been considered a safer career choice. Her second crossroad was applying to be a pioneering Thai AIC member. The application process included compiling work records and having existing AIC members evaluate her interpretation. The turning points became the introduction to a meaningful and extended career.

Furthermore, a quarter of the interviewees reported having been through moments of talent discovery, such as when a person reflects on their skills and links their talents to a future career. Figure and quote below are about Gary's interpreting experience, an intermediate level interpreter.



**Figure 20: Gary's Crossroads to Exuberant Nature**

When... you teach, you get some learnings out of that teaching... You can use your experience working as interpreter to... contribute to your teaching job... (Gary\_intermediate\_14\_yrs)

Taking a training course brought significant changes to Gary's life (Figure 20). After attending the programme, his job branched into two streams: language localisation and interpreting. His current path is populated with trees, inferring the opportunities and the resources from the new position while language localisation faded. He now has a reciprocal relationship with teaching and interpreting.

Likewise, another participant, Olivia, uncovered her interpreting skills and learned about her potential opportunities. When she realised that she 'could do it,' interpreting became a financial source (as shown in the extract below) and an intellectual enhancement.

when I did it [interpreting] as a student, I felt like I could depend on it [financially]. (Olivia\_highly\_experienced\_27\_yrs\_translated)

Through moments of understanding their interpreting potential in both stories, these participants' discoveries led them to embrace an interpreting career.

At their crossroads, most participants articulated that they had career aspirations that encouraged them to further their interpreting career. Career aspirations

present aspiring moments that moved those interviewed to pursue a career in interpreting.

The following extracts and RoEs are taken from beginner, Fabia and Tuapap, and intermediate level interviewees, Kate. Their goals were to extend themselves beyond their limitations:

...every bend [is] resulted from curiosity. I want to challenge myself. I want to know if... I could do better. Or... that's the limit.  
(Fabia\_beginner\_4\_mths)

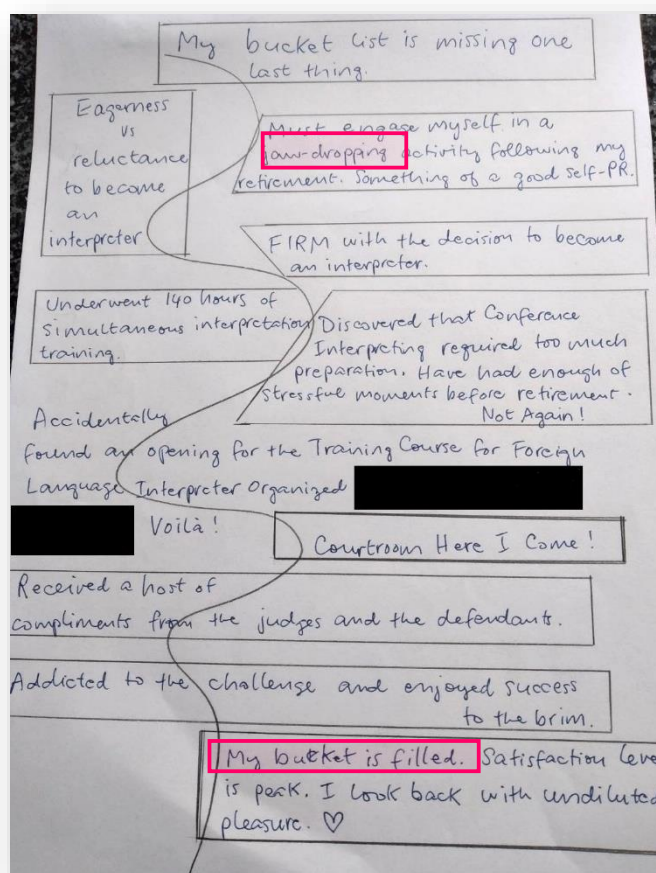


Figure 21: Tuapap – ‘My bucket list is missing one last thing’

being an interpreter is jaw-dropping at my age [66].... The word itself ‘*ล่าม*’ [interpreter] explains the ability of a person to be a fast thinker, fluent in speaking, and it's a good self-PR. (Tuapap\_beginner\_1.4\_yrs)

It's [interpreting] very challenging. It's very fun. It requires a lot of energy and preparation. And it kind of shows me that my capacity does not have a limit. (Kate\_intermediate\_8\_yrs)

The answers from beginner and intermediate level interpreters were challenge-based, and demonstrated excitement and enthusiasm, for example, to perform their best or to start a new career. Fabia's response to the most significant milestone was summarised by her interest in a newly started job. Every milestone has contributed to and helped her get to where she is today. Tuapap invested 46,000 baht (approximately £1,000) in a training course despite being a retiree. She uttered that she would hate seeing herself turn into a 'senior citizen.' Such zest to embark on a new journey demonstrates career aspirations as her confident voice was paired with inspiring words, such as 'jaw-dropping' or 'undiluted pleasure' in Figure 21.

In addition, interpreting seems to be an intellectually engaging activity. With eight years in the industry, interpreting still challenges Kate. Every time she interprets, she states that fluency in both languages, being aware of the jargon, and the 'arts' of predicting the cultural context are essential for a successful session.

Meanwhile at the highly experienced level, participants' answers appeared to be more structured according to their master plans:

I wanted to be an interpreter trainer when I reached 40, and when I reached 40ish, I actually became an interpreter trainer just like how I planned it. (Jeff\_highly\_experienced\_22\_yrs\_translated)

What inspired me was seeing the market, full of so many bad interpreters.... It's not their fault, and I think the way to solve the problem is to give them the training. (Ava\_AIIC)

As opposed to the excitement and curiosity in the previous groups, Jeff's answer displays phases of planning. Since he has focused on reaching a long-term goal, the professional steps taken have not surprised him. Ava's opinion that the job market was full of incompetent interpreters drove her to become a professional interpreter. The word 'professional' refers to an internationally accredited certification by AIIC.

Moreover, Ava wished to elicit change by establishing proper training programmes for Thais, which illuminates a personal and overall goal for the industry (i.e., distinguishing herself from other interpreters and uplifting the industry standards in the long term).

The majority talked about personal moments that encompassed achieving life ambitions, such as being inspired by a live TV interpreter (Sky), witnessing a simultaneous interpreter in action (Mark), simply challenging oneself (Fabia and Tuapap), or improving the quality of interpreters (Ava). Moreover, while beginner and intermediate experience level participants believed that partaking in interpreting represents a quest to develop one's ability towards a new topic, the highly experienced participants reflected on establishment, stability, and trust in the profession.

#### **6.3.1.4 Heightened Exposure to a Foreign Culture**

Early cultural exposure, which mainly encompassed cultural immersion through education or privileged overseas experience, occurred in nearly a quarter of those interviewed. For instance, when asked about her most important milestones, Kate pointed to two river bends comprising a 10-month exchange programme in a US high school and a two-year Master's degree in a Nordic country. She stated that she was never 'inspired' to be an interpreter, but spending time overseas enabled her to execute interpretation by developing her academic vocabulary. Other Thai participants underwent an analogous experience (e.g., Olivia's earning of a Spanish Master's degree improved her linguistic competence, and an excursion to Japan pushed Becca to use English for the first time). Below is an extract from a non-Thai interpreter's, Gavin, about his first study abroad years:



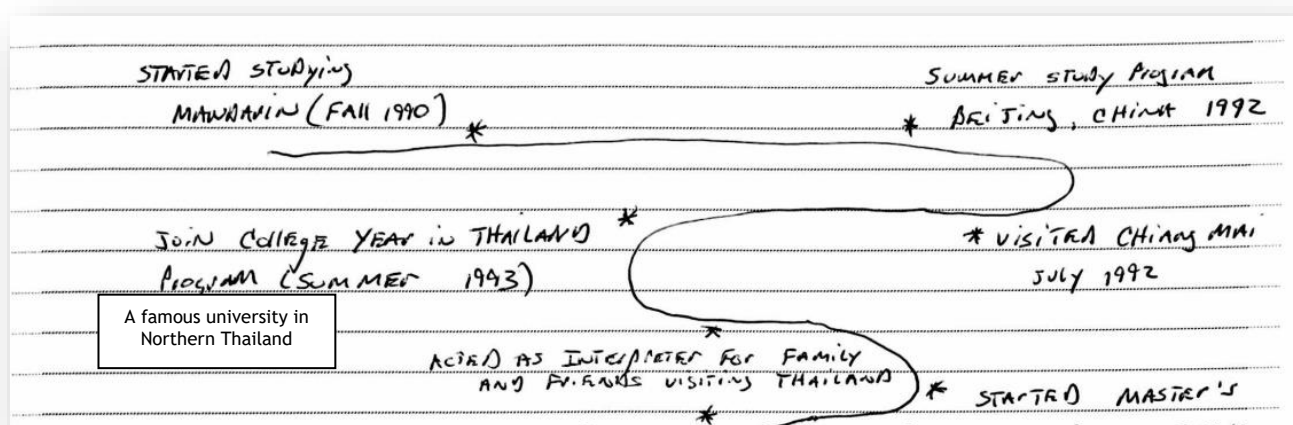


Figure 22: Gavin's First Exposure to Other Cultures

I had a summer intensive language programme, ten weeks of studying Thai [in 1992]... [I] was brought over to Chiang Mai and studied for a year... (Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

For the non-Thai participant, his first contact with Thai culture occurred three decades ago at a 10-week language exchange at a famous Northern Thai university. As his Thai improved, Gavin became an unintentional interpreter for family and friends. The ten weeks appear to have broadened his cultural understanding of the other side of the world. The same could be said with the previously discussed experience of Thai participants, Kate and Olivia, whose experience abroad helped acculturate them to the differences between other cultures and theirs. Their interpretation career would have been an unlikely scenario without critical time spent abroad. Overall, their first-hand experiences with foreign practices at a young age directed the interviewees' lives towards interpreting as they began utilising cultural and linguistic exposure for their career benefits.

## 6.3.2 Challenges

### 6.3.2.1 General Challenges

This section illustrates the general challenges of the unfamiliar and challenging nature of interpreting that the participants encountered as they became interpreters. Nicholas, Helen, and Olivia talked about their challenges as follows:

...coming a stream and then suddenly a waterfall in July, I was thrown to do simultaneous. Just like that! It was my first simultaneous job.  
(Nicholas\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)



**Figure 23: Nicholas' Waterfall**

Nicholas represents one of the few participants whose first experience of interpreting involved being unexpectedly 'thrown' into a booth or a meeting.

My employer... was quite hard on me... he would wear a headset, and he would listen to me... he would walk in and send me a paper and say... I'm interpreting 80% of what the speaker says. He wants 100%.  
(Helen\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

Helen's employer heavily monitored her early career's simultaneous sessions. Little did she know that undergoing such embarrassment of being heavily monitored would establish healthy work referrals with the employer for the years to come, demonstrating that interpreting is not an easy task, as many interviewees testified.

In terms of simultaneous interpretation, we [her colleague and Olivia] failed miserably. We tried to help each other, but at one point, we went

blank, and the whole room turned to us and was like, what's going on with the interpreters? (Olivia\_highly\_experienced\_27\_yrs\_translated)

At the highest level, Olivia's first SI failure marked a starting point of a learning journey as she improved by taking a course.

Failure stories put a meaningful start rather than an end to some of the participants' careers. They reminded the participants that practice and dedication are essential ingredients to success in interpreting (Gillies, 2013).

When examining the educational challenges, the educational background arguably affected the journey of the intermediate and highly experienced groups positively, as shown in a quote from Alan, an intermediate level interpreter:

I couldn't really comprehend how to turn a formula into values.... I didn't know that I couldn't read the math formula.... I could not replace X with a Y. (Alan\_intermediate/NAATI\_12\_yrs)

First, from his interview data, Alan's struggles during junior high years with science classes (e.g., biology, physics, and mathematics) created a crossroads, upon which point he realised that language was the path he was meant to walk. Being good at languages gave him confidence and propelled him forward.

Another topic focuses on overqualification. For the highly experienced group, the two Master's degrees Jeff had earned before the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis struck Thailand made him overqualified during the crisis. An absence of work opportunities and a high educational profile forcibly guided him to pursue a freelance interpreting career.

Both discussion points above represent the intermediate and highly experienced participants' resilience in their learning and adjusting (i.e., fine-tuning their plans to fit their goals or responding to growing demands).

### 6.3.2.2 Covid-19 Challenges

The 2019 pandemic caused an unprecedented change in the way people live. Life was full of uncertainties. Indeed, almost a quarter of the participants shared insights and drawings that suggested the rhythm of interpreting work was disrupted by the disease (i.e., fewer international visits, opportunities, and heightened difficulty in online interpreting and teaching).

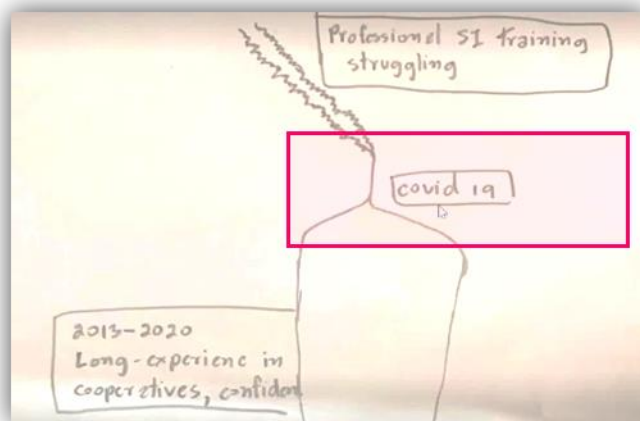
The reason why there is only one [interpreting event] [is] because now it is during the Covid-19 pandemic. (Paul\_beginner\_4\_yrs)

Paul, an ad hoc interpreter for a government agency, no longer hosted guests from overseas, which caused a decrease in interpreting tasks.

...with the online meeting because you never get to talk to your audience. You'd never get to see their responses or reactions when you spoke. (Gary\_intermediate\_14\_yrs)

Gary observed an adverse practical impact of online interpretation through the absence of directing responses from the audience. These responses, which were related to sudden disruptions, were expected during the pandemic. However, the importance lies on the unexpected positive side of the disease, as shown in the following quote, which is from Jo, an intermediate level participant, who had frequently interpreted as part of her job without any training before the pandemic.

I had... an eye for this course... three-month course, and it would require some time... and then I just happened to take it also because of the Covid, then I don't have to travel. (Jo\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)



**Figure 24: Covid-10 Motivated Lily to Take an SI Training Course at a Crossroads**

...when Covid came... all the jobs gone... because I saw that people lost their jobs, I have to take it seriously. (Lily\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)

As evidenced in the above extracts, the effects of Covid played out in Jo and Lily's favour (i.e., enhanced time flexibility leading to self-improvement opportunities). The pandemic was the catalyst for Jo to develop an extra set of skills by taking a professional training course. Likewise, Lily realised how vulnerable and unstable the job market was. Thus, at this critical Covid-19 crossroads (see Figure 24), learning to be a conference interpreter became her 'backup plan.' The career challenges imposed by the pandemic, led these two participants to undertake their first strides into the industry, which they overcome as lesson accomplishments.

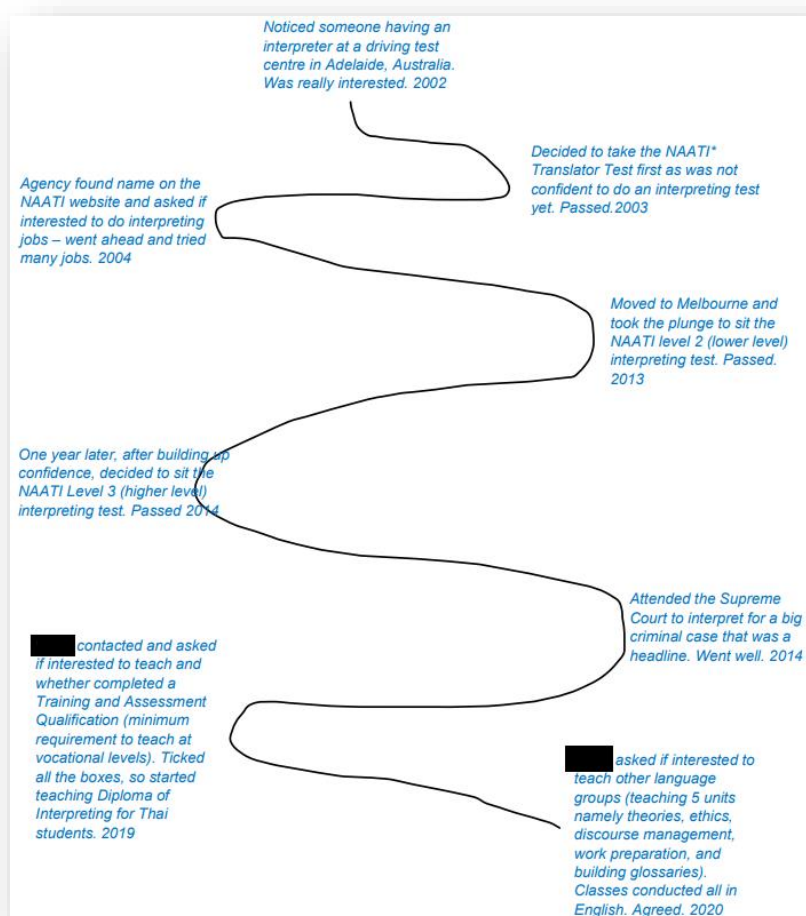
Overall, Covid-19 challenges encompassed implications such as fewer international contacts and reliance on remote interpretation. Non-Covid-19 challenges involved practical and work-related struggles that participants reported encountering, mainly at the beginning of their career (i.e., interpretation difficulty due to inexperience, or realising the importance of consistent practice). Moreover, despite the struggles, perseverance and dedication were identified in approximately 25% of the interviewees.

Two of the following three extracts come from participants with qualifications from Australia and the US. First, Mark is a beginner interpreter who is looking for a permanent interpreting position.

I failed [a work aptitude test] the first time, and then I tried the second time. I still failed. After I failed the second time, I trained myself... like almost every day. (Mark\_beginner\_1.5\_yrs)

The beginner exam that interpreter Mark sat was organised by a Thai company. Although Mark notes how he failed the exam twice, after daily self-training, he recently passed the exam and was waiting to start his career.

Next is Claire, a NAATI interpreter who underwent a series of tests.



**Figure 25: Claire Overcoming a Series of Exams**

...if you fail, it's a waste of money. If you pass, you don't get paid much more anyway.... But... it's rewarding... it's not about money or monetary value. (Claire\_intermediate/NAATI\_15\_yrs)

Claire went through a series of advanced certification exams despite passing an entry-level certification test in Australia. Doing so meant that the fee would have been her loss if she had failed.

Lastly, Sunisa, a participant with the most experience years, tells me about her early days of being an interpreter:

...in 1995, they had this new exam that... all interpreters had to take, and I was the first one to pass this exam... Some people say that it's harder than passing the bar exam. (Sunisa\_highly\_experienced/US-certified\_30\_yrs)

Advancing in the interpreting profession goes beyond ‘monetary’ returns. At the highest experience level, Sunisa pioneered her way as the first registered Thai interpreter in her state by passing a newly introduced mandatory exam. There are now approximately 20 Thai and Lao registered interpreters.

Overall, participants at all levels exhibited traits of perseverance, which may be construed as a form of dedication that is vital for career building. They seemed to have overcome the challenges, both Covid and non-Covid, and used them to their advantages.

### **6.3.3 Rewards of the Interpreting Profession**

Despite the challenges the participants experienced, they also experienced numerous successes. Accordingly, this section presents a compilation of memorable and satisfying moments, organised into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors encompass more profound experiences, such as being pleased with self-performance, or getting gratification from helping others. On the other hand, extrinsic factors relate to the superficial pleasures of an experience, such as working with fame or gaining access to restricted places.

#### **6.3.3.1 Intrinsic Factors**

More than half of the participants shared moments when interpretation had been well-performed or helped people’s lives. In such moments, a sense of joy and satisfaction is shared between the clients and the interpreter, such as evidenced from the remarks of Olivia and Omaki in the following extracts:

When they walk up to you to give compliments, that is the most satisfying.  
(Olivia\_highly\_experienced\_27\_yrs\_translated)

...before the job, you need to work really hard to prepare, and then once you establish... the right dynamic... [if] you can keep this... dynamic until you finish... the post-job feeling is good. (Omaki\_beginner\_3\_yrs)

Complimenting is one way to convey a feeling of satisfaction from the giver (client) to the receiver (interpreter). For Olivia, the most satisfying moment is when the clients compliment her interpretation. She used this as a way to self-evaluate her



performance. Furthermore, some find joy in having a well-executed job (i.e., having a well-prepared session that leads to good quality outcomes, having educated batches of students who go on to become professionals, or being taken to a restaurant as a sign of gratitude). As in the second example above, good preparation led Omaki to ‘establish the right dynamic,’ which became a memorable moment.

The most prevalent intrinsic category was associated with the social influence and impact on clients, as exemplified in a quote from Rawee:

...what I found most satisfaction was when I worked for people who could not really understand English... it was more satisfying than helping people who already know the language to a certain extent. (Rawee\_AIIC)

Rawee felt that her interpretation impacted the most upon those who do not speak English. It may be construed that her interpretation meant more to the clients who only spoke Thai. Likewise, in his interview, Nicholas posits that any misinterpretation could present an ‘error’ that is catastrophic to all lives involved when working with a military team. He gives the example of working with the US to demine bombs in Southeast Asia, which attests that providing the best interpretation could ‘save lives’ and ‘bring people together.’ Both experiences seemed to make a difference in human lives rather than simply leading to superficial rewards.

When examining court interpreters, five participants reflected on the influence of their work since it directly deals with social issues. Two quotes from Tuapap and Gavin, respectively, highlight how this can lead to satisfied clients:

I said... why are you ‘waiing’ me? [Why are you presenting me the Wai hand gesture?] And one of... the ladies said to me, my boyfriend told me that you interpreted so well. (Tuapap\_Thai\_beginner\_1.4\_yrs)

When I was sitting at a desk in the police station and... a Westerner walked in and they would look at you, and you’d see the instant sense of relief on their face. (Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

When relatives of Tuapap’s customers gave her the wai gesture (a sign of respect in Thailand), it demonstrated that the interpreters’ work was meaningful in a dire court situation. Gavin, meanwhile, finds that an ‘extremely rewarding’ experience

can be a simple moment, such as when a Western person sees him and expresses a sudden relief, ‘oh, thank God, do you speak English?’ The sentence conveys a level of trust from the individual whose anxiety has been alleviated by an interpreter who is well versed in the local language. Overall, these two examples demonstrate that intrinsic factors are related to moments when their interpretation can make a positive change in peoples’ lives.

### 6.3.3.2 Extrinsic Factors

Since the interviewees have worked closely with prominent people, their presence with famous individuals inevitably gives them a sense of importance. Here are Hector and Tammy sharing their moments of extrinsic achievements.

...it’s a once... in a lifetime experience [interpreting for the PM]... I felt like I was representing the country in a way. So, it was... really significant... for my feelings and for my identity.  
(Hector\_intermediate\_10\_yrs)

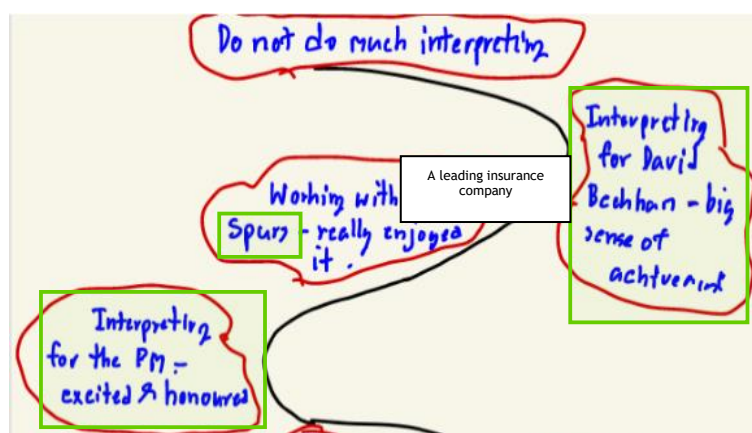


Figure 26: Upper Section of Hector’s RoE

For Hector, the first milestone was a ‘once in a lifetime experience’ when he interpreted for the Thai Prime Minister. He proudly felt that his interpretation had represented Thailand. The second was interpreting for David Beckham, which he expressed as ‘the most important milestone.’ While the football content was relatively easy, meeting the world-renowned footballer made it memorable. In Figure 26, we see that this moment represents his penultimate bend before taking a break from interpreting; he rarely interprets now, implying that he may have reached the peak of his interpreting career.

...being an interpreter allows me to go to places where you don't normally have the authority to get in. (Tammy\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Tammy's most memorable experience was when she was granted access to the ID card factory. She realised how susceptible identification documents were if they fell into the wrong hands.

The experiences of both Hector and Tammy signify the trust and special treatment offered to them.

Almost a quarter of the 40 participants, mainly from intermediate and highly experienced clusters, expressed that their position has given them special access to restricted places, such as parliamentary offices/buildings and a prison, as well as famous figures, such as Barack Obama, Joe Biden, and Kofi Annan. This illustrates that an accumulation of experience may be needed for working on a significant event. Furthermore, the extrinsic factor is not merely about fame but the exclusivity of the experience.

In conclusion, evidence suggests that intrinsic values applied to more than half of Thai and non-Thai interpreters at all levels, while significantly fewer participants were drawn to extrinsic factors. Those interviewed were prone to give importance to engagement with human activities—cultural activities included.

The theme of 'journey to becoming an interpreter' will be discussed under the topic of ICC in Chapter 7.

## **6.4 Culture-Related Practices & Challenges for Interpreters**

This theme comprises situations where interpreters report interpreting culture-related practices and facing intercultural challenges. These situations may be moments when clients from two or more different cultural backgrounds clash. Three sub-themes emerged: (1) conveying deeply-embedded Thai practices, (2) cognitive dissonance, and (3) interpreters' lack of familiarity.

## 6.4.1 Conveying Deeply-Embedded Thai Practices

This theme elucidates the interpreters' linguistic inability to produce equivalent interpretations through a compendium of the target-accepted language translations: common Thai societal features, Thai superstitions and spiritual investments, and seniority and hierarchy.

### 6.4.1.1 Common Thai Societal Features

About 50% of those interviewed believed that Thai interpreters are amiable and helpful based on a 'non-confrontational' approach, ranging from the reported 'kindness' due to Thailand's social structure to how Thais organise their narratives. Tuapap is a retiree who has recently started her interpreting career.

Thai people carry themselves mostly in a respectful way... maybe you bend your body a little just to show that you are listening carefully with respect. (Tuapap\_beginner\_1.4\_yrs)

Tuapap concentrates on how Thai people 'carry themselves' through verbal and body language, which contradicts the gestures and the strong rejections portrayed in the Vignettes where interpreters seemingly adhere to the professional role (See Video Vignettes 1 & 2, Appendices, p. 410). When asked further about the appropriate approach to 'carry' herself, Tuapap said that making eye contact with the client would help elevate the situation.

Another expected characteristic is being helpful towards others, which is something that Julia commented on in her interview, as the following quote highlights:

If I see something happening, I would automatically help people. (Julia\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Julia went on to express that she would help the patient 'out of [her] habits' because most Thais pay less attention to personal boundaries. Helping older patients is more pivotal than upholding professional responsibility.

When analysing the insights of non-Thai interpreters, they provided similar answers without attributing them to any unique Thai characteristics, as the following two extracts illustrate:

He's [the interpreter] not explaining his role clearly enough.... He's also taken it to the point where he's not tried to build trust with... the client. (Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

If it was me, I would be sharing my... stories a bit, so I would actually get close to the person. (Harris\_Korean\_beginner\_3\_yrs)

In his interview regarding the vignette, Gavin believed that the interpreter had missed the opportunity to 'build trust' with the client by explaining what his role is and what can be expected from it. Correspondingly, Harris supports that introducing one's background to 'get close' to the client would be acceptable since misinterpretations are prone to occur without trust.

When comparing nationalities, Thai participants at all levels agreed that if the interpreter were Thai, they would be hospitable towards the patient. The two non-Thai interpreters provided similar explanations without attributing such acts to a characteristic of Thai culture. This limitation reminds us that most of the participants and the researcher are of Thai origin; thus, cultural bias could present one-sided positive reflections about their own group. The non-Thais' insights were unexpected, but they broadened my perspective as a (Thai) researcher.

Several participants mentioned a conglomerate of compound nouns with the word heart or 'ใจ' [heart] in Thai, which are distinct character traits associated with considerations of other feelings. The following three key extracts exemplify this:

In court, there're almost always arguments. So, I just want to show my 'น้ำใจ' [water heart] to him, or he has to show his spirit... I just want to get his 'น้ำใจ' [water heart] too from him (Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_30\_yrs)

...the Thais would feel the same way. It's like, why is this guy [the Vignette 1 interpreter] being so cold. I mean, he's 'ใจดำมาก' [very black heart]. (Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

We have this like ‘เกรงใจ’ [being considerate]... where we don’t speak things... directly or clearly. (Pam\_intermediate\_9\_yrs)

When practising court interpretation, there have been occasions when the concept of ‘น้ำใจ’ [water in heart] manifested itself from Sunisa to the plaintiff or vice versa. Sunisa told her story by pairing the concept of ‘nam-jai’ with the word ‘spirit.’ When interpreting, she wishes to show her ‘น้ำใจ’ [water in heart] to her client as long as the person shows their ‘น้ำใจ’ [water in heart] to her. Sunisa has even prepared a set of English words in case these concepts present themselves when interpreting. This indicates that some values are profound and require interpreters to decipher the meaning before translating.

Gavin, on the other hand, pointed to the scene where the interpreter is being unhelpful and presented the word ‘ใจดำ’ [black heart], which refers to being cold and heartless in Thai. The idea of having ‘namjai’ [good spirit/good heart] without a ‘jai-dum’ [black heart] refers to a person with a good spirit who is socially desired. Gavin’s understanding of the concept seems to be reflected through a distinct disagreement with the interpreter’s behaviours.

Likewise, others wish to see the interpreter with more qualities of being indirect, gentle, and helpful, voiced through the concept of ‘เกรงใจ’ [being considerate, grengjai]. Pam, for instance, shares her opinion that being considerate may restrict the choice to be direct when communicating, potentially presenting a clash between cultures (i.e., one attempting to be polite, whereas the other may deem it as a technique for evasive communication).

An intermediate-level interpreter, Lily, echoed Pam’s point that the approaches to communication in Thailand can be evasive. Sharing her experience of interpreting for Thai farmers whose speaking is not easy to follow, Lily states the following:

A lot of times they’re not answering the questions. They [are] answering what they prepared. (Lily\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)

Lily went on to explain how she responded to a question, ‘Who is *ท่านนายก?*’ [Who is the Prime Minister or Chief Executive?] wherein the ambiguous word ‘Prime Minister’

was uttered by one farmer when he said, ‘ท่านนายกครับ’ [The Prime Minister or Chief Executive - ambiguous title word]. After a few exchanges, the participant learned that the word ‘prime minister’ was used because the person—presumably the Chief Executive of the local municipality—often acts entitled, as if he were the PM. While the reason for such an ambiguous use is not fixed, farmers may have wished to avoid using the actual title or the person’s name.

#### 6.4.1.2 Thai Superstitions and Spiritual Investments

Thai concepts require an in-depth understanding of the Thai context. Nearly all participants had interpreted concepts related to religious and spiritual Thai ideas, such as ‘ทำบุญวันเกิด’ [birthday merit-making], ‘ศาลพระภูมิ’ [spirit house], and ‘เจ้าที่’ [guardian spirit]. Tammy, for example, shared her experience of explaining the concept of Thai spirituality to a European family.

...this European family who think that their house is haunted, and they end up hiring some exorcist team and seer there... there’s ‘เจ้าที่’ [guardian spirit]... the ghost that protected the land... were not happy because the European bring in... lots of relics from other religions.  
(Tammy\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Tammy went on to explain how she found the process of explaining the Thai ‘guardian spirit’ concept to European clients difficult. The so-called guardian spirit residing in a spirit house, a small shrine in a Thai home, is believed to have a mediating role in the phenomenological happenings (Pearce, 2011). Such cultural specificity indicates that the interpreter would have to interpret the process of Thai exorcism and ensure that the clients fully understood the motive behind the belief, which may contradict clients’ beliefs. Spiritual beliefs are intrinsically cultural, which would have required the interpreter to go beyond equivalences by ensuring that a common understanding has been reached (i.e., coexisting with or pleasing the house’s guardian spirit). On the contrary, Tammy talked about all the mentioned concepts to the researcher, a Thai person, without explaining them, which could be a demonstration of the commonality of the idea amongst the Thais.

At the highest experience level, Sunisa shares two common Thai practices that could be deemed criminal acts in an American court:

Thai people would change name four or five times... in America, if you change names that often... you have committed a lot of crimes and you want to... conceal... you want to hide yourself.  
(Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_30\_yrs)

According to Sunisa, criminals in the US may change names to conceal their identity, while Thais change theirs for auspicious reasons. The American jury could view a Thai defendant with multiple names as attempting to create a new identity. Such a view could influence the jury's final verdict; there is arguably room for the interpreter to rectify between the two parties.

Furthermore, a series of rich and detailed observations from one participant, a long-term foreign resident of Thailand, Gavin, illustrated the Thai practice of 'spiritual investment.'

...this employee made an offering to the shrine [Vignette 3], with the hopes that the company would have greater wealth. In essence, it was an investment on the part of the individual for the company.  
(Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Gavin's perception of the Thai donation is that of a 'spiritual investment' for the greater collective wealth. It is an individual well-wishing that reaps non-negligible mental returns. Gavin used the term spiritual investment to elaborate on the event. As a long-term foreign resident of Thailand, Gavin seemingly understands that donating on behalf of a company—financially or non-financially in the form of a purchased gift—is done to boost the overall morale of the collective group.

A Thai person who experiences tough times has several instant remedies available to them, such as making merit at a temple or consulting a fortune teller. Alternatively, in some countries, consulting a psychologist is more socially acceptable when a person goes through difficult times. Gavin further explained the practice of remedying an inauspicious car colour to support this argument. Picking an auspicious car colour is a karmically important milestone in Thailand. When the colour of one's car does not resonate with the owner's fortune, putting up a bumper sticker of 'your car is blue' would fix the owner's luck. These practices are a valid psychological mechanism based on a tradition that needs to be mediated to people of other cultural backgrounds. Such examples from Thai and non-Thai participants



call for interpreters' intervention (i.e., it is the interpreters' obligation to navigate the differences). If the interpreter were to produce an equivalent translation without an IC explanation, the audience would likely find the interpretation insensible (i.e., the audience might end up being puzzled by the tradition).

#### 6.4.1.3 Seniority and Hierarchy

Echoed by approximately a quarter of the participants, the third sub-theme relates to Thai social hierarchies based on age and desired manners towards a person's age. The most often mentioned cultural norm is a widely-practised concept of seniority as a cultural perception, including respecting elders, which highly influenced the interpreters' thinking.

Age is reported as a critical factor in interpreting. Apart from being asked to run trivial errands (e.g., making coffee, printing, and preparing documents) as a beginner interpreter, Daisy talked about an experience when an older staff member requested a translation task while interpreting. The addition hindered her interpretation—typing live translation while interpreting adds another layer of cognitive load and may affect the output quality (Stachowiak, 2014). Daisy emphasised that she could have declined the task had it not been for her age.

Similarly, an intermediate interpreter, Angie, stated that younger generations are not often given professional credibility, making their job more complicated (i.e., being questioned about her vocabulary choice). Although age was not considered, the two represented those not over 30 years old and in their early career.

Conversely, age can work in favour of older interpreters regardless of their interpreting experience, as highlighted in the following two quotes from Tuapap and Fabia, respectively:

By age, comes a certain amount of freedom, and at 66, life is a privilege...  
Just like fine wine, it gets better with age. (Tuapap\_beginner\_1.4\_yrs)

...you may call them [foreigners] like as a friend, even though they're ten years younger or older than you. But, when it comes to the directors here,

even though... they look like they blend in, but they only blend in with the people at the same level. (Fabia\_beginner\_4\_mths)

The sixty-six-year-old court interpreter, Tuapap, shared that the interpreting experience (as a senior by age) associated with younger judges has been exceptionally positive. Despite being a beginner interpreter, she shared a quote from her interpreter trainer that 40 is an optimal age for being an interpreter; for example, junior interpreters would find problematic defendants difficult to manage, possibly resulting in a replacement of interpreters.

Age seniority governs the corporate culture in Thailand. Not only are junior Thai staff obliged to pay respect to Thai nationals, but it also governs the treatment of foreign staff and executives, which often replicates that of the Thais. While the practice is not as rigorous, the corporate structure will often determine strictness (i.e., colleagues from the horizontal level are equals), while those in the vertical line are hierarchically higher or lower.

The following extract highlights the cultural implications of physical appearance related to the age of the interpreter:

I'm not expecting them to respect me because of my age... I want to be respect[ed] for my roles. (Pam\_intermediate\_9\_yrs)

Despite the executives being kind to her, Pam was not given enough respect as an interpreter. Moreover, being just 150cm tall, she said that she struggled with foreign executives, who treated her like a much younger interpreter. Pam expects to be respected for her role as an interpreter, which would make the job easier.

Akin to other societies, social stratification in Thailand may be determined by gender, age, occupation, wealth, residence, and other factors. This is arguably true when a person from an established higher social status meets a person of an established lower social status where subservience may be expected.

A few intermediate participants showed concerns about the scene in the vignette where the patient questions the physician's credentials due to his young age. Magnus and Tammy, for instance, made the following remarks:

...no matter how old you are in Thailand.... They [patients] kind of respect... when they... hear the word doctor.  
(Magnus\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

...the Thai patients are quite respectful to the doctors. I don't think they would... say that right into the face of the doctor.... But then he will complain a lot when he leaves.  
(Tammy\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

As the extracts imply, occupational prestige appears more socially significant than age seniority in Thailand. Regardless of the client's age, a sign of gentleness needs to be conveyed to the doctor. On a similar note, being indirect was said to be a factor in medical encounters. For example, Thai patients normally show respect to doctors, meaning complaints would not be expressed directly. Linked to the previous theme, these insights pertain to characteristics that emphasise consideration and being indirect towards others.

Focusing on the pinnacle of the social ladder in Thailand, beginner interpreter Clara said that Thai people often avoid explicitly talking about the monarchy. Clara's insight was both expected and unexpected because of (1) the pro-democracy movement during the interview and (2) topic sensitivity regarding the Thai monarchy. Clara's observations emerged in the following section of her interview:

...when people are talking about the King [Rama X of Thailand], they would say... the guy from... the route to German[y]... they will avoid mentioning the name [to avoid being prosecuted for defamation] ... also... the King mentioned [to his supporters], like 'ดีมาก เก่งมาก' [excellent very good]... It's like a mockery, in a way, so... it was very hard...  
(Clara\_beginner\_4\_yrs)

In this extract, Clara expresses her concerns about interpreting messages that ridiculed the head of the state. The stipulation of article 112 (see Streckfuss [2010]) indicates that any interpretation or translation of a negative remark toward the monarchy might be construed as a mockery or defamation. The message could be deemed offensive because talking about the monarchy in any critical sense could be considered illegal.

Amid political polarisation at the interview time (BBC, 2020), the decision to ‘skip’ the King’s speech ‘*ดีมาก เก่งมาก*’ may have violated the code of ethics and been viewed as censorship in the eye of the pro-democracy movement. As per the AIC (2022a, p. 3) Code of Ethics, under Article 10 of Fidelity of Interpretation, ‘Interpreters shall strive to translate the message to be interpreted faithfully and precisely.’ Censorship and self-censorship, the decision to do away with a message, are discouraged because when the interpreter censors the message, the message will likely be lost more than expressed. Choosing not to interpret the message could convey the gravity of the situation if the client senses the interpreter’s self-censorship.

More importantly, though, when an interpreter’s life may suddenly be in danger, interpreting a message that ridicules the King becomes a predicament that may be life-threatening. Therefore, during the interview, Clara received assurance from the researcher that the information would remain confidential and anonymous. Her experience demonstrates that an interpreter’s job deals with cultural values that require comprehensive knowledge of the context and appropriateness of filtering for the clients.

Clara’s shifting of roles (Venuti, 2008) suggests that being an interpreter requires the interpreter to decide which role is more appropriate to play. The ability to interpret and relate, or *savoir comprendre* (Byram, 2021), can enhance the interpreter’s performance as she weighs and compares differing value systems. Together, the interpreter would be in a more informed position regarding her roles and responsibilities, as well as having the necessary skills for interpretation.

#### **6.4.2 Cognitive Dissonance**

This section presents the interpreters’ decisions on giving assistance to the clients and on amending interpretations to minimise misunderstandings. Three themes emerged: socially-led expectations, professionally-led expectations, and ethics in interpretation. I will compare the dichotomy of the participants’ opinions between offering assistance as socially expected and refraining from giving aid due to legal limitations and will discuss the ethics in amending interpretation.

#### 6.4.2.1 Socially Led Expectations

While additional assistance could be considered a breach of the interpreting role, a quarter of the participants considered it a fulfilment of social expectations, suggesting that assistance may be greatly influenced by the cultural package one carries and the perception of the package by the other interlocutor.

Moreover, the participants were nearly unanimous against the interpreter's manners in Vignette 1 and believed that he had failed to fulfil the expected duty, especially to Thai expectations. The following participants even expressed that their actions may be an abrasive intercultural violation, while underlining the common nature of small talk when meeting in a foreign land:

...we [Thais] are pretty friendly and... we might... ask some personal questions to the other party. (Becca\_beginner\_1\_yr)

...a very stiff professional interpreter without a single ounce of humanity. (Sara\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

I would answer the question, evasively, maybe. If the patient wanted to know where I was from, I would tell the patient where I came from, and try to keep it short. (Rawee\_AIIC)

In her comment, Becca pointed to the desired Thai characteristic of overt friendliness, while at higher experience levels, participants tended to question the interpreter's actions. Sara, for example, considered the actions to be blatantly strict, while Rawee thought that confiding in an interpreter who speaks the same language in a foreign country should be culturally acceptable. She, however, also added that she would avoid further questions and briefly continue the conversation. Specifically, she remarked that the interpreter in the vignette could have politely kept the conversation short instead of harshly reacting.

Thus far, Thai participants of all levels have highlighted the urgency for handling personal questions as it is a socially anticipated practice and when meeting one another abroad. Comparably, the perspectives of the non-Thai participants exhibited an understanding of the practical and cultural challenges of the patient when abroad, such as highlighted in the following two extracts:

I would actually get close to the person... that way when he speaks something so then I would actually guess and understand what [it] is. (Harris\_Korean\_beginner\_3\_yrs)

...this individual who's already in a stressful situation. He's in the UK. He doesn't speak English... has had an accident... and now he has to try to navigate the healthcare system without any real assistance. (Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

As shown above, Harris views the stressful situation as an opportunity to know the patient, while Gavin regards the issue more analytically, and notes that there are greater 'psychological ramifications' for the patient. As the patient found himself injured on foreign soil where the language was unfamiliar, he received medical treatment from an unfamiliar healthcare system requiring physical and moral support. The fact that a fellow countryman is not being helpful would only worsen the situation from Gavin's point of view. Overall, the insights from the non-Thai participants emphasised that understanding and helpfulness are nation-free, while judgments to help shape the encounter to the cultural target, regardless of the interpreter's original culture, is learnable.

#### 6.4.2.2 Professionally Led Expectations

In terms of professionally led expectations, the more experienced participants proposed solutions to avert probing questions while also fulfilling cultural expectations within the professionalism. Sunisa, for instance, gave the following comment:

I usually pretend to be busy... like checking my email and reading news... on my phone... I would introduce myself and say that.. I'm here to interpret for you. (Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_30\_yrs)

By pretending to be pre-occupied, Sunisa's proposed technique signals friendliness and professionalism. If the client still wishes to continue the conversation, Sunisa advises finding a general topic, while emphasising spontaneous problem-solving with the ability to 'think quickly on your [one's] feet.'

While no pattern of answers according to the experience levels can be illustrated, the overarching recommendations urge the interpreter not to tell the patient to stop

talking but to use social cues and to politely detach themselves from the conversation, such as pretending to go for a smoke.

Professionalism is arguably contextually shaped and culturally construed in interpreting situations. Thus, while the one in-between is the interpreter, who deciphers any subtle codes and makes critical decisions, interpreting is still a context-dependent responsibility that is more than that of a mere conduit (Brashers & Goldsmith, 2009). Moreover, although it may be true that the interpreter should avoid personal stories, their role is characterised by an ability to ensure that the patient feels protected and serviced. This process requires open-mindedness to separate oneself from one's beliefs of professionalism and readiness to read the situation and satisfy the client's needs.

As an example concerning assistance in professional settings, a Spanish–Thai–English, Maluku, interpreter shared an experience of when additional requests came forward from patients:

...most of Thai people... try to help the patient, even it's not our job....  
if... the patient want a... glass of water, he will ask you for a glass of water.  
(Maluma\_beginner\_8\_mnth)

As the only Spanish speaker in an upscale hospital, coupled with the foreign patients undergoing exclusive medical operations in a foreign land with pre-operation stress, Maluma allowed the patients to confide in him (i.e., being contacted outside of work). The participant partly credits Thai norms for contributing to an increased understanding, which propelled him to perform his duties as a helpful interpreter.

Let us now turn to the scene in the vignette wherein the interpreter explains the interpreting protocol to the hospital staff and the client. The first group's opinions went against the vignette interpreter's approach, as illustrated in the following two extracts from Omaki and Alan:

I don't think... he should make it even more tense. If they [the clients] don't know how to... go about when they have an interpreter, then you have just to explain to them nicely and objectively.  
(Omaki\_beginner\_3\_yrs)

...as an interpreter, you're supposed to explain or educate your clients how to work with an interpreter properly, not just pushing things around like this. (Alan\_intermediate/NAATI\_12\_yrs)

In her remarks, Omaki reflected on the situation as a missed opportunity to convey the interpreter's role. As a result of the interpreter's approach, the scene is seemingly pursued by a series of awkward conversational exchanges. The added tension was unnecessary, and the explanation could have been systematically delivered, which may have eased the tension.

For Alan, he commented that the interpreter's role is to 'educate' the clients rather than cause havoc, suggesting that the role should no longer be constrained to an interpreting mechanism. He remarked that increasing tension does not seem to uplift the situation. According to Alan, the interpreter's understanding of the client's cultural background could characterise the event's outcome. The more the interpreter understands and can apply ICC skills to respond to the client's cultural values, the easier the task becomes. The fact that the interpreter tried to detach themselves from the conversation accentuates the failure to establish an understanding of the cultural context.

In comparison, a few intermediate participants, Pam and Betty, supported the interpreter's choice to ensure that the message was directed to the patient in the address change scene:

...when we do consecutive or whispering... I have to inform the persons to... address to... the speakers each way... This way... they can get the message across.... Because, otherwise, it [is] being addressed to me. (Pam\_intermediate\_9\_yrs)

In her interview, Pam goes beyond the superficial offensiveness and reasons that the interpreter tries to include the patient in the conversation. Pam gave underlying reasons to justify the vignette interpreters perceived vulgarity. First, the interpreter may receive excessive attention, while the actual receiver, or the patient, goes unnoticed. Second, the audience may forget the interpreter's role and become 'intimidated' and personal to the interpreter during a heated argument.



When he asked the hospital staff to direct the question to the patient,...  
it may look a bit messy... But ... he is showing respect to his client.  
(Betty\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)

Betty, meanwhile, supports the vignette interpreter's approach for its clarity, suggesting observation beyond the surface level and consideration of the interpreter's intentions. She appreciated the interpreter's explanation and deemed it as a sign of respect for his client.

Overall, for these participants, the benefits of clarity and inclusiveness outweigh a superficial presentation of friendliness and well-behaved manners. Furthermore, as mentioned in the initial context about the dearth of domestic licensing and regulations, the responsibility becomes more directed to the interpreter's obligation to monitor the situation and decide their role due to fewer formal rules. Taken together, both opposing groups of participants suggest that professionalism is flexible, negotiable, and contextualised.

#### 6.4.2.2.1 Humanitarian Act

A few participants, intermediate and highly experienced, supported assisting the patient in the vignette. The assistance would be an alternative to the client's request as a 'humanitarian' act. Elizabeth is a full-time university lecturer who teaches IC who occasionally works as an interpreter, while Rawee is a highly experienced interpreter from AIIC.

He should go back... to the receptionist with him and asked for bus times...  
(Elizabeth\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

I would help him get a taxi... and help him by translating to the taxi driver  
about where he wanted to go... but... would not let him ride in my car.  
(Rawee\_AIIC)

The least and the most experienced, Elizabeth and Rawee, respectively, advocated helping the clients. Although Elizabeth was not certain whether the work contract had ended, she suggested referring the patient to the hospital information area, where transportation options could be arranged. Rawee's suggestion was slightly more reserved. Driving the patient in her car would give him more opportunities to bombard her with personal questions, and avoiding this would diminish the chance

of such a situation. However, she supported offering assistance (e.g., hailing a taxi and suggesting transportation options).

Overall, while driving the patient was not an option for some participants, others felt 'obligated' to 'arrange' a small degree of aid as a middle ground despite going beyond professional boundaries. The insights from this group demonstrated a highly negotiated and well-balanced compromise between professional and cultural expectations or an approach that does not exceedingly violate ethical or cultural responsibilities.

The vignette presents a difficult situation as the interpreter's actions are governed by the professional expectations from their work and the sociocultural expectations of their fellow citizen from the same motherland. For those who do not come from those social spectra, being a medical interpreter in the UK with an Urdu and Pashto speaking background, it would be difficult to be aware of the considerations being taken into account unless the insights from the interviewees are included. The interpreter, in many cases, is the one who is responsible for the most legally and interculturally appropriate decisions. As natives of Thai culture, most of the Thai participants would have found themselves trapped behind their cultural outlooks due to enculturation, such as helpfulness vs professional boundaries. Therefore, IC knowledge could guide them in reaching optimal decisions where expectations can be met and their own cultural values may not unnecessarily be compromised.

#### 6.4.2.2.2 Legal and Professional Practice

From a contrasting view of offering assistance, an interpreter's avoidance of negligence is driven by legal limitations that forbid assistance outside the role of interpreter. The following is a cluster of extracts from court and non-court interpreters/participants whose opinions of the address-changing scene in Vignette 1 do not agree. The first group comprises those who perceive form signing as a legal activity:

...if one wants to assign someone else to fill... any kind of legal binding forms for him or herself, then there must be a proper process of authorisation. (Cherry\_beginner\_non-court\_2\_yrs)

The prisoner asked me to contact his family in the overseas because he was in the jail... but I refused to do so. (Liam\_intermediate\_court\_8\_yrs)

In the first extract above, Cherry reads the situation in a different way from treating assistance as a humanitarian act because of the legal implications attached to form signing, such as the patient changing his name while being assisted with interpretation.

Correspondingly, in the second extract, Liam shares an experience of a defendant who had a legal request during court interpretation. He refused to help the defendant, who personally asked him to contact their family. The task should have been the lawyer's responsibility.

What was unexpected about the data was an inconsistency in the answers of other court and non-court interpreters who did not see the practice of changing address as a hindrance to interpretation, as illustrated in the following two quotes:

The message is to change the address, so if you can get that person to change the address, it doesn't matter how you do it. (Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_court\_30\_yrs)

I may ask... the patient, that is it okay if I asked the hospital staff about the changing address process for him?... (Pepper\_intermediate\_non-court\_10\_yrs)

Contrary to extensive experience, Sunisa believes that the interpreter may not need to follow the exact training protocol if the purpose is to amend an address. Achieving the communicative purpose or changing the address is more critical than conforming to how the interpreter was 'trained or taught.'

In the second extract, Pepper agrees with this statement and would change the address on the client's behalf. The ethical justification is that she would seek the patient's permission before proceeding.

Overall, it was unexpected for court and non-court interpreters to give answers opposing their interpreting expertise. Being court interpreters does not equal strict law conformity. Their decisions seemed founded on contextual particularities, and

while their opinions may be deviant from straightforward interpretation, their stance interestingly acknowledges another side of ethical responsibility: delivering a message effectively.

Next, the legal complications continue in the closing scenes of Vignette 1 (personal transportation) and Vignette 2 (medical assistance), representing a cultural and legal predicament. In considering the first scene, slightly fewer than a quarter of the interviewees were hesitant to give aid due to unknown local legal implications, as exemplified in the following two extracts:

...definitely I'll give him a ride... I'm not sure. The guy said it's illegal. What part of it is illegal? ... If it's illegal.. then I won't do it.  
(Omaki\_beginner\_3\_yrs)

If he is hired by the NHS, the situation might be different because there might be some sort of regulations. (Alan\_intermediate/NAATI\_12\_yrs)

Despite accepting the request at first, Omaki backtracked her answer, demonstrating that legality can cause a high degree of hesitancy or the overturning of a decision. Several intermediate participants expressed the same message.

While concerned with the NHS's (National Health Service) existing regulations, Alan, in the second extract above, puts forward a guideline to pursue what is 'culturally appropriate' in the context, such as no fixed solutions to the problem can be produced. He recalls cultural appropriateness as a determining factor in an interpreting exam in Australia. For both experience levels, approaches seem flexible since legality and cultural appropriateness intersect and negotiate.

Moving to the French interpreter in Vignette 2, who faces an ethical dilemma with an older patient of African descent. Approximately a quarter of the participants, representing all experience levels, voiced that the interpreter's decision to decline an elderly's request is ethical. Clara, for instance, made the following remark:

I would ask the physician to help support him because we don't know what's gonna happen ... so it's better to be handled by professional.  
(Clara\_beginner\_4\_yrs)

In conclusion, there was a strong sense of agreement among the participants since the request in the vignette was a health-related issue that can pose physical risks, thus it would be wise to encourage the doctor to take over and assist the patient. The threat of potentially bringing physical harm to the patient is more ostensible than being asked to give a ride. They remarked that the repercussions would be too significant for the interpreter to be held responsible for what might happen. The assistance should be the practitioner's responsibility, with no individuals stating that the interpreter should have offered the help. The situation is structured by multiple layers requiring multi-faceted prioritisation from the interpreter, suggesting that well-enabled intercultural knowledge may place interpreters at an advantage to make situation-appropriate decisions in demanding intercultural situations.

#### 6.4.2.3 Ethics in Interpretation

This section elaborates on the participants' ethics in their decisions to maintain or amend interpretations in legal and diplomatic contexts. Three sub-themes emerged: ethical, legal, and diplomatic interventions; equivalence vs amendments in interpretation; and minimising misunderstandings and uncertainties.

##### 6.4.2.3.1 Ethical, Legal, and Diplomatic Interventions

This theme involves juxtaposing ethics on dilemmatic intervention amid legal and diplomatic uncertainties, that is, encountering a legal difficulty with a requested receipt (Vignette 3).

From the analysis of the interview data, a bifurcation of opinions emerged between intervention and non-intervention (i.e., the interpreter may regard any needed cultural contexts as crucial and explicate the missing contexts or consider intervention excessive and omit any explanation). A quarter of participants stressed that respecting and complying with the lawyer's request should be done by not intervening. First, following the assignment instructions, they would not intervene, as explained by Scarlett and Clara:

...if I was suggested or told not to intervene, I would not do it.  
(Scarlett\_intermediate\_10\_yrs)

You're not supposed to intervene... any deviation from what the... person in question is speaking, so he or she [is] not in the right position to elaborate or explain. (Clara\_beginner\_4\_yrs)

Focusing on ethical compliance, Scarlett believed, since the interpreter was instructed not to intervene, that violating would mean the interpreter was disobeying the instructions. Clara's concerns differed slightly as to whether it was appropriate for the interpreter's position to include any explanation.

Contrastingly, the decisions are nearly unanimous in court interpreters that faithful interpretation should be not be tampered with, as Tuapap and Sky explain:

...the interpreter has no right to intervene, because... the role of an interpreter is there to interpret. (Tuapap\_beginner\_court\_1.4\_yrs)

No, absolutely not. If I were the interpreter, I wouldn't... intervene that way... We can't decide it on our own. It's not our... duty to identify who speaks, who tell lies, who do not... I would say what they say exactly. (Sky\_intermediate\_court\_10\_yrs)

Tuapap voices against acts of intervention. In order to understand her point, it is essential for us to examine her definition of 'to interpret,' which would have meant faithfully translating from language A to language B without contaminating or omitting any elements. Anything further than pure interpretation would be out of the interpreter's duty. Correspondingly, Sky would ensure that intervention occurs only at the lawyer's request. Her opinion highlights the importance of transference from one language to another without contaminating ideas in the message as a way for interpreters to ensure legal protection. Ultimately, the role of a conduit may be more strictly adhered to by legal interpreters than by other types.

In contrast, more than half of the participants recognised the urgency to intervene during the interrogation. They advocated that interpreters are not mere messengers because they play an active interpreting role. A NAATI-certified trainer spoke on behalf of other interpreters, and suggested that 'we're not just there to minimise the language barrier, we're there to minimise the cultural gaps as well.' This statement illustrates high levels of independence and subjectivity, signifying that decisions to dictate what qualifies for mediation mainly belong to interpreters.

Though interpreters are obliged to follow professional rules and ethics stipulated by governing bodies to maintain objectivity, the reality suggests otherwise since their subjectivity regulates the actions during live interpretation.

When determining thresholds to perform mediation, the following intermediate participants, Betty and Nicholas, argued that communication progress and understanding (e.g., 'progress' and 'disconnect') primarily affects any decision to intervene, indicating that mediation should start when communication is blocked:

If it goes on a couple of times... it seems to indicate to me that there's a disconnect somehow in the understanding of both parties...  
(Betty\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)

it's actually senseless to go with the rules of the game where the interpreter, you just sit there being still just to say this and that... and yet not intervening when you have to. That is inhumane.  
(Nicholas\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)

Betty remarked that she would mediate the situation after two rounds of miscommunication, because this would be an indication that the communication did not achieve its purpose—this marks the turning point that invited intervention. According to Nicholas, on the other hand, adopting the non-intervention approach is 'inhumane' if the interpreter continues interpreting to and fro while recognising that both have fostered a mismatch in their understanding. He calls for an ethical intervention.

Regarding the type of explanation and methods of intervention, several participants considered a socio-cultural contextual explanation necessary since the interpreter needs to create a window of opportunity for intervention. Such mediation is performed in order to untangle the intercultural nuances that the audience may misconstrue.

Here, I present a series of techniques suggested by intermediate and highly experienced participants, starting with suggestions from Olivia:

...the interpreter may find an opportunity outside of the meeting, maybe by asking for a break and informing them that there is something that he'd like to clarify. (Olivia\_highly\_experienced\_27\_yrs\_translated)

Olivia suggested taking a break and utilising the resulting downtime to inform the lawyer of the missing socio-cultural gaps to ensure transparency. She went on to state that the interpreter needs to sense the lack of understanding and quickly 'fill in' the gaps.

At the intermediate level, there were conflicting intervention approaches suggested by participants with slightly different experience years. For example, Tammy and Pam would utter the following to the lawyer in the vignette:

Would you mind if I explained it to you? We can do it outside of the room.  
(Tammy\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Excuse me, may I intervene because or may... I have [to] explain more about the situation (Pam\_intermediate\_9\_yrs)

Tammy would notify the lawyer of the missing context outside the room if the interrogation were not in the court setting, while Pam would ask for permission before intervening during the interview.

There were also different opinions in terms of giving explanations, such as to whom the interpreter should direct the explanation. These are two opinions from two intermediate level participants who suggest various techniques for the interpreter:

I'll have to go back to the employer [lawyer] and explain to him a little bit about culture. (Lily\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)

I might turn around and say to the Thai people or 'เมื่อที่เพิ่งบอกเค้าไปว่า อธิบายเรื่องอะไร'  
(I have just told [the other person] what I have just explained).  
(Claire\_intermediate/NAATI\_15\_yrs)

Lily focuses on giving a one-sided explanation to the lawyer, which signifies that importance and attention are being paid to the client who hired the interpreter. For Claire, clarification is key. She would ensure that both parties are informed that intervention occurs by clarifying that she is talking about a Thai practice. Clarifying



illustrates that intercultural mediation can be transparent. While it is believed that transparency is associated with the conduit role, the interpreter who intervenes may keep all involved interlocutors informed of the current interaction in another language. In the following extracts, for example, the explanatory content would be a contextual explanation that most shrines in Thailand do not offer receipts.

...if you make a donation at charity organisations or temples, they may have a receipt for you to reclaim tax.... So, there are some cases where you would receive a receipt from charitable donations, but not... at public shrines. (Emma\_beginner\_8\_mths)

For Thai people, you have something that you call entertainment expenses... when... you take a client out for... a meal and... you take them to some kind of 'entertainment'... and sometimes you don't get a receipt from that. (Ava\_AIIC)

Emma, in her comments, focuses on the Thai domestic donation practice, although she asserted a further legal explanation of the tax rebate system. The participant's response can primarily represent Thais of all experiences. In the following extract, despite Ava's refusal to intervene, she echoed that both parties would be baffled by the confusion. Ava observes that the American investigator would question the absence of receipts, while the Thai client would not comprehend why evidence needs to be presented for such 'legitimate' spending. Contrastingly, 'entertainment' expenses may be reimbursed in Thailand because it is for establishing business connections with foreign counterparts (e.g., dinners, or visits to massage parlours or brothels). Furthermore, Gavin, an American, would offer a 'cultural explanation' of the donation practice as a 'spiritual investment,' a widely practised concept in Thailand that may be done as a collective cause in the company's name (See 6.4.1.2 Thai Superstitions and Spiritual Investments, pp. 206–208).

In terms of unexpected findings, one of the most experienced participants, Rawee, gave two conflicting proposals: one supporting the intervention and the other as an interference with the interrogation process. Nevertheless, there is a clear explanation for the discrepancy. Before being presented with the vignette, the participant shared her own experience:

Sometimes... the lawyer was using... tricks to get the information that he wanted. (Rawee\_AIIC)

The action of repeatedly asking the employee the same question would be deemed a technique. Rawee argued that the confusion was intentionally induced as an interrogation technique by the lawyer; consequently, any attempt to arbitrate would jeopardise that process and distance the lawyer from reaching the interrogation's objectives. Rawee's phrase 'it was between them' suggests a level of self-protection, arguably from experience. After being presented with the scenario of Vignette 3, Rawee believed that intervening was necessary. Thus, the difference in opinions may have been affected by the elaborate details of the scene. The participant was able to analyse and present her strategy more realistically. This arguably signifies that, in practice, ensuring intercultural understanding is of greater importance than conforming to legal obligations.

The next part presents a salient sense of hesitancy amongst participants to either provide faithful interpretation or adapt for diplomacy within the interpreter's role. Just over 25% of the participants pointed to diplomatic sensitivity for advocating message amendment, such as in the following two extracts:

...the interpreter decided to go off track because he... or she wanted to decrease the tension, trying to protect both the American side and the French side. (Cherry\_beginner\_2\_yrs)

...if I missed the word 'shape,' the relations wouldn't fall apart. Perhaps, I would be on the safe side rather. (Jo\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

In her interview, Cherry argued that, even though it is ethical for interpreters to strive for verbatim translation, the adjusted interpretation is performed with a positive view to protect international affairs. Ensuring diplomatic ties between the two nations are why the interpreter amended the message. Meanwhile, Jo does not see the added value in insisting on translating the word 'shape.' She believes that minor amendments are contextually appropriate since diplomatic decimation would be an insurmountable responsibility for any interpreter. In contrast, deciding not to amend the message could suggest otherwise.

Moreover, there is evidence of external factors that may influence the degree to which literal interpretation can be carried out, such as the department the interpreter is associated with—government agencies, media outlets, and so on. The following participant comments are concerned with media publicity and its effects on interpretation:

...all eyes are on... you're in a spotlight. Everything goes through media... you have this responsibility of... maintain the relationships when the country is not just about yourself and your role. (Claire\_intermediate/NAATI\_15\_yrs)

...if the interpreter is working for the press... they would only have one hat... as an interpreter. It is their job to give the straightforward translation. (Tammy\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

According to Claire, media attention might pressure the interpreters to perform their duties in favour of their country's diplomatic endeavours. Being under the spotlight begets the attention paid to the interpreter to iterate the translation carefully. Likewise, Tammy expresses that if the person is a press interpreter, they may be more prone to give literal translation. In other words, the agency or organisation that employs the interpreter may affect the interpreter's decisions. Her stance is the opposite of those of diplomatic interpreters, whose duty is to preserve national interests and maintain international relations. Below are such views from two participants who work in diplomatic and international affairs interpretation:

Of course, there would be that... welcome to Thailand and we have good relations. We have an exchange of business and cooperation in these areas. And I'd like to expand our cooperation in 1, 2, 3. (Emma\_beginner\_8\_mths)

...most of my work happens in the official setting where people... are very politically correct... (Paul\_beginner\_4\_yrs)

Emma explains that formal meetings between the Prime Minister and foreign ministers are well-organised and run according to a pre-planned schedule. For instance, one speech is scheduled to be followed by another and the proceedings

are concluded with a token of appreciation exchange. Hence, predictability is clearly visible in these gatherings.

Paul, in his comment, highlights how it is quite uncommon to experience political incorrectness in official settings. Paul's assignments are related to official meetings and courtesy calls about drug enforcement. In such assignments, attendees aspire to be as politically correct in their speech as possible. Nevertheless, equivalence is still highly honoured because his office work is related to law enforcement. Both suggest that high levels of political correctness are encouraged in this meeting type, leaving little room for vulgar messages.

This section alluded to the justification of intervention for diplomatic purposes, which is characterised by a balance between a cultural loss and a politically correct diplomatic ritual.

#### 6.4.2.3.2 Equivalence vs Amendments in Interpretation

First, over half of the participants accepted that the amendment of Donald Trump's compliment is well-justified (Vignette 5). They support adjusting the message to circumvent potentially literal interpretation, which could be perceived as sexually harassing. They support eliminating the condescending characteristics in the original content. Message neutralisation would be done by toning down the message. The most popular words rotate around the abstraction of beauty but distance away from physical characteristics (e.g., beautiful, lovely, good health, and elegance). If the compliment were directed at the Thai Prime Minister's wife, they would abandon the phrase 'good physical shape' to avoid sexually-related interpretation and female objectification. Moreover, although 'beautiful' is the main word choice, their answers vary in detail. Hector would remove the vivid comment on the physical qualities and replace it with the word 'beautiful,' while adding the subject to the sentence to remove himself from the compliment.

Second, others believe that literal interpretation is not always correct. An AICC interpreter, Ava, argued that literal translation is not suitable for all translations, and she presents a rare observation, overlooked by most interviewees, that the sentence 'you are in great shape' can possibly be interpreted as 'you are in good

health.’ Therefore, she stressed that the adjusted interpretation is not only correct but also a safer alternative. Two intermediate-level interpreters reiterated this point.

As the third strategy, the interpreter is to grasp the speaker’s intent and develop the rendition on that foundation.

...when you interpret, you have to first understand the intent of the speaker... you can interpolate... from these plots and try to find the best way to render this interpretation. (Gary\_intermediate\_14\_yrs)

Gary expressed that inference may be drawn based on the speaker’s background: forecasting the speaker’s nature and plausible intent. By following this rule, interpreters can prepare themselves for similar situations.

Overall, the decisions to interpret differently from the original were supported by more than 50% of participants when combined with media pressures, manifest flexibility, and visibility in the interpreting role. In contrast, approximately 25% of participants supported the provision of equivalent interpretation. Two of them gave the following reasons:

No, it’s not... my fault because I just say what he’s saying. It’s not coming from me. (Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_30\_yrs)

I don’t see why can’t you have a literal translation... because it’s a compliment... I don’t look at it as... sexist or anything. I think it’s lovely compliment. (Omaki\_beginner\_3\_yrs)

The first supporting reason for equivalent translation is the maintenance of content originality. Sunisa, who has extensive court interpretation experience, chooses verbatim interpretation. She believes that an interpreter should not be held accountable for maintaining the originality of the message. Sunisa’s approach to equivalence negates the flexible approach cited in the earlier section when she sided with practicality—changing the address on behalf of the patient. Nevertheless, flexibility, including transparency and ethical stance, may be context-dependent; for example, the interpreter ought to decide the most appropriate approach to the context.

The second supporting reason for maintaining translation equivalence is that the compliment is not sexist. For instance, Omaki saw no elements of sexism in it and proposed that the interpreter should have produced a literal interpretation, thus questioning the rationale for the intervention.

The third reason is how the culture receiving the compliment can impact on how it is perceived, as illustrated in the following two quotes:

...if the interpreter is a French interpreter, there's no need to tone down here. (Jeff\_highly\_experienced\_22\_yrs\_translated)

I understand 'vous êtes en grande forme.' It means that you are healthy. It's not... a description of the physical... It's a bad translation. (Liam\_intermediate\_8\_yrs)

With expertise in French, Jeff postulates that direct interpretation would be acceptable for the French audience, while Liam considers Trump's compliment, 'you are in good shape,' as a 'bad' rendition. As Thai–French interpreters, these two participants' responses are contrary to most Thai–English interpreters. The contradiction may have stemmed from the latter's unfamiliarity with French culture, as commented on by Jo:

I need to note that I do not understand the culture. I may not be sensitive to their culture. (Jo\_intermediate\_non-French\_5\_yrs)

As acknowledged by several other non-French speaking participants, Jo emphasises the importance of being 'sensitive.' The participant removed herself from the English worldview and considered if the statement was culturally acceptable for French people. If that is the case, the amended message may be a better-suited rendition for the local audience.

Jo's insight illustrates that IC courses are imperative for developing intercultural sensitivity. The contrasting insights from Thai–English and Thai–French–English interpreters imply that any interpreters' linguistic and cultural worldview may be limited due to their expertise. Therefore, it is crucial to be realistic with the spectrum of intercultural knowledge one can be equipped with and selectively focus

on the cultures one frequently encounters. Thai–English interpreters’ inability to understand French cues, for instance, resembles meetings where speakers of other languages use English as a lingua franca. Educators of IC ought to be realistically abreast of achievable expertise of foreign traditions in interpreters of two languages, yet they should not deny the specifics of cultural values. With this approach, interpreters could arguably reconfigure interpreting decisions based on local knowledge they have prepared.

Being selective and specific aligns with *savoir apprendre/faire* or skills of discovery and interaction (Byram, 2021). For practitioners, interpreters can utilise the skill strand to specify what is needed for the interactions during preparation. IC educators and interpreter trainers are to design courses that nurture and promote research skills to enable the students to independently learn and acquire knowledge about other cultures and practices.

#### 6.4.2.3.3 Minimising Misunderstandings and Uncertainties

This section explores a strategy for handling unexpected requests. The purpose of this strategy is to minimise cultural misunderstandings and uncertainties.

Approximately half of the participants recommended stating their job descriptions as a preventive measure to avoid unexpected requests. Claire and Gavin, for example, make the following comments:

Before we start a job, we... introduce ourselves and we have to explain our role... that... our role here is to interpret. We’re not allowed to do anything beyond our role. (Claire\_intermediate/NAATI\_15 yrs)

I would explain my role to them very clearly and state this is how it’s going to be. (Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

According to Claire, once the boundaries are set, and the role communicated, encounters such as talking about the interpreter’s personal life, or being asked not to interpret or provide transport, could have been efficiently avoided. Gavin, meanwhile, expresses his frustrations after seeing the interpreter’s effort as unnecessarily harsh to the patient. In his subsequent responses, he stated that the interpreter (Vignette 1) may have misunderstood the notion of ‘professional

interpreter,' which has been translated into palpable undesirable behaviours with signs of unwillingness to help or to hold a small conversation with the patient. During his interview, Gavin often clarified the role of police liaison interpreter to accused individuals and explained the Thai political system for every party's benefit. By giving such information, Gavin acts as a mediator by elucidating the missing political, legal, and cultural context for the foreign defendants, who have recently been accused of committing a crime.

The following demonstrates that role establishment can lead to increased transparency in interpretation. The technique is specifically applicable to the female interpreter in Vignette 2, who was unsure of the interpretation of the perceived rude message.

...if he didn't want something to be translated, then he [patient] shouldn't say it in the first place. (Emma\_beginner\_8\_mnths)

...the interpreter did not actually need to negotiate. She should have just gone ahead and interpreted everything he said. (Ava\_AIIC)

Nearly a quarter of the participants from all experience levels supported the interpreter's integrity, and most saw no point in communicating with the client before interpreting the message. For example, despite their differences in experience levels, Emma and Ava validated the interpreter's action. Had the interpreter directly interpreted the message without asking the patient, they both deemed that it would have been acceptable. Accordingly, for these participants and others, role establishment helps set professional boundaries when the client requests the interpreter to refrain from interpreting, and some participants found this technique beneficial, such as Alan, who shared the following experience:

...it was easier for me... because when I... told my clients that I need to interpret everything he or she said, they decided to change the wording. (Alan\_intermediate/NAATI\_12\_yrs)

Since Alan reminded his clients of his responsibilities as their interpreter, he indirectly forced them to choose their words more carefully.



Thus far, the participants have remarked that establishing the interpreter's role requires the interpreter to initiate executive decisions. Yet establishing the role can also entail taking control of the communicative flow or abstaining from interpreting the session, which pertains to the notion of visibility (Venuti, 2008). Thereby, the interpreter is able to organise the structure of the exchange and create transparency between the two parties when facing professional uncertainties.

### **6.4.3 Interpreters' Lack of Familiarity**

The theme in this section refers to the interpreter's lack of cultural understanding when interpreting unfamiliar cultural content. It encompasses incidents when participants had to decide whether to interpret or omit culture-specific content. There are two sub-themes that emerged regarding interpretation and omission of content: interpreting regional dialects and conveying humour.

#### **6.4.3.1 Interpreting Regional Dialects**

When the speaker in Vignette 4 suddenly switches to an unfamiliar Thai dialect without informing the interpreter, the interpreter is forced into a vital decision, where they are torn between informing the audience of the limitations or interpreting the unspecialised content.

The country of Thailand consists of its own regional variations and dialects (Iwasaki et al., 2005). Therefore, when code-switching occurs, it could be due to many reasons, from acknowledging the speaker's origins to specifically addressing audience groups. While the AICC professional ethics stipulates that AICC interpreters 'shall not accept any assignment for which they are not qualified AICC,' (2022a, p. 2) nearly one-third of the participants expressed that they would interpret the dialect. Emma and Julia, for example, made the following analyses of the vignette:

...she [the interpreter in Vignette 4] admitted that this isn't the dialect that she's familiar with, but at the same time, she'd try to interpret as much as possible. (Emma\_beginner\_8\_mths)

...that's very appropriate.... Once you give them [the audience] the background... the audience would understand you more... and then they

[the audience] would try to understand what you're trying to do.  
(Julia\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

From her point of view, Emma posits that it is professional for the interpreter to be honest about their limitations, but they should still try to render unfamiliar content. Likewise, Julia believes that honesty with the audience is a form of protection, that is, the audience's awareness of any limitations can be used to assist the interpreter. With any misunderstanding, the audience can further inquire about the speaker directly. In other words, Emma and Julia believe that by interpreting the dialect and informing the audience about their limitations, the interpreter is offering extra service through a safe and honest method.

On the contrary, about 15% of participants strongly voiced concerns against interpreting without expertise. The reasons for this were linked to qualifications, the missing uninterpreted message, and misinterpretation risks. Two of the most experienced participants, Olivia and Ava, remarked that the vignette interpreter's attempt to save the event may distort the intended message.

The interpreter... should not have interpreted because he's not from Isan [Northeastern region] and he doesn't understand it. (Ava\_AIIC)

Ava raised concerns about 40% of the overall speech being unaccounted for and suggested explaining that the interpreter is not qualified to interpret the dialect, understanding that the event organisers would not prefer the approach. Ava believed that the interpreter should not have carried out his interpretation. Meanwhile, Olivia acknowledged that 60% of the claimed interpreted message (Vignette 4) may result from substitution, not omission, implying that the original message could be lost with substituted irrelevant content. The best approach, she believes, is to allow the chairperson to inform the speaker of the limitations. However, both interpreters contradicted Sunisa, who supported interpreting the message:

...you just have to do your best... I have to think very quickly on my feet, and... play it by ear. (Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_30\_yrs)

Sunisa's broad understanding of other regional dialects may have greatly influenced her answer.

Within the cultural boundaries of Thailand there are many regional variations and dialects (Iwasaki et al., 2005), Thai interpreters, therefore, must often choose between message elaboration and omission (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Besides a few knowledgeable local interpreters who understand the dialect, the approach of tackling non-standard Thai through elaboration and omission have been used by participants. In view of those who choose to mediate, the first approach is explicitly clarifying the message with the speaker as explained by Scarlett below:

...in the South, they call ‘น้ำตาล’ [sugar] as ‘น้ำผึ้ง’ [honey], ‘น้ำตาล’ means sugar in... Central Thai... But in the South, they use the word honey from Central as sugar. (Scarlett\_intermediate\_10\_yrs)

The interpreter is to clarify the term(s) with the speaker(s) when dealing with unclear messages. Scarlett, who was working with regional staff training in Southern Thailand on the topic of product ingredients, found that interpretation precision had to be upheld. She found the local jargon perplexing and reaffirmed with the speaker, ‘are we understanding the same thing?’ She learned that the Southern word for ‘sugar’ refers to ‘honey’ in Central Thai.

The second approach for managing non-standard Thai was to depend on a more knowledgeable partner or moderator. For example, when interpreting the Northeastern dialect, Kate relied on a local professor and her audience.

...if I don’t understand anything, I would ask the lecturer... and then I translate it to English to our foreign expert. (Kate\_intermediate\_8\_yrs)

She stressed that the audience were foreign experts in research topics related to Thailand, which underlined their increased patience, familiarity, and tolerance. She was accompanied by a local professor with whom she could consult. Similarly, Jeff exemplifies his reliance on the moderator in his experience of interpreting for a Pga K’nyau [a tribe in Thailand] speaker who not only spoke accented Thai but read a complicated poem with rhythm:

...the moderator had intervened right away. It was as if he [moderator] had sensed it, so he cut to the chase and said that I would deal with this person myself. (Jeff\_highly\_experienced\_22\_yrs\_translated)

He raised that dialect-specific interpreters would be assigned to the task in the EU Parliament. Last, as an interpreter who understood Northern Thai, Liam delivered the interpretation in the dialect:

I come from the North. So, the speakers speak in English, and then I translate... in North dialect to get in contact with the audience.  
(Liam\_intermediate\_8\_yrs)

Liam's interpretation is from English to Northern Thai by favouring the position of the interpreter's regional dialect, he chooses to facilitate the local audience specifically. The interpreter in the vignette could have stopped interpreting but continued. One may argue that the most efficient way to interpret other dialects is to simply do it without notifying anyone, but the question is, what valuable elements could be missed in the process? Are the audience forced into a position where they might overlook critical information? These are necessary questions interpreters may take into consideration.

Others participants discussed the difficulties of finding 'equivalents' for non-standard languages. An intermediate interpreter, Tammy, used the following technique when interpreting the Lao language:

They [Lao audience] understand Thai quite well... But then when they have questions... I decided to just go out of the booth and then just stand right next to them. (Tammy\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Informing the audience of her limitations that Lao is not one of the working languages and then switching to CI is a technique for mitigating any gaps between interpreting Thai and Lao. Tammy, for example, would ensure the audience understood the sentences and the core message correctly with CI. She would also make sure she understood the questions before interpreting them into English. She went on to state that clarification can be performed during consecutive pauses.

Furthermore, for some of the other participants, using simplified Thai with the audience helped them reach their communicative goals. For example, since Patricia's interpretation requires dealing with people from Lao PDR, she has been requested to use 'simplified' Thai to accommodate her audience.

I've been told that I might need to use ... simplified version of Thai so that they can understand me. (Patricia\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Although interpreting Lao presents practical and ethical implications, the replacement of Thai for Lao increases regional inclusivity. The following recount by Gary is exemplary of this statement:

...it turned out that the Laos delegates... were listening to the Thai interpretation all along. (Gary\_intermediate\_14\_yrs)

The interpreter, Gary, continued interpreting despite observing that all Thai attendees had taken their headsets off. He later learned that a group of representatives from Lao PDR had listened to his interpretation into Thai during the meeting. Despite the linguistic discrepancies, the Lao audience could take part in the conference because of the available Thai interpretations. Essentially, the interpretation that the Lao delegates benefited from was the by-product of a qualified interpretation done in Gary's working languages (Thai-English); consequently, the accuracy depended much on the delegates' Thai proficiency.

A more pertinent matter, however, is whether the Lao representatives were supposed to be accompanied by professional interpreters in their language. While recruitment decisions are perhaps executed under limited resources, the participants expressed views that the organisers should start considering the discrepancies between Thai, Northeastern Thai, and Lao. They remarked that despite shared resemblances, recruiting teams can improve their understanding of IC (i.e., Thai and Lao as independent languages). In other words, a lack of IC awareness in recruiters often impacts interpreters' working conditions as recruiters' hiring decisions mistakenly treat Thai and Lao as mutually intelligible.

A highly experienced interpreter, Ava, gave a strongly worded admonition to the recruiters and warned of a hiring trend:

...people tend to think that the Thai language and the Lao language are the same languages... when you have only one speaker who is from Laos... the organiser is not going to hire a Lao interpreter. (Ava\_AIIC)

As Ava remarks, the likelihood of event organisers designating a Lao interpreter for one Lao speaker is minimal, leading to mismatched expertise.

Mixing working languages is also not professionally acceptable (See AIIIC's requirements [AIIIC, 2022b]); however, the issue is not exclusive between Thai and Lao but a shared problem among adjacent relative languages. For instance, Maluma, a Thai–Spanish–English medical interpreter, was asked to interpret French because the hospital was aware of his basic French ability. Yet using available resources while disregarding cultural values can eclipse making appropriate IC choices.

For other 'non-standard' varieties of English, difficulties are reported in terms of terminology and enunciation from native and non-native speakers, such as those highlighted by Sunisa and Gavin:

I don't understand a lot of their [African American] slang and even their pronunciation. So, I just say, excuse me, interpreter didn't get that word... but I, the interpreter, would try her best.  
(Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_30\_yrs)

She [the trainer] has a woman come up and play the role that she's a sexual assault victim and she goes, darling, how are you doing are you hurt? [imitating Scottish accent]... why is she asking the woman 'hot'?... then I realised... [in] Scottish 'hurt' becomes 'hot.'  
(Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Despite having the most extended professional experience, and having been immersed in American culture, Sunisa admits feeling challenged when interpreting the American Ebonics Vernacular English (Espinoza-Saavedra, 2017). However, she would also be honest about her limitations with the audience, because limitations can pose problems for native English speakers.

Focusing on exposure, having been overseas for nearly three decades as a native speaker of English has given Gavin vast exposure to different cultures and peoples. In Gavin's scenario, Scottish English is a standard known as Standard Scottish English (SSE) (Meer et al., 2021), with differences in features such as grammar, phrasal expressions, and enunciation; it is influenced by both Scottish Gaelic and English (Stuart-Smith, 2008). Gavin suspects that those without worldly experience would

struggle with unfamiliar accents, since many L2 speakers of English are educated through standard Englishes and their associated accents, thus they may have limited experience in trying to decipher non-standard dialects and localised accents.

In consideration of translation, the interpreter has the autonomy to translate, add, and/or omit; whichever choices the interpreter takes will reflect their translation approach. Interpreting dialects and accents seem to require a two-fold demonstration of skills. First, interpreters need to determine whether to translate the accent/dialect or decode intercultural conflicts that demand mediation. Second, they may need to comprehensively increase their knowledge of local and foreign accents or language variations to cope with the demands. The assertion that '[the interpreter] doesn't understand this expression' pertains to intercultural knowledge (i.e., how social groups communally function). At the same time, Helen asserted that interpreters must be armed with 'an ear that understands every accent' to expand their understanding. Those equipped with comprehensive cultural understanding could effectively decipher cultural manuscripts or intercultural conflicts that call for mediation. For interpreters, the target appears to be developing a comprehensive understanding of a spectrum of language standards (e.g., professional jargon words and regional sounds), while fostering awareness is valuable for end-users and recruiters of interpreters to appropriately match the languages with the suitable interpreters.

Both development goals correspond to *savoirs* (knowledge) and *savoir s'engager* or critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2021). The former pertains to the ability of the interpreters to comprehensively obtain knowledge, while the latter emphasises promoting awareness, specifically among the clients and interpreter recruitment teams. Achieving these two goals would benefit everyone involved. As for the hiring teams, the selection process would be carried out with intercultural awareness which would likely lead to an interculturally competent interpreter. At the same time, the interpreter would be fully equipped to understand a variety of standards and the clients would be aware of the cultural differences that take place during interpretation.

### 6.4.3.2 Conveying Humour

Participants admitted that the process of interpreting culturally intertwined jokes is difficult because of varying cultural values. First, they pointed to the vignette interpreter's failure to fulfil the interpretive role, while arguing that the gist should be explicated regardless of the audience's response. Consider the following quotes, for example:

...it doesn't matter whether you can make people laugh or not.  
(Paul\_beginner\_4\_yrs)

This interpreter wasn't even trying to convey... what the speaker wants to convey... she doesn't really interpret to be exact.  
(Sara\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

In his interview, Paul stressed that the audience's laughter should not define the decision to interpret. Likewise, Sara, with slightly more experience, firmly echoed that the interpreter had failed to interpret the message. Sara commented that the audience has the right to know the underlying humour, and what the interpreter did could not be considered interpretation.

Nearly half of those interviewed believed that the vignette interpreter was wrong, and that they would elaborate on the story's essence. The following remarks come from representatives of all experience levels who agree with explaining the joke:

It's a nice joke and... I can explain it in like three seconds. No problem... the students deserve to know the joke. (Omaki\_beginner\_3\_yrs)

...even if it [the joke] doesn't make sense in English. I tried to translate it, and then like sidebar, I would explain why it is funny.  
(Kate\_intermediate\_8\_yrs)

It's wrong. You can't do that... you need to interpret the message... you know, jokes don't translate, right? So, it's not going to be funny, but nevertheless... you need to interpret it. (Ava\_AIIC)

Omaki disagrees with the vignette interpreter's decision to not interpret the joke and emphasises that one responsibility is to inform the audience about the joke. Meanwhile, Kate suggests explaining the word qualification and how it rhymes with



‘koalifications.’ This method requires the interpreter to relate values and beliefs from one culture to another. Ava, on the other hand, deems the vignette interpreter’s practice as unethical. The interpreter deciding to omit the content means ethical responsibility is overlooked. In the rest of her interview, Ava goes on to state that the interpreter should not have focused on generating laughter but should have explicated that the joke was an allusion to Australia’s koala. She then remarks that it is not her responsibility to ensure the audience laughs at the joke, suggesting that there could be room for the audience to investigate the humour on their own.

Drawing from professional experience, Daisy, a beginner interpreter recounts how she interpreted a Thai joke from a senior executive whose humour did not attract laughter:

...the sales volume went down on that period of time... the salesperson name was ‘Worapan’... He was like, if you’re still doing this, I would change you from [Worapan to Woraroi]. (Daisy\_beginner\_1\_yr)

Daisy goes on to explain how she provided the audience with a literal explanation of two Thai words, ‘พัน pan’ (thousand) and ‘ร้อย roi’ (hundred), to describe the mechanism behind the joke. Her intervention suggests that the interpreter’s presence is actively involved and visible through mediation. Without any mediation, the joke would probably not have made any sense to the audience. The audience, nevertheless, did not laugh at the interpretation.

After analysing the effect on the speaker and the audience of the hypothetical scenario in the vignette, several beginner, Fabia, and intermediate participants, Scarlett and Elizabeth, pointed out that a negative connotation could be derived from the statement ‘the joke is too long’:

...this [saying ‘The joke is too long. Just laugh!'] would be successful only in case he [the speaker] is an open-minded professor. (Fabia\_beginner\_4\_mnth)

In her analysis, Fabia considers the approach inappropriate because the interpreter may have violated the code of ethics, and the approach would only succeed if the

invited speaker had leniency. Otherwise, the speaker could be offended by the interpretation because the interpreted sentence criticises him.

...You're not... to construct the audience. (Scarlett\_intermediate\_10\_yrs)

In her response, Scarlett raises the point that the interpreter has crossed the professional boundary by taking control of the audience. Although the interpretive role may encompass cultural mediation, as suggested by many participants, orchestrating the audience and overtaking the speaker is seen as being unacceptable.

Elizabeth, for instance, observes that the interpreter might be a lecturer who has some authority over the audience:

She [the interpreter] seems... to have the authority to tell them what to do... the interpreter must be a professor, too.  
(Elizabeth\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

Elizabeth's statement could be construed that failing to evaluate such a situation could lead to a breach of ethical rules and cultural norms. In Thailand, for example, lecturers are rarely questioned since the norm is for students to show respect to their teachers. The Wai Kruu ceremony, an annually held ritual where students show respect to teachers (Atagi, 2011), exemplifies the ideology. Constructing a new message in place of the lecturer may violate both this ideology; hence such a technique is to be avoided.

The interpreter's mindfulness of the expected culture is required whether they can demonstrate that they uphold the values of both cultures at play. The expectations should come from both ends, although the culture of the physical location may be more influential, with Thai culture being the host culture in this instance.

A few participants justified the interpretation technique of the vignette interpreter:

...that's clever [the technique].... It's very difficult to translate the word like koalifications... we don't share the same language structure.  
(Rawee\_AIIC)

...the audience laugh, which is the whole purpose of the joke.  
(Betty\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)

In contrast with Ava's intervention approach, Rawee supported the omission. She voiced her concerns about varying language structures which make the translation of puns virtually impossible. Betty, meanwhile, claimed that the omissive approach satisfied the communicative purpose since the interpretation made the audience laugh and achieved the speaker's objective: to induce laughter.

Nevertheless, approximately half of those interviewed would give an equivalent joke in the target language as opposed to explaining the joke. Such a view is exemplified in the following three extracts from Sara, Gavin, and Sunisa:

I just go with the flow... I just grabbed at whatever equivalent jokes in English I could find. (Sara\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

In order to produce a smooth rendition, Sara would quickly choose English 'equivalent jokes.' In other words, the interpreter could produce a substituted English joke in order to match the joke in Thai.

The only way to be able to do that [translating jokes] would be to have knowledge of an equivalent Thai metaphor or phrase that you could throw out so it would change the wording of the joke.  
(Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Conversely, Gavin urged interpreters to prepare Thai metaphors or sayings beforehand. He emphasised that the interpreted joke must be conveyed to the extent that the audience 'get it.'

I had to come up with some of my own jokes... It helps with interpretation... you can come up with something that's similar to the content quickly. (Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_30\_yrs)

Sunisa is working on a compendium of equivalent Thai phrases and idioms to enable interpreters to respond to challenging words. Jokes often challenge listeners with a 'violation of norms' (Vaid, 2006, p. 156); hence, second language speakers (often interpreters) heavily rely on linguistic and cultural competence to recognise which norm(s) is(are) being violated and attempt to reconstruct another violation in

another culture. Based on the concept of equivalence (Nida & Taber, 2003), the interpreter would arguably recreate a set of ‘equivalent’ beliefs (i.e., values regarded as humorous in another culture). Yet, how realistic is it for interpreters to achieve ‘equivalence’? Sara, Gavin, and Sunisa would aim to reproduce new jokes that stimulate laughter in new forms.

From the first-hand professional experience of beginner and intermediate participants, Fabia and Gary, a technique of omitting and altering the content emerged as the most popular one for dealing with jokes:

So, the Boomer in question was talking about milk [lockdown sales performance]... he was trying to say ‘กินนมที่บ้านดีกว่ากินข้างนอก’ [drinking at home is better than finding milk to drink outside]. (Fabia\_beginner\_4\_mths)

Fabia recounted how he dealt with an ambiguously sexual joke in an event related to non-alcoholic drinks. When the speaker used an incestuous undertone to say ‘กินนมที่บ้านดีกว่ากินข้างนอก’ [drinking milk at home is better than drinking outside], referring to female breasts, Fabia skipped the joke but it still received laughter from the foreign audience as they followed the laughter of the Thais.

Contrastingly, while simultaneously interpreting a joke, Gary changed the climax of the joke from possible sexual harassment to just killing the audience.

...a young female horse getting lost in the forest... she found... a young male horse and... asked... how can I get out of the forest? ...the male horse said, you have to sleep with me... and in the morning... the... male horse was gone... and she did that, three more times... In the end, she managed to get out of the forest herself, and she was pregnant. Do you know what colour would her baby horse be? [the speaker to the audience].... If you want to know, sleep with me tonight, and tomorrow I will tell you.... I’m tearing up as I’m telling you this because it was so bad. (Gary\_intermediate\_14\_yrs)

He considered this an ‘ethical alteration’ to maintain the speaker’s image. Interestingly, he asserted, ‘some time, we [interpreters] had to do something wrong to get out of the situation.’ In Gary’s justification, the joke was not significant to the meeting topic, which implied that omitting the interpretation would not create any miscommunication.

The previous two examples show that both interviewees paid close attention to the interpretation outcome. The audience could have been greatly offended had Fabia and Gary directly interpreted the jokes about the breast milk and the sexual exploits of a horse.

A few of the participants stated that they would explain that the joke is culturally distant or simply inappropriate (i.e., translation will not do the original content justice). Gavin and Alan, for instance, made the following remarks:

I try to tell a joke, and they [audience] all look at me... So, why is that funny? And I just take a deep breath in a depressed voice and go ‘*ขี้หนูหลั่ง*’ [A Western joke]. (Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

It was another dirty joke, so... I’m not gonna interpret that. (Alan\_intermediate/NAATI\_12\_yrs)

From the perspective of an American interpreter interpreting an English joke, Gavin would interpret the joke and quickly add a verbal footnote that it is a Western joke. Effectively, he utilised the fact that he is a foreigner to his advantage. Alan, meanwhile, omitted the joke and stated that it was excessively promiscuous to interpret; however, the audience followed his interpretation closely with a burst of hysterical laughter. Despite satisfying cultural transparency, interpreting a joke does not necessarily guarantee culturally well-received interpretations. Indeed, both Gavin’s and Alan’s admittances that the joke is not translatable appears to induce more laughter.

Overall, whether an interpreter takes the conduit role to report a joke, the mediating role to translate it with an explanation, or omitting the translation altogether, it has been shown that interpreters’ decisions can actively determine the direction of the meeting. Their role can no longer be confined to transferring from A to B because translating A to B is a choice amongst many. Only interpreting the message, in turn, reflects the personal outlook and belief in their role.

The findings are seemingly in line with the framework of visibility (Venuti, 2008), which suggests that interpreters can have an evolving and shifting role by remaining unnoticed or to be present. Each decision would have underlying implications to the

dynamics of the meeting. Further in-depth discussions can be found in Chapter 7. Next, the theme of conveying deeply embedded Thai practices will be reintroduced in the discussion topics of culture in interpretation, ethics, and censorship.

## 6.5 Core ICC Characteristics

This section observes the main desirable characteristics of ICC in interpreters by asking the participants for their opinions about interpreters' abilities to mediate cultures. There are four identified traits by answer frequency and extensiveness as suggested by Krueger et al. (2000, p. 136): (1) understanding of nuances and cultural references, (2) open-mindedness and adaptability, (3) intercultural experience and exposure, and (4) research skills.

### 6.5.1 Understanding of Nuances and Cultural References

Approximately half of the participants across all experience levels voiced understanding nuances and cultural references as the most desirable IC trait. The following extracts are from Emma, Patricia, and Jeff.

...it would be on cultural understanding... you would have to understand the Thai cultural expressions, as well as the English cultural expressions.  
(Emma\_beginner\_8\_mths)

Emma's answer suggests that she is starting to recognise the importance of cultural understandings or expressions in both languages.

As an interpreter, it doesn't mean that... if you can speak English, you can interpret, no. You need to understand that culture, as well, in order to be able to convey the meaning of whatever the content.  
(Patricia\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Since Patricia has interpreted for seven years, her answer appears more profound as pure language acquisition will not suffice for interpreting learners. Understanding the other culture will help the learners 'convey' when reverting to the clients.

...interpreters need to have studied subjects like history and civilisation to understand the background... to answer why they think in a certain

way, why they speak in a certain way. It makes us understand their intent.  
(Jeff\_highly\_experienced\_22\_yrs\_translated)

Jeff highlights the benefits of educating oneself with associated knowledge bodies surrounding a particular language (i.e., learning the history of the language as a foundation).

Other participants underlined the interweaving between language and culture concerns, such as language constraints, cultural sensitivity, empathy and awareness of cultural offence in other cultures, slang terms, and jokes. Even though the participants present different stages of reflection, all accentuate the significance of extending beyond knowing the language because language(s) can help to (re)enforce an individual's cultural worldview(s) (Kramsch, 2014; Sapir, 1929; Whorf, 1940).

### 6.5.2 Open-mindedness and Adaptability

Approximately 20% of participants agreed that being aware of differences and being open-minded is essential. The following describes insights from beginner and intermediate participants, Becca, Sara, and Julia, whose ideas are relatively comparable:

...you need to respect every culture... each culture has their own... uniqueness and beauty... you need to be open-mind to... learning new things and accept that there are different from you.  
(Becca\_beginner\_1\_yr)

There are so many shapes to all of us... not to mention cultures. So... if we... are understanding that people are just different... you'll be sympathetic and do your job well enough without having to even mediate between culture. (Sara\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

...the flexibility of or adaptive factors of yourself because you have to kind of bridge between two different cultures or different languages.  
(Julia\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

Becca, a beginner interpreter, concentrated on ensuring that she kept an open mind with clients from diverse backgrounds. At the intermediate level, the focus shifted to the importance of awareness building. Sara points to fostering an understanding that every individual is different, and that an interpreter with enough

sympathy may not need to mediate between cultures. A few others argued that interpreters require professional elasticity for impromptu solutions; for example, Julia highlights flexibility and adaptability when attempting to link cultural discrepancies. While an interpreter may need to put effort into connecting the missing pieces in cultural puzzles, an optimal starting point is to begin the task with an open mind.

### 6.5.3 Intercultural Experience and Exposure

Intercultural experience and exposure was the third most cited quality, supported by 15% of the participants. This group echoed that accumulating experience through interpreting people from other cultures is pivotal. The participants, comprising mainly intermediate and highly experienced individuals, made comments such as the following:

You don't have to be in different [country] ... but expose means... you look out to learning... differences in cultures and ... you get exposed enough not to have the assumption that your very own culture is the right one. (Jo\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

...after interpreting people from different cultures for quite a while, you tend to... have this ability to foretell beforehand... of how they are going to present their argument... there's a certain kind of structure. (Ava\_AllC)

For Jo, being exposed to cultures is not restricted to living in a particular country. She posits that raising questions about one's own cultural practices and reflecting on them are the keys to building foundations. However, doing so may be difficult because cultural values may have been 'input' since one's birth.

Ava focuses on experience accumulation. While there are resemblances to generalisation, she remarks that the experience of dealing with people of different cultures will guide the language speakers' thinking patterns. Her proposal could be an effective way to cope with differences, particularly when a multitude of intercultural possibilities is expected.

As an alternative to having experience through work, accumulating experience can also be achieved by spending an extended period in the target country. Such



immersion inculcates the person to a natural understanding of the place and its cultural values, as noted by Olivia:

...it should be someone who has lived in that culture... who knows what that culture entails... understanding the values.  
(Olivia\_highly\_experienced\_27\_yrs\_translated)

The skills necessary for intercultural mediation can be cultivated through time spent in a country where the language is spoken and the culture is practised. When considering Olivia's experience, earning a two-year Master's degree from Spain helped her acclimate to Spanish and the country's subtle cultural nuances. The journey helped this individual gain confidence to begin interpreting after her return to Thailand.

#### **6.5.4 Research Skills**

The last skill set required for IC is researching, which was echoed by a small fraction of those interviewed. The answers are analogous when comparing the two most experienced participants (intermediate), as shown in the following quotes:

...their ability actually comes from what they have searched for information. (Sky\_intermediate\_10\_yrs)

It's supposed to be the research skill... because you cannot know all kinds of things in other culture. (Alan\_intermediate/NAATI\_12\_yrs)

Although it was not easy to pinpoint critical skills, Sky summarises that the ability to look for potential differences is required (i.e., the speaker's thinking and communicative approaches). If the interpreter already knows the speaker's background beforehand, preparatory research can be performed to familiarise oneself with their thinking, communicative style, and sensitive points.

Alan's answer illustrates a similar belief. It is virtually impossible to understand every culture fully. For Alan, the solution lies in the research and preparation before an event to fill any potential void. By learning about the clients' nationality, for example, the interpreter could learn appropriate responses, including the clients' communicative characteristics.

This section has considered the characteristics vital for constructing ICC in interpreters, which will be revisited again under the theme teaching interpreters IC in the subsequent chapter.

To address RQ1, the findings suggested that encounters with other cultures in early childhood positively impacted the participants' desires to become interpreters and, arguably, the participants' subsequent understanding of IC when interpreting. The findings were informed by how interpreters arrived at IC-appropriate decisions in various culturally clashing scenarios and applied techniques.

Core ICC characteristics will be examined in the discussion topic of ICC in Chapter 7.

## **6.6 Intercultural Communication Education**

This section addresses RQ2 on the importance of IC in interpretation classrooms and training programmes (i.e., lessons that help construct ICC in Thai interpreters). Four themes emerged: (1) interpreters' prior understanding of ICC, (2) levels of interpreting training received, (3) studying intercultural communication, and (4) teaching interpretation and intercultural communication. These themes are informed by RQ1 findings and complemented by data from demographic and primary questions.

### **6.6.1 Interpreters' Prior Understanding of Intercultural Communicative Competence**

More than three-fourths of the participants appeared to be aware of or stated that they understood the term intercultural communicative competence (Falbo et al., 2019). With words such as 'may be' or 'let me think,' nearly all groups hesitantly stated that ICC refers to the ability to 'understand' the cultural aspects and 'convey' the message appropriately 'between different cultures.' Several perceived the term as a set of translating or interpreting techniques interpreters can use in their work, such as in the following remark from Gary.

...it's about techniques and approaches or how we approach the cultural interferences in our work. (Gary\_intermediate\_14\_yrs)

As an individual who regularly teaches short training courses, Gary paired the concept of IC with the act of translation or interpretation. He approaches IC from the practical side and treats it as an additional skill.

A few of the participants were able to explain the concept from a theoretical standpoint, such as Elizabeth:

IC is more like why and you hold on to the frameworks, but the cross-cultural communication, cross-culture, cross-cultural understanding is when you... can kind of categorise the differences. (Elizabeth\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

Such a detailed insight from Elizabeth may be due to her teaching background in IC. Elizabeth proposed a practical approach as she asked interpreters to dissociate themselves from the framework and effectively compare what it means in one culture and the other culture.

Overall, the participants' prior understanding of IC is mainly about the ability to transfer cultural values between two or more cultures, while considerably fewer subjects focused on combining the skills with interpreting or applying them beyond a mere theoretical framework. However, this does not necessarily mean rudimentary understanding is incorrect. Rather, most interviewees demonstrated that their understandings can be systematically developed further.

## **6.6.2 Levels of Interpreting Training Received**

This section describes the levels of interpretation training and foci that participants received during their careers, which is bifurcated into formal and informal programmes.

### **6.6.2.1 Formal Training**

Over 50% of the participants had undertaken formal training. Formal training refers to courses taken at undergraduate or graduate levels, as well as short training

courses organised by an institute, a university, or an association inside or outside Thailand. Formal university courses have only been taken by beginner and intermediate-level participants, whereas highly experienced subjects have attended short training programmes (See 6.3.1.1 Educational Path, Chapter 6, pp. 173–178).

Three groups of participants can be classified according to their educational experiences: (A) undergraduate or graduate programmes (8 participants), (B) those attending the short courses by themselves (7), and (C) those assigned to study interpreting by their organisation (4).

In the first group, eight participants or 20%, had gone to a university to take a course or earned an interpretation degree. Most had attended or were attending programmes provided by two Bangkok universities—one individual has an overseas degree.

The second group illustrates a personal effort and determination to participate in the industry. None had an interpretation degree; therefore, taking a course was a skill extension to their existing language proficiency, such as the one mentioned by Olivia:

...after I came back from Spain [earning a non-interpretation Master's degree], I took a simultaneous interpretation course for six months.  
(Olivia\_highly\_experienced\_27\_yrs\_translated)

Although studying in Spain equipped Olivia with foreign language skills, other necessary skills for interpretation still required further development. Her decision to take a short SI training course was a follow-up on a failed task she had done.

As for the third group, their organisation's sponsoring of training courses was a means to train their staff in the interpreting skills of a respective discipline.

I was the first batch of [Ministry personnel] to actually receive formal training... before this, it was pretty much [staff] being selected and then being placed directly on the field.  
(Emma\_beginner\_8\_mths)

Although what the organisations had done before implementing a scheme seemed like an impromptu solution—for example, to collaborate with an institute and produce competent staff—the participant’s statement reveals that effort was put into selecting the best-suited personnel as an interpreter from each department. The main foci encompassed the cognitive workload, skill development, succinct translation, code of ethics, note-taking, technical and instrumental issues, training the trainers, and others.

A few participants in this category had insights to share when asked about IC in interpretation. To the intermediate participant, Claire, cultural challenges were slightly embedded within the discussion of the word ‘disability’ and the cultural stigma attached to a translated phrase in Thai. However, according to the other participant’s professor, who taught the short course she had attended:

...the culture... the understanding of the meaning,... participants [training attendees] are supposed to have had [obtained] it from before, otherwise further develop by themselves.  
(Jo\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

With time limitations, the training course (attended by several individuals) was designed to cover the ‘hard skills’—interpreting practice, neglecting the IC aspects. IC is an area where the professor expects the participants to have formerly developed, or have taken responsibility for, IC-based skills. Likewise, some noticed a lack of engagement with IC in the SI classroom, as the following quote from Olivia highlights:

No one really talks about intercultural communication, especially in conference interpreting. (Olivia\_highly\_experienced\_27\_yrs\_translated)

Olivia pointed to reduced personal contact with SI; however, the findings previously suggested otherwise (See 6.4.3.1 Interpreting Regional Dialects, pp. 232–238).

Interpreters, irrespective of the mode, require ICC skills to mediate interpretation.

### 6.6.2.2 Informal Training

A little less than half of the participants stated that their training was informal. Informal learning often consists of self-practising and mentoring with a work colleague. First, self-practising (i.e., self-preparation) was applied by nearly a quarter of the participants. The process involves familiarisation with the lexical terms related to the topic and the speaker's verbal style. An example quote from an intermediate level participant is shown below—this level contains most of the participants:

...when I try to interpret something and I think it doesn't make sense, so I just try to figure out that the meaning online first.  
(Magnus\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

As highlighted above, researching and preparing information online helped Magnus self-learn with no formal training and, most importantly, enter the interpreting profession.

Alternatively, slightly less than 25% of participants credited observing and mentoring as beneficial learning processes, as well as receiving feedback from work colleagues or the audience. The following is a comment about training from one of the least experienced interpreters, Emma, who received a combination of formal, as shown previously, and informal advice:

...one of my senior colleagues... called me to... give some advice on preparations for the simultaneous interpretation next week. (Emma\_beginner\_8\_mths)

Emma's mentor recommended watching comparable seminars on YouTube to familiarise herself with the speaker. The technique resembles those who rely on self-preparation. Furthermore, Emma shared that she had observed live interpreting sessions. With the same set of preparation binders, the technique provides a replicated interpreting experience from preparation to execution of the interpretation. As it is done side by side with the responsible interpreter, the participant could discuss the word use with her mentor after the session. Despite being an informal type of training, a trend of systematic training development can

be observed (i.e., preparation in advance and mock interpreting with the actual interpreter).

Others stated that they had received feedback from work colleagues, focusing on word choice and other interpreting techniques: interpreting pauses. Overall, these feedback foci revolved around learning word choice, familiarising oneself with the speaker, adding and omitting the message, and coping with interpreting difficulties such as dealing with fast speakers and getting them to speak on point.

One participant, Magnus, uttered that, as a learner, he would pay attention to the aspects of ‘cultural difference,’ phrases, or concepts that would not make sense in the Thai language, illustrating the need for a concentration on IC training.

As a whole, while one-half of the participants was more fortunate to receive formal guidance, the other half went through an unconventional journey where self-regulation, determination, and discipline were required to succeed.

### **6.6.3 Studying Intercultural Communication**

This section concentrates on the studying of IC from the participants’ perspectives.

A little more than a quarter of participants had undertaken IC training through an independent course. In this thesis, an IC course refers to classes in universities, institutes, or companies that explicitly teach IC content. Eight participants took a compulsory course in IC from the same university, whereas a few others undertook a course operated by a company, wherein the course focused on diversity and creating sensitivity among employees. For example, Pam recounted the following:

It was a course for the foreigners working in [a hypermarket] in Thailand... to know about Thailand. I was enrolled in the course... to understand what they think. (Pam\_intermediate\_9\_yrs)

Designed to serve a company filled with Thai and foreign staff, the aim of Pam’s course was to enhance communication between personnel. This illustrates organisations and ventures do observe the importance of IC and incorporate training as part of their operations, apart from educational institutions.

Thus far, the findings indicate that existing IC courses are intended to satisfy a degree in English or translation, or ensure that mutual understandings are met between co-workers within an organisation; however, pertaining to IC in the context of interpretation, IC is yet to be applied to lessons.

#### 6.6.3.1 Lack of Intercultural Communication in Education and Alternative Learnings

The lack of IC in the study of interpretation was an issue raised by almost half of the participants. The insights were given as answers to whether the classes they had attended or taught had IC elements. Their insights ranged from an obvious negation ‘no, not at all’ (Becca) to an uncertain example such as ‘they talk about it [IC], but they... don’t really focus on it’ (Sunisa). Both statements show improvement possibilities to the current stage of IC application to interpreting classrooms.

More than half of participants credited intercultural exposure, the experience of living with a culture, or the embracement of activities that promote acculturation. In respect to intercultural exposure, immersing oneself in the country or the environment where the language is spoken and the culture is practised was seen as key to development of IC knowledge by these participants, as evidenced in the following quotes from Sunisa and Gavin:

I lived in Japan. I have been in America for over 25 years. I lived briefly in Mexico. (Sunisa\_highly\_experienced\_30\_yrs)

I spent more than half of my life in Thailand. So, I don’t see myself as being an American anymore. I’m a hybrid between the two. (Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

The multilingual ability of Sunisa seemingly stems from her vast immersive experience overseas. Moreover, she has taught herself multiple languages. The same was demonstrated by non-Thais who had spent years living in Thailand. Residing in Thailand for a prolonged period has given Gavin a ‘Thai cap,’ which, on occasions, allows him to shift and traverse the worldviews of the two cultural realms.

Other exposure techniques may be done through self-learning, such as researching or creating a learning-friendly environment, as remarked by Olivia and Alan:



I read Hall. I read Hofstede... (Olivia\_highly\_experienced\_27\_yrs; translated)

...computer games are very well made in terms of cultural representation... they try to add their own culture... like Japanese, they add... lots of Japanese culture into their games and US, as well. (Alan\_intermediate/NAATI\_12\_yrs)

The professional nature of a university lecturer is reflected in the method Olivia uses to find IC knowledge.

For others, language and culture may be acculturated through trivial outlets such as games and doing basic searches online. Alan acquired the 'cultural gist' by paying attention to the nuances and idiosyncrasies of other people displayed through computer games.

A lack of IC knowledge in the classroom seemed to have influenced nearly 50% of the participants to rely on overseas experience or alternative methods to familiarise themselves with new language(s) and culture(s).

#### 6.6.3.2 IC: Practised, but Not Explicitly Realised

Relevant to around half of the subjects, the heading above presents the current stage of IC application in interpretation teaching. Two sub-themes emerged: (1) classrooms that already implement IC but do not explicitly use the term IC, and (2) participants who practise IC without realising they do.

First, despite a dearth of exposure to IC lessons, as claimed by many participants, IC elements were already embedded in the classroom through materials related to culture. As per the participants who teach, here are comments from two trainers who work at the same university:

It's definitely one of the topics that we should discuss and should train our students... we took it for granted. (Omaki\_beginner\_3\_yrs)

Yes. All the time actually... now that you asked without myself even being aware of it. (Ava\_AIIC)

Omaki does not 'highlight' the topic and now realises that IC should be made more 'systematic' in teaching by using scenarios similar to the vignettes to replicate actual events.

Ava acknowledged that IC in her classroom might not be the correct approach, but it is considered cultural. She used the word 'criticise' where she would generalise how each group of English speakers are prone to act: the Japanese's pronunciation, the Germans' complex argument presentation, the Thais' convoluting speeches, or the Indians' 'flowery' word choice.

These examples lay the groundwork for students to take the practical steps to become qualified interpreters despite generalisation. It demonstrates that trainers are starting to adopt discussions of cultural implications into their teaching.

Second, it was evident that I had to clarify what IC meant before proceeding to question a few participants, although I had provided a list of definitions in the pre-interview package. They, however, demonstrated a high degree of IC practice during interpretation, while admitting that they did not understand if the situations shown would pose cultural issues or require mediation. Their insights would later suggest otherwise. The most conspicuous example is from one of the most highly experienced participants:

I still don't quite get exactly what you meant by that [cultural mediation]. Because being interpreters, we have to work with colleagues and speakers of different nationalities, and listen to different accents. I don't know whether you would call that intercultural [communication]. (Rawee\_AIIC)

Rawee's understanding of IC is already one where the interpreter works with people of different cultures. In spite of her unfamiliarity with the technical terms, she has used IC materials in class where students were challenged with accented English—that is, grasping English variations. This exemplifies that IC is nested in classroom discussions without the instructor's realisation.

Since the findings suggest that IC knowledge effectively and appropriately assists interpreters in performing their tasks, it is imperative for trainers to openly

acknowledge and create an interculturally-embraced learning environment for the benefit of learners.

### 6.6.3.3 Intercultural Communication Knowledge for the Interpretation Classroom

The following presents participants' abilities to extract IC and apply it to the interpreting profession. I selected a group of intermediate participants with agreeing and contrasting insights, two of which are shown below:

...that course [IC]... basically has become fundamental of my career... it is not just about the people from different countries... It's also people from different backgrounds, different religions... even in within the same countries such as Thailand. (Scarlett\_intermediate\_10\_yrs)

ICC is the root of interpretation.... It's like you're walking around in the dark, and you're bumping into things... ICC, to me, is turning on a flashlight... and think what is this, and why is it here and why am I bumping into it. (Gavin\_American\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

IC knowledge has enabled Scarlett to approach the people for whom she interprets in culturally understandable ways. The statement became relevant as she travelled and dealt with regional campaigns in her line of responsibility. The importance of IC expanded by facilitating her worldview to shift toward other people. Therefore, Scarlett is able to specifically delve into regional specifics and produce the most appropriate renditions for the foreign audience and the locals. She is an example of a Thai person who has adapted to domestic differences, whereas IC expands Gavin's cultural understanding.

For Gavin, cultural misunderstandings occur because people in the culture fail to question their own practices. As a non-Thai, immersing himself in the local culture and answering why certain practices exist helps Gavin distinguish and understand both sides.

Elizabeth, takes a different approach by viewing that both fields have a reciprocal learning relationship:

It's the other way around... My interpretation experience to teach ICC.  
(Elizabeth\_intermediate\_5\_yrs)

Elizabeth talked about an advertisement she had obtained from an interpreting event in the IC classroom. As a condom advertisement that targets Japanese audience, the talk surrounding the taboo subjects of sex and condoms had to be implicit to be culturally suitable. The participant used embedded nuances to approach high and low-context cultures as teaching materials. Elizabeth's case illustrates more profound connecting points between interpretation and IC. In particular, it can be construed that IC is advantageous when interpreters interpret, whereas their experience could reciprocally be applied in any class that teaches IC. The more one is understood and well-executed, the better the other benefits through the experience obtained.

#### 6.6.3.4 Practical Insights into Delivering Intercultural Communication Lessons

On the suggested content of lessons, when asked about the IC substance to be adapted into lessons, nearly 35% of those interviewed expressed a variety of perspectives. Two main points were learning from experiences or examples and covering contextual specifics. First, there are advocates of using real experiences and examples for the class, which contain scenarios, movies, documentaries, and testimonials:

...it should not... all be theoretical. The students should have a chance to put their knowledge into practice in real setting.... The student needs to have an opportunity to execute their skills. (Cherry\_beginner\_2\_yrs)

... ‘กบในกะลาครอบ’ [frog in the coconut shell]. When I teach Thai to them, they always link to their mother tongue... and their culture.... So, the Taiwanese would say, oh, we have the same, but our frog... is in the well, not in the coconut shell. (Pepper\_intermediate\_10\_yrs)

According to Cherry, the experience is individually different; therefore, the instructor can prepare ‘testimonies’ to increase the learning span of the students without restricting the lessons to the instructor's experience. She believes that learners should be given opportunities to bring their skills to the test (i.e., a simulated experience working as an interpreter or dealing with foreigners).

The second main suggestion is to insert the specifics of the culture and the language in the lessons. In her interview, Pepper suggested holding discussions on the use of idioms and comparing how different societies approach ideas (i.e., the Thai outlook and how it impacts societal values). The comparison between contextual idioms, she believes, can help learners question their beliefs and understand how values were established. While doing so, the instructor could keep in mind the target cultures that learners would encounter in the line of work and concentrate specifically on those cultures.

Last, one participant whose statement does not belong in any of the mentioned groups argued that IC cannot be taught in class:

No, you cannot teach intercultural communication in the classroom....  
Unless... you have... people of various cultures in the classroom.  
(Nicholas\_intermediate\_12\_yrs)

Overall, it would be ideal for an IC class to have members who are of international origins to exchange their values and practices. Still, it poses practical challenges to educational institutions, especially during the pandemic. By way of an alternative, the instructor can arrange invited speakers or exchange students through online means to recreate the environment to welcome international insights during class discussions.

#### **6.6.4 Teaching Interpretation and Intercultural Communication**

This section describes the interpretation and IC teaching stage in Thailand, consisting of three sub-themes: teaching license requirements, curriculum designing and teaching examples, and teaching limitations.

##### **6.6.4.1 Teaching License Requirements**

There are currently no license requirements for teaching interpretation in Thailand. Out of 40 participants, 16 had participated at some level of teaching, such as facilitating a formal class, being invited to speak on a selected topic, or informally offering advice to colleagues out of necessity and limited personnel resources. Sixteen is quite a large proportion of participants (40%), whereas only two

underwent a degree of vetting because they are/were based in American and Australian institutions.

An example of a participant who was required to pass a course is as follows:

I had to do a course... a six-month course... a lot of written assignments, practical assignments... I had to pass that...  
(Claire\_intermediate/NAATI\_15\_yrs)

Claire had to undergo and pass a series of tasks before being admitted to the university, whereas Sunisa in the US, who teaches privately, had to submit the course details to the state-approving committee. Compared with Thailand, there seems to be an informal system that heavily relies on connections with leading universities without any central accrediting agencies. Through an agreement between the university and the interpreter's association, Rawee was 'asked' to join the teaching team. It is crucial to acknowledge that Rawee is one of the teaching pioneers in the country (See 6.3.1.1 Educational Path, pp. 173–178). The other point that seems to have contributed to the problem is related to paired languages or lack thereof in Thai, as highlighted by Jeff:

...when I received the French government's scholarship, there was a problem with my pair languages because my mother tongue, Thai, was not one of the pair languages that the institute used.  
(Jeff\_highly\_experienced\_22\_yrs\_translated)

Jeff had to choose the translation strand instead of interpreting. His experience reflects the experience of those who wish to pursue Thai and English interpreting degrees. To my knowledge, as of 2022, Master's courses in Thai–English interpretation are rare in Western universities, with a few exceptions in Australian universities, such as RMIT (2022) and Western Sydney University (2019), while the majority of courses offered by other universities concentrate on European languages and a few exceptionally popular Asian languages (or even theories of interpretation). Even in Australia, as per Claire's experience, the annual 'expression of interest' could contribute to the shortage of teaching personnel with higher degrees in Thai interpretation.

#### 6.6.4.2 Intercultural Communication Curriculum Designing and Teaching Examples

Fifteen percent of those interviewed shared that they were responsible for designing interpretation curricula for public and private courses. Here is an example objective of an undergraduate course:

...the aim is to make them [learners] competent... The courses... at undergraduate level... are not meant to make people interpreters, they're just meant to... make them well rounded in the language. (Ava\_AIIC)

Ava expects English major graduates to be asked to do translation or interpretation tasks in their careers due to their perceived specialisations, hence the design of the course. Besides the four communicative skills, she goes on to explain how the goal is to 'combine' those skills to produce a 'well-rounded' language user. The course will not be adequate for those intending to be professional interpreters. If graduates wished to pursue an interpreting career, a Master's degree would be needed. Furthermore, when investigating how IC-focused lessons are brought into the interpretation lessons, the participants' insights suggest that instructors present IC in interpretation through direct experience and/or creating new teaching materials, with most using a combination of both. As per direct interpreting experiences, one trainer organises a compendium of incidents encountered into a document and shares it with the students.

Next, I will examine IC teaching materials through the use of scenarios, starting with the following two extracts.

French people eat lunch at 2 pm and Thai people eat at noon, so the negotiation at 12 is very torturing for the interpreter and the Thai side. (Jeff\_highly\_experienced\_22\_yrs\_translated)

...we had one scenario where a Muslim lady... an interpreter and she was working for a lawyer and when the session finished, the lawyer just reached out his hand for a handshake, but the interpreter.... she had to decline that handshake. (Claire\_intermediate/NAATI\_15\_yrs)

Jeff stated that he would explain to his students that the Thai clients in his scenario would have been in no mood to do business. The cultural difference causes them to

dislike the negotiation. There can be many further discussion points and challenges for the instructor or students to lead if this situation was raised.

Claire, whose scenario was in Australia, would allocate a session for IC discussions and a series of eight replicated scenarios as stimuli for the class (e.g., declining the handshake due to religious practice). Regarding informal coaching, the main form of advice rarely focused on the IC aspects of interpretation, but rather on interpreting types and skill development.

Julia, who deals primarily with Korean institutes, informally shares basic Korean etiquette with her peers, such as gift-giving in Korea, where gifts are collectively presented in one bag. In contrast, the Thais would present them to each person individually. The situation poses practical questions for the interpreter to mediate. Students in the class would brainstorm how to ‘tackle’ the issues. They are trained to be ‘proactive’ once they sense a foreseeable problem. These sources may be drawn from the internet or observation.

#### 6.6.4.3 Teaching Limitations

The conspicuous knowledge void of IC theories and lack of time devoted to it in classrooms largely contribute to the teaching limitations. Consider the following two comments:

...when I am invited to teach government officers... They would only give me three hours so... we need to train... every interpreting skill... so intercultural skills would not be the first thing that we teach. (Olivia\_highly\_experienced\_27\_yrs\_translated)

...as I have not been trained to give a session about intercultural communication in interpreting... I tend to choose the material ... [which] contains the intercultural... cultural issues, like years, or jokes or some puns. (Patricia\_intermediate\_7\_yrs)

For Olivia, time restriction and teaching content priority are the determining factors for the lack of IC teaching. Olivia explains that prioritisation of knowledge affects the instructor’s decisions since the main topics would cover interpretation techniques and ethics. In terms of knowledge specialisations, topics such as ‘critical



discourse analysis' (CDA) and 'sociocultural context' are lessons she can cover because of her background, while teaching in-depth IC is out of her scope. It is to be observed that Olivia is relatively IC-theoretically inclined compared to other instructors. Likewise, Patricia acknowledges the lack of IC knowledge and would adapt teaching materials from online sources and personal experience. However, the participant is one of the few who saw IC's importance and admitted that she teaches from 'common sense.'

Drawing on the findings, this section has described the importance of IC (RQ1) and the dearth of IC teaching and learning (RQ2). Professors and trainers use professional experiences and materials to tackle IC problems; the participants' insights illustrate a knowledge void among the trainers. In practice, interpreters employ IC as an integral part of their work but fail to realise it.

In closing, the findings suggest an indispensable role of IC in interpretation. The theme of IC education will be linked to the topic, teaching interpreters IC, in the discussion chapter. Informed by the findings, four main concepts, culture in interpretation, ethics, censorship in interpretation, and ICC will be used in the following chapter for further discussion.

## 7 Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

I present a synthesis of the secondary and empirical findings in this chapter, interpreted in light of three theoretical lenses. By linking to the relevant literature, the chapter brings translation and IC frameworks into the discussion of the interview findings, thus synthesising my interpretation of the findings with existing frameworks and addressing my two research questions.

1. What does intercultural communicative competence entail in the interpretation industry in Thailand?
2. What is the importance of intercultural communication in interpretation classrooms and training programmes in Thailand?

To chronologically discuss the findings, I divided the chapter into five sections: introduction (elucidating how the major findings and themes are grouped); culture (addressing RQ1); teaching interpreters IC (addressing RQ2); addressing research questions (a summary); and conclusions.

In terms of analytical frameworks, culture will be addressed in my answers to RQ1 by incorporating cultural dimensionality and translation visibility in the discussion. Subsequently, teaching interpreters IC will be on the ICC skills needed by interpreters. My investigation of these skills will be based on the ICC model proposed by Byram (1997, 2021) and will seek to explore IC in the interpretation classroom in order to address RQ2. Conclusions will end by identifying theoretical, professional, and educational contributions, while acknowledging research implications and suggesting further research directions.

### 7.1 Introduction: Sensitising Concepts

First, to explore RQ1, when looking holistically at the themes and sub-themes that have emerged in my study, four main concepts stood out. They are reorganised as culture in interpretation, ethics, censorship, and ICC, as shown in Table 7-1 below. Each can be traced back to the informing themes of the findings chapter. These four

concepts will help me address any intercultural conflicts that occur during my interpretations (RQ1), while also leading to technical solutions or skill-building guidance (RQ2).

**Table 7-1: Overarching Discussion Topics**

Informing Themes from the Findings According to Table 7-1	Themes for Discussion Chapter	Sub-themes	Conceptualising IC in the Thai Context Derived from the Findings Complemented by Byram (2020); Venuti (2012) and Vinay and Darbelnet Translation Strategies (1995)
	<b>8.2 Culture</b>		
➤ Culture-related Practices & Challenges for Interpreters	Culture in Interpretation	▪ Hierarchy Culture	○ IC as Intercultural and Ethical Remit
		▪ Culturally Expected Assistance	○ IC as Intercultural Sensitivity ○ IC as Visibility for Invisibility
➤ Culture-related Practices & Challenges for Interpreters	Ethics	▪ When Ethical Responsibilities Meet Cultural Expectations	○ IC as Invisibility (Non-Intervention) ○ IC as Visibility (Intervention) ○ IC as Intervention and Non-Intervention ○ IC as Modulation
		▪ Ethics in Unfamiliar Culture-related Interpretation ▪ Unfamiliar Dialects ▪ Unfamiliar Humour	○ IC as Omission ○ IC as Adaptation ○ IC as Borrowing and Explication ○ IC as Equivalence
➤ Culture-related Practices & Challenges for Interpreters	Censorship in Interpretation	▪ Ethical Interpretation	○ IC as Self-Censorship (Omission) ○ IC as Explication
➤ Core ICC Characteristics ➤ A Journey to Becoming an Interpreter	Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)	• Inadvertent Intercultural Communicative Competence Formulation	
	<b>8.3 Teaching Interpreters IC</b>		
➤ Intercultural	IC in the Interpretation Classroom: Closing the Gaps	• IC Teaching Engagement	

Communication Education		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systemising IC Teaching</li> </ul>	
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With respect to the conceptual frameworks used for addressing RQ1, the first model I employ is Hofstede's cultural dimensionality (2001; 2020), which includes dimensions related to the following: power distance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation versus short-term normative orientation. These dimensions will be used to make broad comparisons between Thailand, the United Kingdom, and other countries where necessary (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede Insights, 2020).

The second model relates to the translators' visibility (Venuti, 2008), which establishes that interpreters are not restricted to the role of being a conduit but can intervene to mediate if needed. By challenging the conventional role of translators, the analytical layer this model provides unlocks the possibility of examining the shifting roles of interpreters with regard to cultural circumstances.

As shown in Table 7-2, I have provided a holistic conceptualisation of IC in Thai-English interpreters by combining the translation analysis of the participants' most chosen techniques with the frameworks of Byram (2021), Venuti (2008), and Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) seminal work on translation strategies.

In view of translation strategies, the procedures are based on two types of translation: literal and oblique translation. The former refers to sentences that maintain structural, lexical, and morphological equivalence, while the latter is a technique that focuses on the gist of the message and does not follow word-for-word strategies. I will focus mainly on the latter.

The cultural dimensions, on the other hand, provide analytical guidelines to explore cultural tendencies. For RQ2, there are two sub-themes for discussion: IC teaching engagement and systemising IC teaching. I will begin teaching interpreters IC by addressing the challenges of teaching interpreting and IC studies in Thailand. The goal of this phase of the conclusion is to provide an overview of the teaching

situations in Thailand. The analytical framework for this section will be Byram's ICC Model (1997, 2021).

## **7.2 Culture**

This section addresses RQ1, specifically the perspectives that interpreters, while utilising their ICC and cultural dimensionality, frequently switch between the visible and invisible role. I begin with the topic of culture in interpretation (for a more comprehensive discussion of the conceptual models, see Chapter 3, pp. 81–99).

### **7.2.1 Culture in Interpretation**

As discussed in the literature review, language and culture are heavily intertwined (see 2.3.4.1, pp. 54–56), which means that when speakers of one language speak, they often exhibit their cultural worldview through their spoken vernacular. Since RQ1 seeks to determine the characteristics of ICC in Thai–English interpreters, this section begins by focusing on the cultural values that can potentially influence decisions made by interpreters, thus engendering additional assistance beyond the interpreting role while also fulfilling cultural expectations. This section, therefore, links to the findings related to culture-related practices and challenges for interpreters.

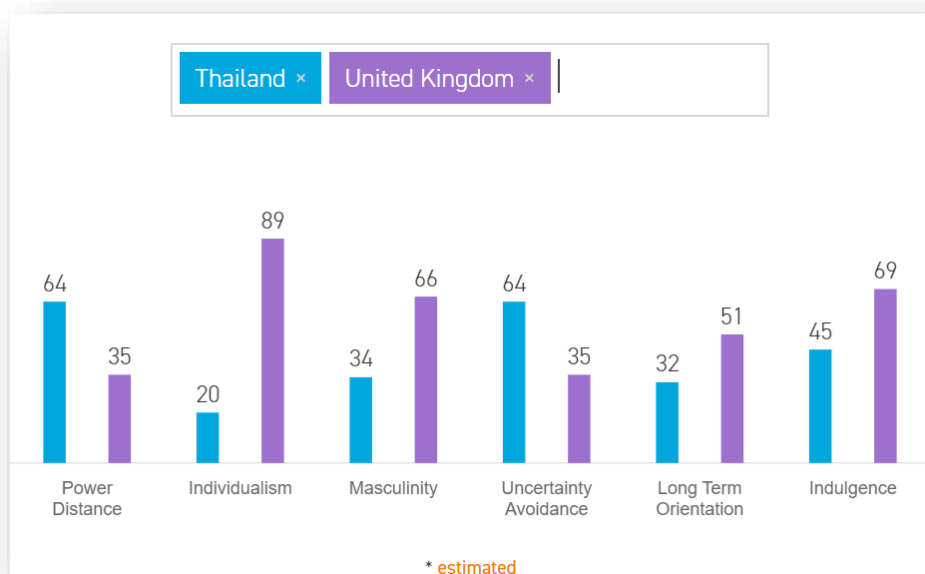
This section is divided into two headings: hierarchy culture and culturally expected assistance.

#### **7.2.1.1 Hierarchy Culture**

As one of the major factors for intercultural mediation—according to the interview findings—hierarchy culture based on age is seen by the study's participants as a critical factor that influences an interpreter's work in Thailand. Specifically, participants suggested that the older the interpreter is, the easier their interpreting job tends to be. For instance, they believed that younger interpreters often experience more social disruptions that interfere with the interpreting process, and that younger interpreters are frequently asked to do additional work. Moreover,

interviewees often remarked that age boosts confidence in older interpreters, regardless of their professional experience. These phenomena can be partly explained by Hofstede's scale (2001; 2020) of low/high *power distance*, or the level of acceptance that socio-economically challenged individuals within a society are prepared to accept with regard to social inequality.

As shown in Figure 27 below, based on a scale of 0-100, Thailand's score of 64 implies that its citizens are more likely to be in acceptance of an unequal society, meaning there tends to be a socially recognised respect for age and other essentialist markers that stratify power relations in society. In contrast, the United Kingdom's score of 35 implies that Britain's social hierarchy may be less reliant on essential markers of power. Consequently, when interpreters perform their tasks, it may be the case that participants from a lower power distance country, such as Thailand, would be expected to support their bosses or people of power more (e.g., by showing deference to those who might likely govern the conversation or pave the way to an easier ascent on the corporate ladder). Alternatively, countries with a higher power distance score would likely produce individuals who adhere to the rules and regulations of interpreting rather than kowtowing to some aspect of the client's identity/professional role. Moreover, in Thailand, the way one treats their boss(es) may, in turn, be critical to the process of becoming a boss as well. Overall, these differing scores between Thailand and the UK suggest that the interpreters from each country may have to mediate between systems of social inequality that are based on different indexicals of power.



**Figure 27: Hofstede's Score Between Thailand and the United Kingdom (Hofstede Insights, 2020)**

In this thesis, Hofstede's scores (2001; 2020) seem to correspond to the interview findings, since the scores may reflect how age impacts certain aspects of Thailand's social strata. Fundamentally, the older a person, the more likelihood of them having collected more lived or professional experiences, and thus the more deserving of respect they are in the eyes of their counterparts in many societies (including Thailand). Indeed, some participants reported experiencing difficulty interpreting because of their relatively young age, whereas others believed that older interpreters are seen as more trustworthy by their clients. This is an example of how cultural dimensionality can be used as a guide for intercultural patterns of prospective clients.

#### 7.2.1.1.1 IC as Intercultural and Ethical Remit (Responsibility to Intercultural and Ethical Principles)

Interpreters working with older clients may be required to offer additional assistance (e.g., being asked to give physical assistance or not to interpret a message by an older client). While doing so, the interpreters may be demanded to intervene in the conversation to conform to ethical responsibilities. In Vignette 2, for example, the scene shows an older client asking a female interpreter to omit the translated messages and assist him while standing up from the chair (9.4.3, Appendices, p. 433).



Moreover, the document analysis unveils that such mediation is prevalent and can be identified in many professional fronts, such as diplomatic interpreting (Bharntong, 2010), healthcare interpreting (Tantiwatana, 2012), human trafficking (Prousoontorn, 2010), migrant workers (Rassiri, 2008), and business (Markomol, 2010).

Based on the interview data, three main points can be summarised. First, participants widely asserted that the elderly patient's request should not compromise the patient's physical well-being despite his age affording him a higher social status. Second, participants expressed that if the situation had occurred in Thailand, most would decline the request to omit the implied comment about the doctor's inexperience and the patient's health conditions. The majority of those interviewed would interpret verbatim rather than following the patient's request to omit the message. Following what seemed like the female interpreter being uncomfortable when fulfilling the elderly patient's request, the explanation of her role showed that interpreters might be 'visible' (Venuti, 2008). In other words, the female interpreter clearly clarified to the patient that she had a duty to fulfil and restrictions with which she needed to comply. To be transparent and invisible, the interpreter had to make their voice heard by stating that the requested omission was not possible for the patient. This interview finding also indicates that respect towards age was reprioritised when it clashed with occupational prestige.

Although age is a significant indexical of respect in many cultures, the interview findings suggest that age was only one factor among others that could have shaped the situation's outcome. For example, occupational prestige may be attached to certain professions, such as being a physician, which is a prime example of a highly honoured career in Thailand. Culturally, respect would be expected when dealing with Thai physicians, regardless of age. When the doctor was questioned about his age by the senior client, most participants expressed concerns because they recognised that those in Thailand who fail to show respect to physicians might be at risk of violating and disrespecting social norms. By 'senior,' I refer to seniority by age.

What I am claiming here is that an interpreter may apply a country's power distance score as an extra layer of consideration when interpreting. A reference point is that age is critical in many interactional situations, but it is not the only contributor to establishing social power distances in interactions—it can be combined or even overwritten by social norms and the interpreter's perspective on their professional identity. This shows that the interpreter uses IC as a part of the intercultural and ethical remit to make an independent decision.

In consideration of Byram's model (1997, 2021), since each culture contextualises age differently, it would be advantageous for interpreters to attain the *savoir* (knowledge) of their own culture as well as that of the clients' and anyone else involved in an exchange. Thus, it is essential that 'intercultural speakers' equip themselves with various cultural norms so that they may become aware of any underlying issues or causes of clashes in shared communication. This shows that IC is a means of intervention for the interpreter to fill in any cultural gaps.

In acquiring cultural familiarisation, an interpreter may include learning about the products, practices, and processes of the targeted cultures from one's own group and the other interlocutors. In this respect, the knowledge would entail understanding the underlying cultural connotations of age, such as what values are attached to it in Thailand, the UK, or perhaps in Urdu or Pashto-speaking cultures (as shown in Vignette 1 details). Interpreters with *savoir* (knowledge) about their own culture and others' cultures would likely be more prepared to navigate any differences and produce culturally appropriate interpretations. This is a demonstration that IC plays an integral mechanism by allowing interpreters to balance IC and ethical responsibilities in the interpreting routine.

There were also moments when participants were asked to give additional assistance, which was arguably outside of their interpreting duties, yet such assistance was warranted in light of their cultural norms.

### 7.2.1.2 Culturally Expected Assistance

#### 7.2.1.2.1 IC as Intercultural Sensitivity (Awareness of Diverse Cultural Backgrounds)

There were cases in which interpreters had to be interculturally sensitive to cultural expectations of the interpreting environments in order to depict politeness to both sides. As shown in Vignette 1, in terms of additional assistance, the interpreter refused to fulfil most of the client's requests, which included answering personal questions and providing transportation (9.4.3 Appendices, p. 433). Most Thai participants postulated that it is culturally obligatory to assist their clients, although the action may be considered outside their expected professional roles. In their view, assistance is still a highly-demanded value by interpreters of Thai descent. This is despite their working in the UK.

According to one participant, the phrase 'we [Thais] are pretty friendly' exemplifies how the majority of those interviewed look at the quality of cordiality as a collective characteristic of Thai people. The sentence was expressed in reaction to an interpreting scene at a UK hospital with a Pakistani interpreter. Participants remarked that alternative ways to convey friendliness, such as allowing small conversations, politely educating the client on the interpreting procedure, or suggesting transport options, are three approaches that a Thai interpreter should offer.

A sense of belonging to one's own group can be linked to Hofstede's low/high *individualism and collectivism* score (2001; 2020). Hofstede defines individualism as the extent to which social members rely on one another, meaning an individualistic society upholds self-value. In contrast, a collectivistic society arguably honours in-group relationships. Collectivism is a broad term, but what does a collectivist Thailand entail? *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* website postulates that collectivism emphasises the opposite of 'individual action or identity' (2023). Thailand's score of 20, which is relatively low, may be construed as quite collectivist. Therefore, Thai are likely to operate collectively, whereas Britons, with a high score of 89, would tend to emphasise the individual self.

To my knowledge, Thai culture tends to be macro-constrained by seniority structures and a lack of democracy; the society has a tendency to be led by seniors without reaching a consensus, while the fear of losing face highly influences people's decisions. This kind of collectivism may be linked to the concept of 'เกรงใจ' (k<sup>h</sup>wa:mkre:ɲaj [KKJ]), Intachakra (2012) elaborates that Krieng-jai literally means 'fear of hearts.' The term can metaphorically mean not wanting to bother or disturb others. Those wanting to conform to a Thai lifestyle ought to take into account the feelings of other people from the Thai perspective (i.e., a showing of their fear of hurting other people's hearts). However, the non-Thai participants expressed similar attitudes towards helping to that of the Thais—the two participants from South Korea and the US advocated help and assistance on separate occasions. However, South Korea has a low individualism score of 18, while the US is 91 (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede Insights, 2020). Arguably, this latter score represents the sampled Americans' individualistic ideology and individual values. In this view, the scores do not correspond to their matching views on providing help and assistance.

When examining the *savoirs* as strands of skills which can be developed, it can be implied that intercultural sensitivity is an individually-formed trait and should not be concluded based exclusively on a national score.

#### 7.2.1.2.2 IC as Visibility for Invisibility (Explicitly Establishing Boundaries for Impartiality)

Another factor to consider comes in terms of rules and regulations. This factor is related to a Vignette 1 scene, where a Pakistani interpreter is inundated with a number of the client's personal requests (9.1.1, Appendices, p. 410). Being a registered interpreter for the UK's public services, which includes the NHS, may have bound this interpreter to specific cultural and professional obligations. These may have affected the interpreter's independence in making decisions and eclipsed a different set of cultural expectations than they had acquired in Pakistan. In turn, this may have led to a series of unmatched expectations, such as the client being told not to discuss personal issues or to ask the concierge about transport options by himself, even though they do not have the ability to speak English.

Interestingly, there is perhaps a discrepancy in regard to work acceptance and responsibility in the AIIC's code of ethics. On the one hand, under the General

Principles of Professional Ethics and Conduct towards Clients (2022b), in article 1, under professionalism, it is stated that ‘Members of the Association shall not accept any assignment for which they are not qualified. Acceptance of an assignment shall imply a moral undertaking on the member’s part to work with all due professionalism’ (pp. 2–3).

First, from my interpretation of this regulation, it is the interpreter’s role to ensure that they are qualified for the job, which may include offering additional assistance to the patient. The interpreter could have considered the provision of physical assistance a breach of ethical adherence and declined the requests. On the other hand, in article 8, under Conduct towards Clients, the topic of loyalty and integrity prescribes that ‘the exercise of the profession shall be based on principles of independence, impartiality and responsibility. Members of the Association shall base their relationship with clients on the principles of loyalty and integrity’ (AICC, 2022a, p. 3). Professional flexibility can be construed in interpreting words like independence and responsibility. The terms offer leeway to the interpreter to intervene. Still, they could have also pressured the interpreter into making difficult decisions since they would need to find a contextualised balance in the ethical responsibilities regardless of a final decision to help or not to help.

According to the theory of invisibility (Venuti, 2008), on the other hand, one could argue that when the interpreter explained the interpreting process to the client, he did so to remove himself from the interpretation process. This produces a type of interpretation that ‘masquerades as true semantic equivalence’ (Venuti, 2008, p. 21), meaning there is an impression that the interpretation is undisturbed and transparent. However, the noticeable intervention by the interpreter, in turn, created a series of new problems. The interpreter could have generated a more ‘fluent’ interpretation had the patient been less aware of the interpreter’s ethical filter—that is, executing regulatory protocols more discreetly for more natural control of the situation. By explaining his role, the interpreter has extended beyond being just an interpreting mechanism; thus, this finding reiterates the importance of intercultural mediation and contributes to addressing RQ1.

The savoir of attitudes by Byram (1997, 2021) can provide an outlook into the vignette interpreter's rationale. This savoir involves a suspension of disbelief about other groups and disengagement from one's own beliefs—that is, a willingness to question one's own values and take (or not) the initiative and 'relativise' their own beliefs with other sets of beliefs. In the Pakistani interpreter's case, there appears to be a negotiation between professional boundaries and expected cultural politeness. The interpreter embraced legal obligations (i.e., interpreters adhering to rules and regulations) more than cultural politeness. However, some participants argued that the benefits of clarity and inclusiveness as a result of his intervention outweighed a superficial presentation of friendliness and manners. It suggests that if the interpreters were to explain their role politely, it would require them to relate the two cultural values by acting as a mediator to elucidate the missing medical and cultural context for the foreign patient, who is ultimately facing hardship in a foreign country. This example demonstrates that savoir attitude is dynamic and continuously bargained, and that it can assist the interpreter in reaching the most appropriate utilisation of intercultural values between interlocutors of various backgrounds.

When considering the legality of interpreters in Thailand (Australian Embassy in Bangkok, 2016), the responsibility for mediation arguably becomes pronounced and more directed to the interpreters to monitor the situation and fully utilise their savoir attitudes. The extended responsibility demonstrates that the interpreter's attitude determines their choice to perform socially-expected rituals. Therefore, it can be argued that being an interpreter requires flexibility, negotiation, and contextualisation.

In terms of role, whether the interpreter's intervention has fostered visibility or invisibility depends on the perspective. The interpreter is required to approach the situation by thinking multi-dimensionally in order to facilitate politeness. From the client asking many personal questions to providing transportation to his home, the most popular approach to minimise misunderstandings between cultures and prevent unexpected requests is to clearly state the job descriptions and limitations from the beginning or give a self-introduction and explain professional boundaries. The

participants could use IC to be visible before they can be invisible (i.e., to explain the boundaries of their role).

These summarised points reiterate the findings that interpreters can oftentimes mediate cultures by utilising ICC and using the cultural dimensionality scores for a baseline understanding of other cultures. This view agrees with the findings of the document analysis, whereby culture was viewed as a subject that has to be mediated in various interpreting contexts.

### **7.2.2 Ethics**

Drawing on the findings related to culture related practices & challenges for interpreters, this section extends further into the cultural aspects of ethical translation and its relations to IC. The section seeks to understand how interpreters, when prompted with ethically challenging intercultural scenes, prevent or resolve conflicts and justify their solutions. It discusses the ethical implications of legal obligations that are attached to the interpreting role, particularly with respect to how interpreters negotiate the space between ethical and cultural compliance. In this section, I argue that interpreters use an extended mediating role by doing more than they are expected to do, which is done to satisfy expectations rather than legal requirements.

To recognise the relationship between ethics and culture, one needs to be informed of the ethical underpinnings for interpreters in terms of culture. Anthony Pym (2012) reflects on classical translated works in *On Translator Ethics: Principles for Mediation Between Cultures*. He claims that ethics does not equate to heroic ethical acts, for which he gives an example of an interpreter who struggles to take consecutive notes in the rain. At the same time, the interpreter lends the umbrella to a political figure for whom he/she works. Pym explains that this kind of sacrifice can hinder the translators' more profound ethical and cultural contributions, and argues that translators are the mediators who should perceive ethics in terms of cooperative cultural relationships in an intercultural space. This space is a void between cultures and is thus not attached to one specific culture.

Within this intercultural space, I argue that translators/interpreters can facilitate and bridge intercultural understandings—it is arguably an area where interpreters are aware of their access and attachments to both worlds. Pym also urges scholars to investigate this space because the regulations stipulated for translators often prescribe what translators are not allowed to do rather than advising what to do. As my thesis aims to understand how interpreters move and make judgments to suit two worlds, my objective seems to fill the gap in terms of the following two functions: (a) exemplifying that interpreting between intercultural spaces requires bridging cultural differences beyond the linguistic discrepancies; and (b) suggesting guidelines for interpreters working in and between these spaces.

Furthermore, Pym (2012) postulates two cross-cultural translation principles: (a) translators' ethics should be based on intercultural judgements by avoiding establishing binary comparisons; and (b) translators play an essential role in maintaining long-term and stable cross-cultural cooperation. Pym's argument is relatable to interpreters who find themselves in the midst of cultural differences but not necessarily conflicts. In theory, it is the interpreter's position and responsibility to reconcile any disproportionate levels of misunderstandings and ensure a smooth transition of information between all parties involved. Nevertheless, in practice, one of the challenges in interpretation is when socio-cultural expectations defy ethical compliance, resulting in professional danger. The underlying question is whether such life-threatening acts (i.e., interpreting political messages that could be deemed illegal) could affect and alter the interpreter's decisions because of the risks associated with them. Would the visible/invisible roles still be applicable in those threatening situations? Under what circumstances does survival start to overshadow their ethical commitments?

#### **7.2.2.1 When Ethical Responsibilities Meet Cultural Expectations**

While the interview findings demonstrated that the interpreter's voice and decisions may be visible when they need to address cultural differences, it was found that the interpreter's role is often regulated by the setting and influenced by the client's and local culture's practices (of where the meeting takes place).



The following discussion explores this issue further and is based on a scene from Vignette 1 where the client asks the interpreter to change his address (9.4.3, Appendices, p. 433).

#### 7.2.2.1.1 IC as Invisibility (Non-Intervention: Not Becoming Involved in the Conversation)

First, the ethical challenges of the interpreter's non-intervention were underlined in the vignette scene where the client asked the interpreter for help to change his registered address. In the interview data, two opposing views were voiced about the interpreter's approach: the approach either ethically conforms to legal obligations or creates a hindrance to the interpreting process. On the one hand, it was appropriate for the interpreter on the scene to explain the process clearly and allow the client to fill in the form, as it would normally have legal implications for the patient. On the other hand, the opposing view was that if the objective was to change the client's address, the interpreter could have done it on behalf of the patient. Instead, the process of explaining seemingly caused some confusion between the patient and the clerk.

With respect to the interpreter's visibility, although the vignette interpreter's explanation was provided for the transparency of translation, the detailed protocol seems to have puzzled the client and the clerk. The interpreter tried to set the scene by strictly monitoring the client and the clerk, while also designating that they speak to each other directly. If the interpreter's goal was not to be seen, the process seems to have produced the opposite result, which is to visibly instruct the flow of the conversation. If the plan was to detach oneself from the conversation, the interpreter became more visible than what had been anticipated.

Although Venuti (2008) categorises visibility as foreignisation and domestication of translation, visibility, in the vignette, had a different outlook and overlapped with intervention. For example, when the interpreter said to the hospital staff, 'I've asked you to please address the patient. He is talking to you, not me' (Vignette 1), the client's and clerk's facial expressions showed that they were uneasy and possibly offended. If the process to ensure that the interpretation is ethically transparent causes the interlocutors to feel unease, then would it still be considered an ethical

approach? If such an approach to being transparent causes disruption to the communication process, then it is likely to be problematic and ought to be rethought.

Furthermore, ethical and cultural negotiation was stressed by the absence of a donation receipt in Thailand (9.4.3, Appendices, p. 427). Most participants voiced concerns that the choice would be between conforming to legal obligations or explaining a widely practised donation norm in Thailand. The interpreter's visible role in this instance was exemplified by the legal difficulties of an investigative interpretation session in Vignette 3. The situation presents a misunderstanding arising from an employee's failure to provide a receipt to the company; his action conforms to his cultural norm but defies the company's policy. The ethical implications here lie in whether ethics are about not intervening for legal transparency or intervening for shared understandings which are achieved by explaining cultural gaps. The focus is on having the interpreter transfer the message from language A to language B without inserting or omitting anything. The main argument from the participants is that continuous interrogation with interruption could be used as an interrogative technique to extract information for the interviewee. This outlook resembles the role of the conduit, where the interpreter only filters from one language to another, ideally by not injecting their thoughts and values (Hsieh & Kramer, 2012). This suggests that any interrogation would have translated into a process disruption.

#### 7.2.2.1.2 IC as Visibility (Intervention: Intervening to Mediate in the Conversation)

In view of utilising IC by intervening to mediate in the conversation, other participants demonstrated that explaining the role of culture was a needed ethical intervention. It was argued that it would be unethical for the interpreter to keep interpreting despite being aware of the cultural discrepancy and misunderstanding. This view is exemplified by the idea that the interpreters' role is to diminish linguistic and cultural barriers, resembling one of Pym's (2012) translation principles whereby cross-cultural cooperation can only be maintained if the interpreter agrees to play their part effectively. Without the necessary intervention, both sides of the communication would have to go back and forth without gaining further ground. Having the position and the responsibility to bridge gaps between

misunderstandings, the interpreter is to appropriately match the time and place of intervention: asking for permission, finding the appropriate moments, and translating the inserted message for transparency; all three aspects in unison were as equally important as the content.

#### 7.2.2.1.3 IC as Intervention (Intervening in the Conversation) and Non-Intervention (Intentionally Not Becoming Involved in the Conversation)

According to the latest dimension of low/high *indulgence and restraint* score, added by Hofstede et al. (2010), an indulgent society rarely controls its desires. According to Hofstede's interpretations, as a mid-range scorer, Thailand's figure of 45 is difficult to interpret. On the other hand, the UK's score of 69 arguably indicates that it could be an indulgent nation, where living life to its fullest and materialistic spending tend to be preferred. The level of indulgence, however, does not necessarily correlate with the country's wealth. In this case, it could be argued that the donation is not for indulgence but for the well-being of the company's wealth. Moreover, despite Thailand being a strictly regulated country in terms of financial regulations overseen by the Bank of Thailand (Chen et al., 2020), in this example, the notion of 'ไม่เป็นไร' 'mai-pen-rai' or as directly translated as 'It's not substantial' in Panpothong and Phakdeephassook (2014, p. 99) is said to be applied to various use contexts, such as consolation, declining help, or settling that a dispute is not of any importance. This thinking may have contributed to the shared mentality of Thai people's relaxed and laid-back lifestyle, suggesting that failure to present financial evidence should not be taken seriously and can be remedied.

The interview data also indicated that some companies allocate an additional budget for business negotiation, meaning companies could reimburse their employees for visits to restaurants, nightclubs, or even massage parlours. In this instance, the vignette details match my interpretation of the score, implying that the Thai employee would likely be perplexed as to why he/she is being questioned about such justifiable and culturally appropriate spending. On the other hand, because of the cultural differences between Thailand and the US, the American interrogator might have been perplexed as to why such expenditure is allowed to exist in a firm. This is one gap that the interpreter needs to carefully bridge by using IC knowledge and explaining any conflicting expectations.

Furthermore, in terms of ICC skills, the interpreter could benefit from *savoir comprendre*, a set of interpreting and relating skills that encompasses the interpreter's aptitudes as they relate to interpretive abilities (Byram, 1997, 2021). The theory states that individuals could apply this form of *savoir* to help decipher cultural manuscripts or decode intercultural conflicts that demand mediation. For instance, the interpreters, in this case, may act as mediators when explaining the Thai norms of donation to foreigners. They could explain that this spending is allowed and even encouraged as the donation is often given on behalf of the company's business prospects. The interpreters, who intervene by elaborating on cultural ambiguities as a visible interpreter, are seemingly combining visibility and *savoir comprendre*. Although one might argue that the skill to relate and bridge cultures can work implicitly as an analytical structure for interpreting—the skill is more pronounced when the interpreter is visibly present.

Regarding the type of explanation and the intervention methods, several participants considered a socio-cultural explanation necessary since the interpreter needs to create a window of opportunity for intervention. This is where the interpreter is to employ *savoir comprendre* in order to untangle the intercultural nuances that invite mediation. Inserting information during a break or asking for permission before giving information was suggested to ensure mediation transparency. Though interpreters must follow professional rules and ethics stipulated by governing bodies to maintain objectivity, the reality suggests otherwise, as their subjectivity or *savoir comprendre* regulates their actions during live interpretation. The utilisation of *savoir* corresponds to the role beyond the bounds of an invisible conduit (see also Davidson, 2000; Farini, 2012a; Liddicoat, 2016a; Wadensjö, 2017).

#### 7.2.2.1.4 IC as Modulation (Amending the Perspective of the Message)

The topic of ethics continued in the discussion of diplomatic sensitivity in Vignette 5, where the interpreter modified Donald Trump's remarks about the First Lady of France (9.4.3, Appendices, p. 434). Diplomatic interpretation is considered a high-stakes interpretation as figures of power, including leaders and policymakers, often discuss multinational matters through an interpreter (Kadrić et al., 2021). Diplomatic interpreters carefully navigate the translation process to avoid

compromising the relations between countries. Based on the interview findings, more than half of the participants would amend Donald Trump's compliment to avoid offending the French President and his wife. For the participants, removing the original message would not alter the crux of the message, while preserving the compliment poses greater risks to the interpreter and the clients. This approach is in agreement with the approaches proposed in Bharnthong's dissertation (2010) (see 5.1.4.2 Diplomatic Interpretation, Chapter 5, p. 155).

Given the previous discussion point, I reiterate the definition of ethics in terms of IC in relation to Pym (2012), wherein being ethical requires interpreters to mediate between an intercultural space. Being ethical can also be understood in terms of two goals: maintaining relations and being faithful to the clients.

Participants who work with diplomats were aware of the political protocol for state meetings (i.e., speakers take turns speaking and exchange gifts as a closing). As conveyed by most Thai participants, diplomatic interpreters work in environments where minimal political incorrectness is expected. At the same time, they are pressured by the media's presence. Consequently, when the interpreter in the vignette left out President Trump's compliment, they rewrote the interpretation—they essentially became visible by modifying the message, transforming it from 'good physical shape. Beautiful' in English to 'you are in great health' in French. Such a technique leads to a more conventional compliment among the target language audience.

I would argue that the vignette interpreters' action is a technique for adapting or toning down the message to suit the target audience. Indeed, when asked how they would interpret the compliment if it were for a Thai Prime Minister's wife, the participants suggested replacing the original message with abstract words and phrases, such as beautiful, lovely, good health, and elegant. As a form of modulation in translation, participants explained that this would be done to detach the translation from commenting on body shape, which can be seen as sexist in many cultures. In other words, the abstract words/phrases the participants chose were seemingly a safer alternative for the interpreters since they are generally less misogynistic in comparison to Donald Trump's language choices.

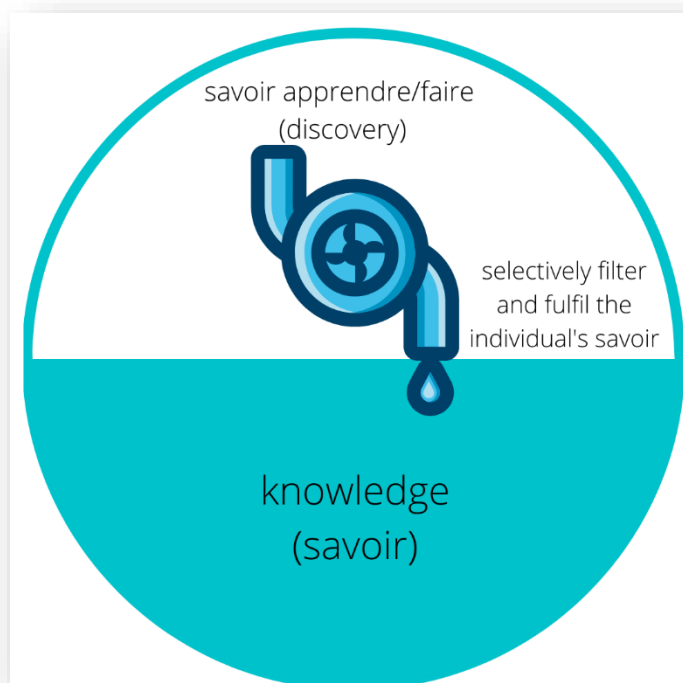
The discussion will now turn to Hofstede's low/high *uncertainty avoidance* score (2001; 2020), which refers to a willingness to adapt to novel and ambiguous changes. I will start by presenting a country with a high score compared to a country with a low score; Thailand scores 64 in this respect, while the UK scores 35. The scores imply that Thailand may be somewhat ambivalent regarding adapting to changes, whereas the UK would likely be more resilient to uncertain events. In other words, UK enculturated interpreters may be more able to adapt to sudden changes or disruptions than Thai interpreters. With an open interpretation of Thailand, the uncertainty avoidance score could signify that interpreters from the UK would likely be able to deal with any stresses more than those from Thailand.

In view of the vignette characters, France scores 86 with respect to the avoidance score, implying that French culture's negotiations and meetings are arguably well-structured. This suggests that there may be a tendency for attendees in French meetings to receive meeting details beforehand, while any deviations from the original plan are strongly discouraged.

The two avoidance scores for Thailand and France can be related to the interview data in a number of ways. First, the French score of 86 seems to explain the rationale behind the modification of Trump's compliment and justifies the omission of his exact words. However, according to the interview findings, the two Thai participants who interpreted Thai–French challenged Hofstede's scores; specifically, they both agreed that the original message would have been a culturally acceptable interpretation for the French audience. This insight contradicts both the scores of Thailand and France.

Another interesting finding from the interview responses is the acknowledgement from non-French-speaking participants as to their lack of linguistic knowledge and experience with French culture, which limits their views on French norms and their abilities to provide answers. Here we can move beyond Byram's *savoir* of knowledge to the *savoir apprendre/faire* (1997, 2021). Namely, an interpreter can focus on the people(s) they will be working with, understanding that it is impractical to learn about all cultures.

I created the visual below to illustrate that utilising *savoir apprendre* allows the interpreters to selectively choose the necessary nuances to learn about others. This filtered knowledge is then added to the overall knowledge or *savoir*.



**Figure 28: Savoir Apprendre/Faire and Savoir (Knowledge)**

In preparation for an intercultural and interlingual meeting, this *savoir* deals with one's skills in obtaining cultural knowledge under time constraints. The interpreter is advised to pursue the following actions: (1) facilitate concepts and develop a system to explore knowledge, (2) recognise cultural references and implications, and (3) establish links between contemporary and past views on one's own culture and others'. In practice, a preparation system, a self-preparation routine, or a classroom lesson could be developed to research the specifics of the target group(s). The results of these activities can cover potentially sensitive cultural patterns that may materialise in the meetings.

Moreover, the process of intervention for diplomatic purposes is for the interpreter to apply *savoir comprendre* in selecting between a cultural loss and a politically correct diplomatic ritual. The decision to tone down the message from one cultural

structure to another is achieved through *savoir comprendre* or analysis and relation of cultural discrepancies. Regarding the relationship between *savoir comprendre* and the decision to intervene or not intervene, according to my interpretations of the interview findings, the contrasting answers from Thai and French interpreters indicate that *savoir comprendre* can be practically limited without *savoir* knowledge of the culture.

It is also important to be realistic with the actual usage of the *savoirs*, such as promoting Thai–English interpreters to decipher nuanced meaning with attention to detail (*comprendre*), as well as ensuring interpreters are well-rounded (knowledge) with the cultures they frequently encounter. This calls into question the achievable foreignisation depth. In other words, the level of attainable foreignisation will depend on the level of knowledge and the awareness of the cultures the participant is transversing. As a reminder, foreignisation is a process in which the interpreter/translator maintains the foreign elements from the original sources in the target text or oral rendition (Venuti, 2008).

The next section continues the discussion of ethics in translation and interpretation, particularly concerning unfamiliar cultural contents.

### **7.2.2.2 Ethics in Unfamiliar Culture-Related Interpretation**

#### **7.2.2.2.1 Unfamiliar Dialects**

This section focuses on the ethical implications of an inability to produce interpretations for clients of other cultural backgrounds. These implications derive from ethical dilemmas that include encountering unfamiliar cultural contents, a collection of unspecialised Thai dialects, humour, and other Thai-specific practices. This section also reports on the omission of interpreted content and the application of Byram’s ICC model.

##### *7.2.2.2.1.1 IC as Omission (Leaving out Messages)*

In Vignette 4, a simultaneous interpreter faces a Thai dialect, which is not one of their agreed-upon interpreting languages (9.4.3, Appendices, p. 434). My analysis of this extract begins by addressing the ethics of the proposed approaches to interpreting unfamiliar dialects and accents. As previously mentioned, there are a



variety of regional dialects in Thailand (Iwasaki et al., 2005). Thus, the first ethical underpinning for the interpreter to consider is whether the participants should have interpreted without knowledge of the dialect being used.

The first group of participants, who advocated interpreting the accented message, stated that it is the interpreter's responsibility to ensure that the message is translated regardless of the circumstances. In contrast, those who would refrain from interpreting stated reasons such as lack of qualifications and complete understanding, as well as the potential loss and meaning distortion that could be caused by substitution. Choosing to omit the message, about 15% of the interviewees believed that the interpreter should not have rendered any interpretation because of the potential loss of translation, which was estimated at 40% based on the vignette details. While being aware that it would not be the preferred approach for event organisers, the participants called into question the interpreter's responsibility if the translation was ambiguous.

Regardless of the professional effort to interpret, the participants generally believed that the interpreter must take full responsibility for ensuring that the interpreted message is produced accurately and transparently; these two qualities seemed to have been overlooked in the vignette scene. This means that the interpreter should not have interpreted at all because of their lack of linguistic knowledge. Furthermore, according to the professional guidelines of AIIC (2022b), the interpreter should not have interpreted because it has been clearly pointed out that interpreting a task outside the interpreter's scope of knowledge must not be taken.

In the above instance, the interpreter had two choices: elaboration or omission of the message. More specifically, in the case that an interpreter decides to interpret, there are two approaches to choose from: elaborating on the differences between the language they were hired to interpret and the articulated dialect (i.e., admitting the interpreter's limitations); or interpreting the message using their available knowledge without explaining to the other parties involved.

One-third of the participants stated that they would provide the background information to convey professionalism and protect themselves from misinterpreting.

By explaining that the dialect is not within the interpreter's range of expertise, the interpreter takes the visible role as the other parties become aware of the interpreter's presence and their knowledge gap. The remaining two-thirds argued that the interpreter should have invisibly performed their interpretation without informing the audience of their linguistic limitations. Nevertheless, based on the document analysis, doing this would require a sound knowledge of the local dialect from the interpreter as suggested in Wuttiwong (2014). Another study on interpreters in the village of Northeastern Thailand by Premruedeelert (2008) suggests that it is also the case for highly skilled interpreters to gain knowledge through interacting with the communities before interpreting. This suggests that exposure plays a pivotal role in the compilation of knowledge for the interpreting process.

Techniques used to ensure accurate translation are switching from simultaneous to consecutive interpretation, directly asking the speaker to clarify during pauses, and relying on a knowledgeable interpreting partner or event moderator to intervene when needed. For instance, Scarlett had to clarify with the speaker about the Southern Thai word for 'sugar' which is the same word used for 'honey' in Central Thai. However, as mentioned earlier, when the interpreters acknowledge their limitations, they take on the visible role by intervening. Therefore, it appears that using clarification techniques inevitably forces an interpreter to be visible, as certain levels of intervention would be required in the translation process. Even if the interpreter aims to be a conduit for the conversation, it seems visibility is unavoidable, whether through acknowledgement of the mismatched interpreting languages or clarification techniques if the task requires clarification.

According to Angelelli (2004, p. 50), the term visibility, when used specifically for interpreters, encompasses five areas: (1) aligning with the parties, (2) establishing trust or facilitating mutual respect between the parties, (3) communicating effect as well as message, (4) explaining cultural gaps or interpreting culture as well as language, and (5) establishing communication rules during a conversation. Angelelli argues that the interpreter does more than simply switch languages. As an example of the extended role, the interpreter's insistence on interpreting an unfamiliar dialect in the previous example, regardless of his lack of knowledge, is arguably

done to align understandings between the two sides of the clients. To establish rules, the interpreter informs the client of his limitations: the dialect-induced knowledge gaps between the hired language, Central Thai, and the Northeastern dialect. He establishes trust in the client while making them aware of the cultural gaps between each region. All of these steps exemplify the interpreter's visibility.

In my dataset, there are also instances where the participants reported that they had to interpret for Lao clients. The ethical implications here concern inadequate understanding, which can contribute to an incomplete translation. The interpreter informing the client of the dialect means that they become visible to the audience and, as nearly a quarter of the participants argued, helps to create an understanding and highlight the interpreter's efforts. However, this method poses risks because the process appears uncertain and relies on the clients' empathy. As a remedy, a participant named Jeff explained that the EU Parliament uses dialect-specific interpreters to deal with linguistic diversity. Such elaborate job allocation suggests that the EU Parliament considers the micro differences within the dialects to be of considerable importance. The fact that meeting attendees are entitled to speak and write in their chosen language, which includes 27 countries and 24 official languages, signifies the high level of cultural diversity in the EU Parliament (2022). Such fairness to diversity is also evidenced in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) relating to multilingualism, where it is stipulated that the EU's contributions to the Member States must concentrate on national, regional, and common heritage (2012). The terms national, regional, and common suggest a level of engagement and language inclusivity while also perhaps illustrating that an awareness of ICC has been incorporated into policymaking and the recruitment process.

There are insufficient details from the findings to determine whether most participants would take the domesticating or foreignising approach when mediating. However, in a rare instance where domestication was used, Liam said he would interpret English to the Northern Thai dialect if he knew that the audience was from the area to get close to the clients. The job descriptions do not usually require this level of facilitation but, in this instance, it was because Liam knew the dialect and decided to use this knowledge to his advantage. For the other Thai participants, though, when queried about their experience interpreting language variations, the

most prevalent experience related to unplanned interpretations of the Lao language (not a dialect). Specifically, a quarter of the participants stated that on at least one occasion they had to interpret Lao despite being employed as a Thai interpreter.

According to the participant named Gary, oftentimes, Lao delegates rely on Thai interpreters at international meetings because it is rare for event organisers to hire Lao interpreters. Several other participants had similar experiences and voiced that recruiters should pay attention to the Thai and Lao languages and their cultural discrepancies. These participants also noted that the languages are not mutually intelligible despite their resemblance. The lack of exposure to Lao for the majority of Thai speakers, on the contrary, seems to create a linguistic and cultural barrier (Bradley, 2009) for Thai–English interpreters. Additionally, drawing on Byram’s framework (1997, 2021), recruiters who fail to recognise the differences between Thai and Lao may lack *savoir* of knowledge in the hiring process. Setting hiring objectives to minimise spending could cause a mismatch in interpreting languages. However, if the issue is about not being aware of linguistic discrepancies, incorporating the *savoirs* or focusing on knowledge by doing basic research about the intended demographic groups could enhance the recruiter’s knowledge of the Lao language. Therefore, there is a tendency for better-informed decisions to be made in the future. Having one speaker from Lao will not deter recruiters from hiring all Thai–English interpreters. However, the interpreter can draw professional boundaries by suggesting that the recruiters make culturally appropriate decisions, thus avoiding unexpected job demands placed on them.

#### *7.2.2.2.1.2 IC as Adaptation (Amending the Text/Message for Cultural Nuances)*

As elaborated by the participants, amending the message may be applied to other adjacent languages, such as Romance languages (e.g., French, Spanish, and Italian). A quarter of participants said that they had interpreted an eclectic array of English variations, such as American Ebonics Vernacular English, Scottish English, Australian English, Bangladeshi English, and Hong Kong English. For example, Sunisa remarked how she has had to deal with varieties of slang terms, grammar, idiomatic expressions, and pronunciation of American Ebonics Vernacular English (Espinoza-Saavedra, 2017) and Scottish English (Meer et al., 2021), in the case of Gavin.

Preparing idioms in the target language conforms to the technique of adaptation (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

The findings also suggest that exposure to a wide range of English varieties was a widespread challenge experienced by native and non-native speakers of English. Interpreters are advised to equip themselves with knowledge (*savoirs*) and seek out discovery (*savoir apprendre*). In order to formulate *savoirs* about certain social groups, one needs to possess the discovery skills to learn about the practices. The interpreter could organise a learning system to familiarise oneself with potential communicative patterns or the speaker's speaking style.

#### 7.2.2.2.2 Unfamiliar Humour

##### *7.2.2.2.2.1 IC as Borrowing (Using Words/Phrases from SL) and Explicitation (Making Implicit Information in SL Explicit in TL)*

The following presents ethical implications when the interpreter encounters culturally-specific humour.

With reference to Vignette 6, the interpreter faces lexical and cultural challenges posed by the word 'koalifications,' which is embedded in an Australian joke (9.4.3, Appendices, p. 435). While the interpreter in the vignette decided to skip the joke, because he presumably decided that the humour would not translate to another language, the participants in this study appeared to have two main choices: (1) to formulate new forms of words in another language where the system is completely different from the origin, or (2) to disassemble the word components and explain why it would be a funny remark in the original language. The participants' insights are in line with the dissertation by Amratisha (2008) which states that the interpreter has also two options: refraining from translating or selecting a local joke that is universally funny. No matter the chosen approach, the interpreter would have to take risks from both sides. Participants agreed that laughter should not be the joke's determiner.

Participants also agreed that the joke's complete omission should not be allowed because it is the clients' right to know the contents of a message regardless of its linguistic difficulty or its distance from the clients' culture. Conversely, borrowing

the joke and explicating the meaning was an approach supported by approximately half of the participants. This technique means that the interpreter would explain the joke using foreignisation. For example, Kate stated that she would elaborate on the rhyme between ‘koalifications’ and ‘qualifications,’ as well as explain the words close relationships to Australian culture and the academic context of the exchange. Doing so would require Kate to visibly interpret and relate cultural systems (savoir comprendre) to one another. However, based on the shared professional experiences of the participants, foreignising or explaining the joke in detail was said to lessen the humorous impact.

#### 7.2.2.2.2 IC as Equivalence (*Finding Words/Expressions in TL that Convey the Exact Same Meaning*)

Another strategy is employing IC as equivalence by identifying words in TL that express precise meaning. Domesticating, for this particular example, refers to the act of inserting an alternative joke in Thai to replace the original joke in English. That means producing an equivalent joke in an instant. The term ‘equivalent’ was used by Sara, who would prepare a similar joke in Thai for an unexpected joke, while Gavin emphasised that the interpretation must be tailored to the audience so that they understand; see also Tapinta’s study (2011) in *Humour Interpretation*, or my Document Analysis for comparison with translation. This sort of translation is considered translation equivalence as defined by Nida and Taber (2003), where the audience gets the same effect. Interpreters using this approach intend to recreate a burst of similar laughter from a different contextualised cultural joke. Many of Byram’s (1997, 2021) *savoirs* are necessary for the success of a joke’s interpretation. Two of which are possessing the requisite knowledge and the ability to use the knowledge to one’s advantage.

Another issue with Vignette 6 is how the interpreter tried to influence the audience through the negative remark, ‘the joke is too long.’ Several participants pointed out that the interpreter has performed beyond their expected duty. As the comment criticises the speaker, Fabia said that the technique would work if the professor were lenient enough to receive the comment. This construes the existence of an underlying norm that governs the classroom. It is a type of norm that may be characterised by one of Hofstede’s (2001, 2020) dimensions.

A high-power distance score for Thailand, implies that many Thai people know their socioeconomic status and accept the reality of Thailand being an unequal society. A ceremony that arguably exemplifies inequality is the Wai Kru ceremony, where Thai teachers are unquestionably honoured and revered (Atagi, 2011). In other countries, however, the treatment of teachers is more often based on their qualifications and performance on the job—meritocratic rather than ritualistic and partisan. A Thai interpreter working in Thailand is in the position to evaluate the cultural nuances of such events and interpret them in a way that does not violate the local norms or deviate greatly from the original message. However, a few participants disagreed and believed that the omission approach led the audience to laugh, hence accomplishing the purpose of telling a joke.

Thus far, the conclusions suggest that domestication and foreignisation of translation were the participants' main choices in their visible role. This contends that equivalence is rare in interpretation. Participants also incorporated the *savoirs* into their thinking when mediation was required.

The next section continues to address RQ1. It discusses translation/interpretation censorship or (self)-censorship in relation to Thailand's hierarchical culture, as previously elucidated in ethics.

### **7.2.3 Censorship in Interpretation**

The previous ethics section discussed the crucial factors of Thailand's hierarchical culture regarding seniority, occupational privilege, and ethical implications of unfamiliar culture-related interpretation. This section further focuses on (self-)censorship in translation. The discussion will be centred on the theme of miscommunication in interpreting cultural differences, which was evident in the findings due to some of the Thai participants having to interpret prohibited or taboo topics in Thailand. The data will reflect the pronounced mediating role during dilemmatic circumstances, while also addressing cultural tendencies and IC development.

Santaemilia (2008) puts forward that self-censoring is an ethical decision based on individual and social factors, as translators aim to produce individually and socially acceptable texts. In late 2020 Thailand, student-led demonstrations pushed for amendments to be made to the country's constitution and demanded a reform of the country's monarchy (Ockey, 2021). Although the movement was unprecedented in the Thai political scene, there was still vigorous enforcement of one particular criminal code, article 112, in Thailand (stipulated in 1976) (see Streckfuss, 2010), which is publicly known as the *lèse-majesté* law or defamation law. In addition to curtailing political protests, restrictions due to this law seem to have also taken a toll on the freedom of Thai translators and interpreters. This suggests that the predicament between ethics and survival can pose challenges for translators/interpreters in Thailand.

In light of this thesis, as the pro-democracy movement arguably presents negative sentiments towards the institution, such polarisation between young (anti-establishment) and old (pro-establishment) has led to increased political content that requires interpreters to translate regardless of their willingness. This generational conflict seems to place increased weight on the interpreters' shoulders as some of them may have had to interpret controversial and mocking political messages. As a mediator of messages, interpreters may find the process ethically challenging to themselves and their professional roles.

### 7.2.3.1 Ethical Interpretation

Another dimension of Hofstede (2001; 2020) that I explore here in relation to my findings is *long-term orientation* versus *short-term orientation*. This dimension focuses on the ties a society attaches between its past and current practices. A score of 32 for Thailand infers that the country's population has a tendency to embrace the past, while a score of 51 for the UK suggests that its countries' populations tend to be slightly less attached to the past (i.e., the ties a society attaches between its past and current practices). Despite the slight differences in these scores, and the fact that both nations have age-old histories and constitutional monarchies in place, an insight from one Thai participant demonstrated the difficulty of interpreting in a country where past practices are still highly protected.



### 7.2.3.1.1 IC as Self-Censorship (Omission)

Clara (beginner, 4 yrs), whose political interpreting job involved interpreting a mockery of the country's head of state, presented ethical implications that arose during Thailand's political polarisation. The mockery was the King complimenting his supporters for standing up against the protesters. Although the exemplified defiance with protests in 2020 may have suggested that the country is rapidly changing its sentiment and rewriting its political narrative (BBC, 2020), interpreting the phrase 'ดีมาก เก่งมาก' [excellent very good] still posed professional risks and dilemmas for this interpreter as the nation is taking its time to find a new political balance.

For the context, the King uttered the phrase to one of his supporters, who had displayed a portrait of the late king over his head during an anti-government protest—it was, in effect, a compliment given by the King following an altercation between young (anti-establishment) and old (pro-establishment). Therefore, the King's statement was heavily ridiculed by the youth protest movement. Of relevance here is Tantiwatana's (2012) observation that some interpreters would use the technique of transliteration (i.e., spelling out the characters of another language) when interpreting such sensitive topics and non-verbal communication to avert conflicts.

Moreover, the issue of self-censorship in interpreters is multifaceted and complex and may be exacerbated when the interpreters themselves come from marginalised populations. The interpreters would have to navigate layers of restrictions (e.g., translating content related to same-sex marriage in contexts whose laws prohibit such discussions).

When considering the *Long Term Orientation* score, the decision to censor the King's speech may have been influenced by the clients' cultural background. For instance, the Taiwanese score of 93 implies that Taiwan is run pragmatically with a mindset towards the future. Taiwanese people tend to blend old traditions with new approaches (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede Insights, 2020; Poluha & Rosendahl, 2012). With such cultural inclinations, an interpreter working between Taiwanese and Thai clients would likely have to explain to Taiwanese counterparts why such omission is legally and culturally required in Thailand. In contrast, Thai traditions are

presumably much more widely practised and religiously upheld over time. Regardless of whether the scores hold true to the existing geopolitical understanding of the Taiwanese people, the implications can suggest a planning process for the interpreter, such as forecasting and anticipating the clients beforehand. Interpreters could utilise the scores as part of their preparation, whereby they can familiarise themselves with probable intercultural tendencies and practices of the clients, whom they would normally meet shortly after receiving the assignments.

The relevant skillset that could help alleviate such cultural discrepancies is *savoir s'engager* of the critical cultural awareness. This skillset deals with one's criticality and evaluation skills in terms of the following three processes: (1) identification of direct and indirect values present in cultural texts or events; (2) evaluative analysis of documents; and (3) intercultural exchange mediation. Byram (1997) reasons that this *savoir* is the most important because it enables intercultural speakers to present the experiences of their own and other cultures: 'a rational and explicit standpoint from which to evaluate the encounter' (p. 54). He suggests that the key to understanding lies within the self-cultivated awareness of one's own culture as well as other's cultures and the presentation of that awareness.

As part of the intercultural exchange mediation, the interpreter could identify and evaluate each client's direct and indirect values regarding a specific concept. Moreover, as a preparation process, if the topic is politically sensitive and a punitive law is being enforced, the interpreter can compare the political systems between the clients' countries and evaluate their susceptibility to the topic, their preference for receiving faithful translation or paying respect to the institution, and ultimately their willingness to accept any differences. For example, even if a Thai client listens to the interpretation of the King's words in the previous example and opposes any disrespect to the monarch, *savoir s'engager* allows the interpreter to demonstrate that they have critically evaluated and delivered the interpretation based on a well-established understanding of both sides.

#### 7.2.3.1.2 IC as Explicitation (Explicating Implicit Information in TL)

There was also evidence in the findings of culturally-specific beliefs and practices that participants found problematic when interpreting (e.g., those related to

religion and spirituality). In order to interpret these beliefs and practices, interpreters need to establish an in-depth understanding of them, which includes associating or recreating the existing ideas in another culture. For instance, in response to Vignette 3, where a Thai employee had donated the company's money without getting a receipt (9.4.3, Appendices, p. 434). The findings seem to suggest that it is unlikely that a non-Thai investigator, whose task is to scrutinise the expenses, would understand that the money donated without a receipt is made in the company's name.

Cultural discrepancies, such as the one in the previous paragraph, can cause misunderstandings between the parties if the two sides continue to construe two meanings from one action. According to a dissertation by Tantiwatana (2012), although examining medical interpreters, the author found that interpreters are the only people who are aware of the complete situation and can connect the two groups of people. There are moments where interpreters need to use their judgements and may or may not intervene to create a better understanding of the situation.

The second set of examples deal with superstitious beliefs. Regarding the guardian spirit case, omission of the message could not have been an option because spirit and haunting were the interpreting topic. The lack of options translates into the interpreter elaborating on what a guardian spirit is and explaining why the spirit may be mad because of the client's 'wrongdoings.' In this instance, the interpreter needed to estimate the client's levels of understanding with respect to Thai superstition.

Two of Hofstede's dimensions (2001; 2020), *masculinity and femininity* and *collectivism*, can be applied to the donation and the King's speech examples. First, Hofstede's masculinity is not necessarily associated with sex or gender in the traditional spirit. In a 'masculine' society, competition and achievement are paramount, while a society whose focus is placed on quality of life would receive a low score and be deemed a feminine society. In my view, the label does not reflect the valued socioeconomic system it refers to, and thus it should be renamed.

A masculinity score of 34 for Thailand implies that the importance of quality of life, perhaps the collective qualitative, is highlighted in the country, whereas the US's score of 62 suggests that an urge to excel and be affluent is more highly valued. There is a clash between a competition-driven society and a well-being-emphasised society. In the aspect of the donation (Vignette 3), it can be construed that the Thai person in the vignette would concentrate on pursuing a collective morale boost for the company, whereas the US lawyer showed that he was pursuing an answer for clarity, a quality which would typically be expected in his system of beliefs.

Second, based on Hofstede's (2001; 2020) view on collectivism, since the score suggests that Thailand would be inclined to operate as a macro group, it may be construed that the donation in the second example could have been made for the collective good. Even if the spiritual part were taken away from the equation, the same mentality would likely be replicated in other social spheres (e.g., policy-making, family orientation, etc.). This is not to say that the scores offer absolute suggestions, rather they offer one approach to understanding cultural discrepancies that interpreters often encounter while doing their jobs.

In Vignette 3, the interpreter, acting as a middle person, witnesses the American investigator being confused and needing to resolve the issue. Suppose the interpreter was already aware of the cultural perception of this sort of spending. In that case, the interpreter could have mediated by matching the client's understanding of the practice and then elaborating on the underlying intention of both sides. Subsequently, both clients may have been able to reach an understanding without offending each other—in essence, they would be applying the added knowledge gained through the interpreter. In other words, the interpreter, who is situated at the centre of a potential culture clash, appears to be in a fragile position, and he/she would need to carefully navigate a sensitive political climate because, in the eyes of the investigator, equivalence to the literal content of the message would be considered illegal.

Culturally, the findings seem to suggest that an interpretation can either preserve age-old traditions or promote upcoming trends of political movements. Taking either

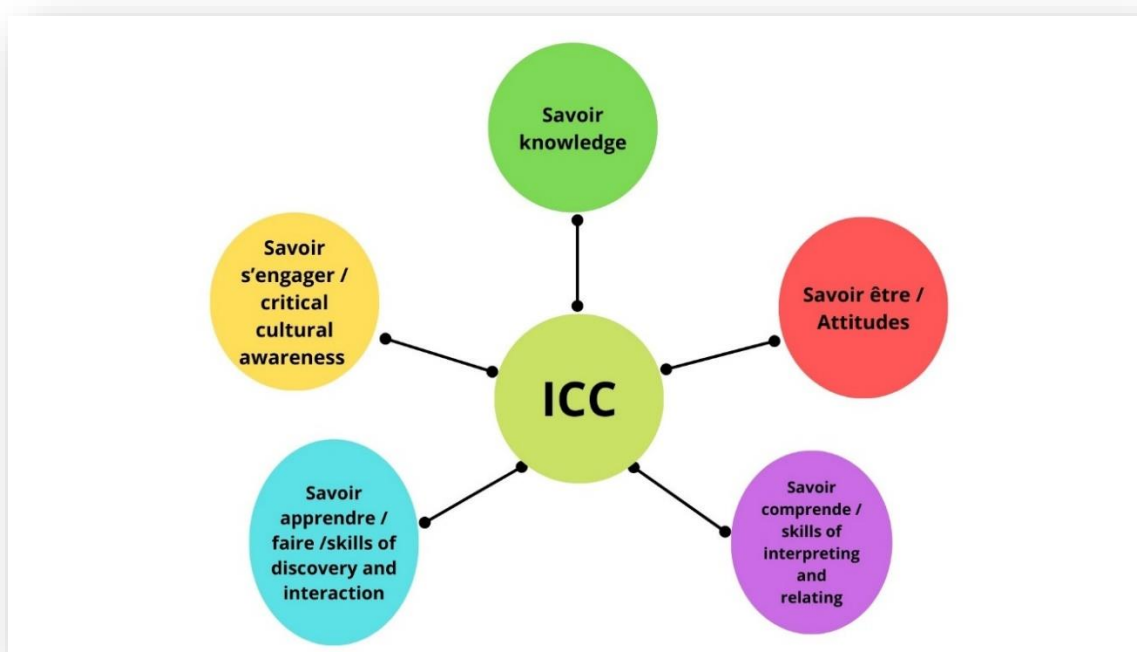
approach may put the interpreter's safety at risk. The decision becomes a professional predicament that the interpreter must navigate with caution.

Nonetheless, at an individual level, if an interpreter's job is to transfer a message verbatim from one language to another, what happens if a verbatim translation puts the interpreter's life at risk? Does it mean the interpreter has violated their ethical compliance?

The following section continues to address RQ1 in terms of which ICC skills are needed or should be added to the existing ICC framework.

#### **7.2.4 Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)**

When interpreters work between cultural expectations, they require a set of skills that can help individuals arrive at culturally-appropriate decisions. This is in agreement with the Document Analysis that interpreters need to have a grasp of IC to avoid potential intercultural conflicts. Accordingly, participants were asked about the skills that they think are most needed in interpreters for cultural mediation. Based on the frequency and extensiveness of their answers (Krueger et al., 2000, p. 136), four strands of skills were identified. In this section, I will match the four strands with Byram's ICC model (Figure 29) and identify the gaps between the participants' suggestions and the existing savoirs, grounded on the themes of core observable ICC characteristics and the interpreting journey of the findings chapter.



**Figure 29: The Intercultural Communicative Competence Model (Byram, 1997, 2021)**

More than 50% of participants ( $n = 20$ ) highlighted the importance of understanding nuanced meanings and cultural references, which included knowledge of cultural expressions and values gained through learning about history and civilisation. This skillset resembles two strands of Byram's model (1997, 2021): savoir knowledge, highlighted in green in Figure 29; and savoir apprendre/faire, in turquoise. The former relates to the interpreter's possession of knowledge (savoir). This skillset may include teaching about ways different cultures function. An important note is to focus not on one culture but on a wide range of cultures and practices. The latter, savoir apprendre, is premised on the realisation that new knowledge about other traditions and rituals can be obtained through experience or explicitly learned. The interpreter must, as suggested by one participant, Patricia, study beyond language forms and functions.

The second most raised set of skills included open-mindedness and adaptability, which were mentioned by one-fifth of the participants. From the intermediate group of participants, Sara expressed that those who interpret should be 'sympathetic' because everyone comes from different 'shapes,' which links to open-mindedness. Julia's answer, on the other hand, is indicative of interpreters needing 'flexibility' to be able to adapt and act as a 'bridge' between the languages. When considering these qualities in light of Byram's model (1997, 2021), the characteristics match

savoir être or attitudes, highlighted in light red on Figure 29, which deals with openness and readiness to beliefs and disbeliefs. In other words, participants would begin with excluding their self-belief about other groups and themselves. It is the ability to remove an enculturated belief and allow oneself to learn a new set of values from a different perspective. When observing insights from other intermediate-level participants, their answers shift towards building an awareness that links to the savoir s'engager (in yellow) or critical cultural awareness to be added to the list. Having this savoir is not only about having the attitude of an intercultural speaker or the openness to receive other cultures, but is also about implementing the attitudes to evaluate the values of others as well as comparing other cultures with one's own culture systematically and critically. This process may encompass discussions of cultural generalisations.

The third set of characteristics is exposure to intercultural experience. As the third most frequently quoted quality, with 15% of the participants stating that this was an important facet; the emphasis here is placed on immersing oneself in a culture, which is not necessarily restricted to being physically in a country or around the culture.

Although some participants conflated cultural immersion with physically being in the location where the 'other' culture is primarily located, the shared idea here is to allow intercultural mixing regardless of location. According to Ava, for example, having experience dealing with people who speak other languages has equipped her to gauge the speaking styles a speaker may intend to use in their speech. This can be referred to as savoir s'engager, as mentioned earlier.

The last set of skills regards the ability to research, which was a frequently voiced concern from a small number of participants. It was emphasised that this concerned an interpreter's ability to look for new information. This skill is especially valuable because of the variety of topics and nationalities that an interpreter is exposed to. This is the final set of necessary skills raised by participants, which relates to savoir comprendre or skills of interpreting and relating. Compared to the other four strands of savoirs, this savoir takes an active role by regulating an interpreter to have the curiosity and openness for intercultural exchanges, create a method for acquiring

knowledge, and the criticality for utilising the obtained knowledge. It focuses on bringing the other elements to the fore, as the interpreter interrelates the two opposing sides through mediation, putting together the characteristics of open-mindedness in their attitudes and using criticality based on the obtained understanding of the conflict at hand.

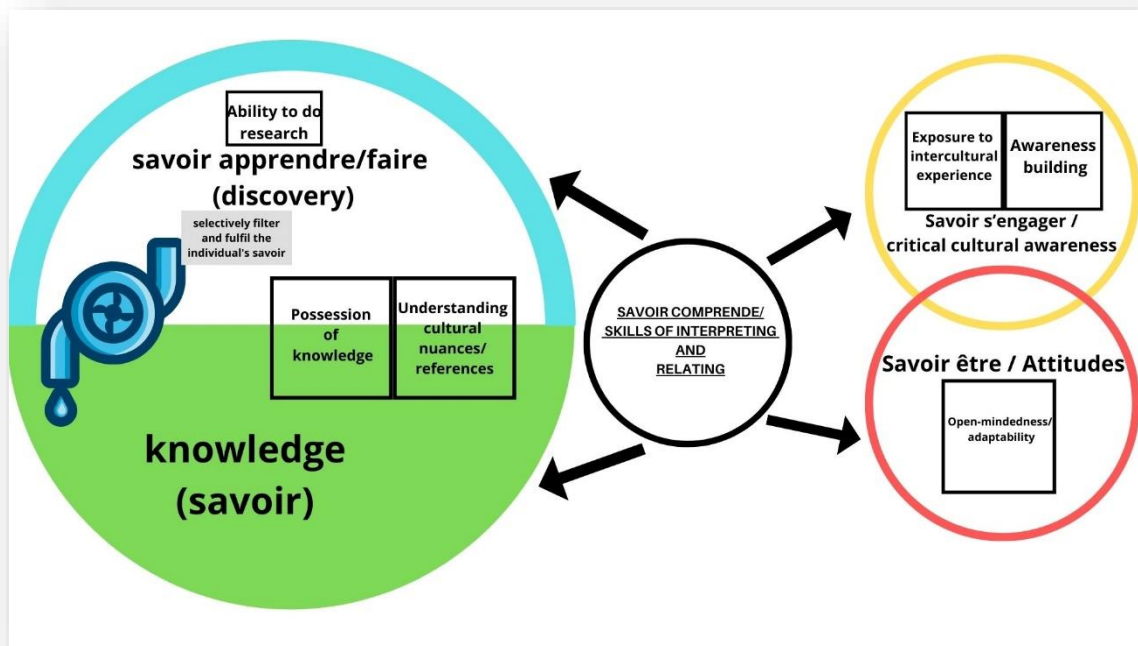


Figure 30: Savoir Comprendre Connecting Other Savoirs, the ICC Model (Byram, 1997, 2021)

For a clearer visualisation of skill strands, I designed a visual (Figure 30) to signify that savoir apprendre/faire consists of an ability to research and filter knowledge, and complements the comprehensive collection of one's own savoir or knowledge. Different colours and shapes are used to signify that each skillset is distinct and can be linked to savoir comprendre in the middle, while the squares represent the actual characteristics that participants stated in the interviews. The water drop in the figure signifies selectively filtered knowledge (i.e., adding to one's knowledge by thoroughly deciding the areas to specialise in).

More than 20 participants said that interpreters need possession of knowledge, and that understanding cultural nuances and references are important, which fall under



savoir apprendre/faire and savoir (knowledge). Open-mindedness and adaptability through being exposed to intercultural experiences and building awareness fall under savoir être or attitudes, which slightly resemble the awareness building of savoir s'engager. Overall, the connecting hands from savoir comprendre signify that interpreters would be required to combine the skillsets by interpreting and relating their experience and knowledge and having an open-minded attitude toward being interculturally competent.

#### **7.2.4.1 Inadvertent Intercultural Communicative Competence Formulation**

In the last section of the semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked to elaborate on their journeys; specifically, they were asked to emphasise critical moments that impacted their career choices. The participants were never instructed to pay attention to the cultural experiences they had been through; however, one of my main objectives is to underline their direct and indirect experiences related to culture through non-cultural and cultural influences.

As an example of non-cultural influences, most participants attributed coincidence as the reason for their career start. Coincidence encompasses phenomenon such as professional connections, windfall career opportunities, an obligation to fill a vacant position, or an opportunity to do a small translation job. Critical decisions, such as resigning from a full-time job and then becoming an interpreter, or accepting an opportunity from an experienced interpreter, are also in this category. However, the gist of this section is the discussion of the career influences that are related to culture. I begin by briefly discussing the participants' paths to their interpreting careers and specifically address culture-related factors to their career establishment and IC formulation. After that, I will discuss the challenges that they encountered during the course of their career entrances.

In consideration of access to an interpreting career, the overarching heading of career planning entails two reported paths: work and education. These are the paths on which the participants built their successes. The work path refers to realising and utilising their unique expertise to fulfil their career as interpreters or vice versa. In other words, using their interpreting experiences to expand their career

opportunities, such as realising other prospective careers or even becoming business partners. The educational path is a more straightforward route, where participants study interpretation or a language-related degree and later secure a job as an interpreter.

Apart from those participants who had the opportunity to study interpretation in a formal classroom, a focus on cultural exposure was identified in the sub-theme of the educational path. It is the strong emphasis on the importance of English language education through privileged schooling or nurturing at home. Cherry, whose family was able to afford extracurricular English classes on the weekends, exemplifies the former example. Or in the case of Magnus, the participant grew up in a household where both English and Thai were used interchangeably and commented that this positively impacted his school performance. These participants also stated that a high level of English competence at an early age gave them a competitive advantage and paved the way for them to acquire professional interpreting skills.

In addition, based on the participants' comments, it seems to be the case that personnel at the management level equate experience abroad with ICC skills. Specifically, recruiters or bosses often trust and associate experience abroad with an increased understanding of IC. Moreover, when ICC skills are combined with specific expertise, such as a degree in pharmacy or automotive mechanics, it can open doors to an interpreting career. In other words, whether the individuals acquired ICC skills during their time abroad, recruiters and bosses seem to give them opportunities to work as interpreters based on their accumulated cultural experiences. This is perhaps due to recruiters perceiving the living-abroad experience or awarded qualifications as an assured understanding of foreign cultures.

Two interpretations about IC learning can be construed here about the effects of language and cultural learning. The first group refers to those who were taught the English language at a young age, while the other group refers to those who spent an extended period of time living overseas and thus experienced the associated cultural norms in person. These experiences, occurring at a young age, seemingly contribute

to the development of ICC skills that the participants found useful later in life. This implies that IC can be learned and developed from early years.

In light of RQ1, when comparing the participants' acquisition of intercultural experience with the *savoirs*, being exposed to culture is arguably crucial because it helps create an open attitude and generate knowledge, which is essential for systematically acquiring the *savoirs* (Byram, 1997, 2021). This insight, in part, answers RQ2, whereby IC learning can be fostered and enhanced through a natural learning process, as suggested in the findings.

Up to this point, I have covered four sensitising concepts of *culture*, *ethics*, *censorship*, and *intercultural communicative competence* as a means to explore potential answers to RQ1. As a reminder, RQ1 entails the main components of IC.

First, by discussing the interview findings, I argued that despite being professionally regulated, interpreters often take a visible role in determining the conversation flow and mediating what cultural differences get clarified or wholly omitted. Adding to the equation are the meeting attendees—most of whom have little language proficiency in the other languages—who listen to the interpretation provided by the interpreter, essentially listening to the interpreter's live judgements. Arguably, these live judgements suggest that projected interpretations will always be filtered, modified, added, or even abridged by the interpreter within acceptable overarching boundaries and rules.

Second, the unpredictable and changing demands of each meeting, as simulated in the vignettes, suggest that interpreters must systematically prepare themselves beforehand. As shown earlier, interpreters could employ the Hofstede scale (2001; 2020) while making spontaneous decisions. The scale can be used as a guideline to gauge fundamental differences between speakers from two cultures. For example, an interpreter can anticipate communicative patterns based on the level of collectivism or individualism in each speaker's culture.

Third, regarding culture-specific practices or rituals, the interview findings suggest that interpreters knowingly and unknowingly rely on cultural *savoirs* to deal with

intercultural meetings. Moreover, with regard to desirable ICC characteristics, the participants raised discussions involving all the *savoirs* except for *savoir comprendre* (or the skills of interpreting and relating for cultural mediation). This *savoir* arguably connects the other four *savoirs* and puts understanding nuances, open-mindedness, cultural exposure, and research skills into practice. This is more of an active *savoir* since interpreters who apply it must combine the four skills during live interpretation, which shows that the *savoirs* are dynamic and must be constantly adapted according to the job demands.

The findings also suggest that the participants' early exposure to foreign cultures and languages in and outside classroom seems to contribute to IC formulation, which, in turn, orientate the learners towards the interpreting profession. In my view, interpreter students, particularly those who have not had an opportunity to experience direct experience living abroad, are arguably in need of a classroom with simulated intercultural exposure (i.e., class materials and theories about cultural practices). In Thailand, this change can be implemented at the levels of instructors, curriculums, and policies. Further discussion of IC in Thai interpreting classrooms or RQ2 will be explored in the following section.

### 7.3 Teaching Interpreters IC

In this section, I switch to the educational and classroom context to address RQ2, and do so by discussing findings related to the educational sphere. These major findings are related to the utilisation of ICC skills in interpretation and include the following: (1) a lack of awareness regarding currently taught IC materials in interpreting classes; (2) a call for action regarding the inclusion of IC training for interpreter trainers; and (3) allocation of more teaching IC time.

Before discussing the teaching problems, I will underline the challenges that the participants experienced in the process of becoming interpreters in Thailand. I do this so as to contextualise the Thai professional market, while also outlining current obstacles and how the participants turned these to their advantage. At strategic points, I also briefly discuss the participants' personal career aspirations.

First, in terms of career obstacles, participants talked about non-Covid-19 and Covid-19 related challenges. The former consisted of interpreting without training, dealing with strict bosses, or only receiving on-the-job training from colleagues, whereas the latter involved the lack of overseas visitors and the difficulties of online interpretation. However, the pandemic unexpectedly presented learning opportunities for a few participants who had never had time to take interpreting courses before. Due to the pandemic, some were free from their work duties and enrolled in interpreter training classes.

Despite their challenges, a sense of perseverance and dedication was identified in approximately a quarter of the participants whose journeys involved multiple attempts to undertake exams. These personal aspirations comprised challenging oneself to excel in an interpreting career and following personal life plans, primarily because interpreting manifests itself as an intellectual challenge and a financial advancement for their future, while others, as broader goals, see their journey as key to uplifting the overall market conditions of Thailand.

After further exploring the details of the participants' journeys, the interview data also illustrated that the market for interpreting in Thailand is relatively informal. Nearly 25% of the participants said that they were able to function in their current interpreting positions because of their mentors, along with receiving guidance and encouragement from them. Nevertheless, when observing the overall recruitment system for interpreters in Thailand, the system appears to be based on knowing people in the business and networking to get job referrals. For instance, representing highly experienced and intermediate interpreter trainers, Ava, Olivia and Gary all had mentors who introduced them to the profession. Moreover, all three have continued to mentor newcomers. Due to the absence of rules and regulations in the Thai recruitment system, the participants had to rely on one another. This informal system is often composed of on-the-job learning and being coached by colleagues or employers. By relying on such an informal work structure, the interpreting circle may be based on collective trust, reflecting the collectivism suggested by Hofstede's scale (2001; 2020).

### 7.3.1 IC in the Interpretation Classroom: Closing the Gaps

According to the interview findings, teaching implications mainly come from the lack of teaching license requirements in Thai formal education. Forty per cent of the participants had taught in a classroom. However, only two had to pass a series of assignments and tests before they were allowed to teach, and this seemed to be because they worked for American and Australian institutions. The participants stated that the Thai system largely depends on networking with prominent higher education institutes. To recapitulate, a number of examined theses have acknowledged a nation-wide failure to offer interpreter training in a variety of professional fields: non-governmental agencies (Premruedeelert, 2008), judicial interpreting (Onlaor, 2010), civil servants (Wuttiwong, 2014), interpreting for migrant workers (Rassiri, 2008), the Royal Thai Armed Forces (Maneerat, 2010), diplomatic interpreting (Tepatanapong, 2014), telephonic communications for Thai tourist police (Sujariyasai, 2017).

Moreover, experienced participants, all of whom grew up when there were no teaching programmes in Thailand, expressed that enrolling in a Thai–English (or other paired languages) interpretation degree was a challenge because the option of earning a degree in or outside of Thailand was not available until the early 2000s. Among many experienced interpreters who faced this difficulty, Jeff had to switch to a translation degree. Such a widened gap is where Thailand-based institutes or organisations can contribute to. Apart from a few new courses in Thai–English interpretation offered by Australian universities (6.6.4.1 Teaching License Requirements, Chapter 6, pp. 260–261), the difficulties faced by individuals interested in studying Thai–English interpretation could be alleviated by expanding and improving existing domestic programmes.

The findings from the interviews suggest that IC, regardless of interpretation type is fundamental to interpreting and can affect the quality of the interpretation to a large degree. This view is in accordance with secondary findings such as Onlaor (2010), Tantiwatana (2012), Wuttiwong (2014) and the Thai Court of Justice (Office of the Judicial Commission, 2011). The findings also suggest that IC for Thai–English interpreters becomes more prominent due to the nation’s underlying cultural

practices, such as respecting ones' elders, which may be shared with or conflicted with other cultures. Any decisions made by interpreters can govern the conflict direction. This analogy can be applied to most cases based on the fact that interpretation often occurs between two or more people from various backgrounds due to linguistic demands. Therefore, given intercultural mediation demands, it is imperative to equip current interpreters, interpreter trainers, and interpreter students with IC knowledge. One participant, Elizabeth, even expressed that IC is 'the root of interpretation,' while others postulated that interpretation has a reciprocal relationship with IC education by admitting that they had used their interpretation experiences in their IC classrooms.

Characterised by the theme of IC education from the interview findings, the next concluding section addresses RQ2 and stresses the importance of IC in the classroom and related training programmes. The procedure was to incorporate the ICC model with the existing curriculum of interpretation in Thailand to investigate any potential gaps between the IC elements and the current engagement of intercultural teaching.

First, I begin by discussing the participants' understanding of IC. When asked about their prior understanding of IC, only a few participants knew the specialised term, and only one participant was familiar with the academic discipline of IC (see 6.6.3, Chapter 6, pp. 254–260). Over a quarter had enrolled in IC courses at universities, institutes, or training programmes at their corporations. This was done to either satisfy the requirements for a degree or to be trained for international work environments. Approximately half of the participants unveiled that they have not seen any inclusion of IC in the teaching and learning materials.

Regarding formal training in interpretation, which consists of courses taken at an institution or a university, about half of the participants had taken a formal training course (See Table 9-1, Appendices, pp. 406–410). This finding suggests an association between the lack of licensing requirements and the relatively small number of participants who had attended formal training. According to Jo, a graduate of a short interpretation course, IC is a skill that learners of interpretation are expected to have learned or can further learn by themselves, but not in the

classroom. The same statement can be said about informal teaching, which applied to less than 50% of the participants. These findings are consistent with the dissertations that reported that interpreters are frequently hired due to their natural language ability and do not usually receive training (Rassiri, 2008; Sirithanachai, 2010).

Through self-practice, self-preparation, and observing a mentor, the focus for these participants was primarily on familiarising themselves with the potential speaking styles of clients and learning the actual interpreting routine from a more experienced interpreter. Participants would then receive feedback based on their chosen word choice and addition and/or omission types. Interestingly, there has been an increase in the development of in-house teachings in organisations that demand their staff to interpret, such as for governmental purposes, as opposed to the past, where on-the-job training used to be the only learning approach. However, the teaching foci were on professionalism and skill-building (e.g. practice skills, cognitive workload, note-taking, and technical problems).

The only mentioned IC aspect in informal training was from Magnus, who said that he would pay close attention to the English cultural phrases that would be difficult to interpret into Thai. Besides this example, it is evident that IC has not been implemented in formal or informal interpretation learning among most of the participants.

Participants also said that the teaching of IC exists in Thailand in universities and companies as an independent subject, but not as a hybrid course with interpretation. In the business context, one course often serves as diversity and sensitivity guidelines for intercultural working between Thais and foreigners in international ventures (i.e., unpacking norms for the foreign staff or vice versa). It seems that the course is designed to give information about Thailand to new foreign employees who have recently arrived, while IC courses are part of the curriculum for a language-based or translation degree in universities.

According to the document analysis, research attention in Thailand has mostly been paid to the areas of interpreters' working conditions and expectations in CI. Although



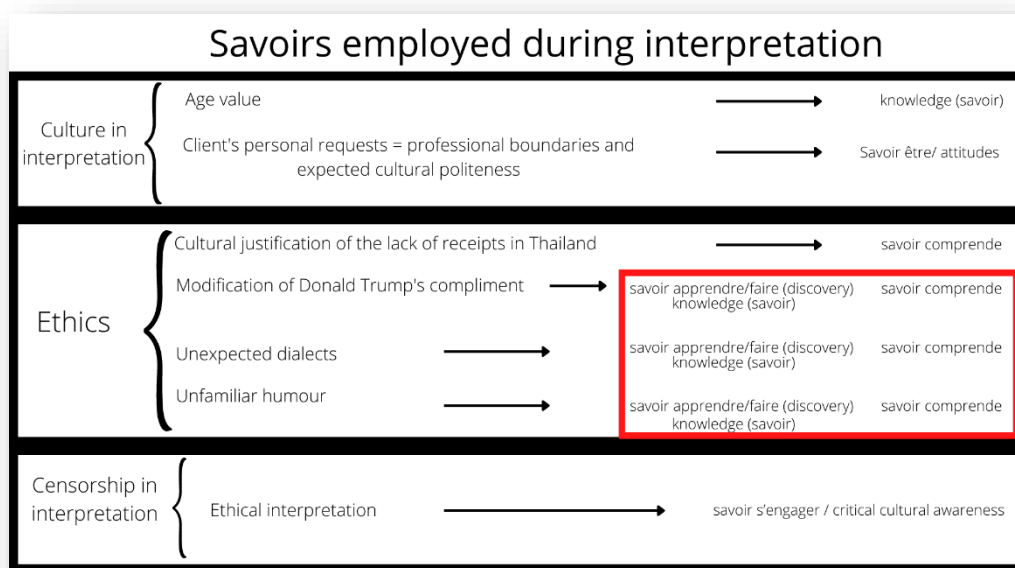
numerous theses seem to peripherally discuss IC, only one dissertation by Tantiwatana (2012) examined culture. The author offered insights into IC in the domain of European embassy staff, while the focus was shared with the area of roles and expectations. Additionally, the number of interviewed participants was relatively small and generally homogenous in terms of job descriptions. This suggests that further research is needed in order to understand IC in the context of Thailand's interpreting industry.

### 7.3.1.1 IC Teaching Engagement

Nearly half of the participants admitted that they have yet to see enough engagement between IC and interpretation lessons. Such a finding is in line with an existing training scheme for Thai interpreters in the field of human trafficking, whose teaching materials do not specifically teach IC (Sae-heng, 2010).

Furthermore, when queried about how they learned about IC, participants pointed to the experience and exposure they had when being in an overseas environment or through self-learning means such as reading academic texts about IC or playing computer games—for example, studying as an exchange student in an American high school for Kate (Thai participant), or joining a language exchange in Thailand for Gavin (American participant).

Highlighted in Figure 31, the cluster of *savoirs* that was utilised the most was *savoir apprendre/faire* (discovery), *savoir comprendre* (interpreting and relating), and *savoir* (knowledge). It can be construed from Figure 31, which I created, that the missing element from the core ICC characteristics answers is *savoir comprendre*, or the ability to relate all the *savoirs* together. It is the strand that was not mentioned by the participants as one of the core characteristics. Since the findings suggest that participants would utilise these strands when interpreting—a process that could be categorised as an ICC skill—the next section will explore how IC can be systematically taught in an interpretation classroom.



**Figure 31: Byram's Savoirs Employed During Interpretation (Vignette Situations)**

Comparing the findings from the vignettes with the desirable characteristics of interpreters who can effectively mediate cultures, the skills needed to navigate the scenes overlap. These skills seem to emerge from three core features: (1) an ability to understand the nuances, (2) an open-mindedness to new ideas and experiences, and (3) increased exposure to intercultural experience.

### 7.3.1.2 Systemising IC Teaching

The participants believe that the lack of IC teaching, which was discussed previously, is reportedly due to limitations in teaching time and knowledge. The former is explained by Olivia, who had to prioritise teaching orders when teaching a three-hour session. She explained that an instructor must ensure that learners understand basic interpreting skills before intercultural skills. This prioritisation limits her lesson selections. Patricia raised the latter point. She explained that she relies on online sources because she lacks in-depth knowledge about IC. Nevertheless, evidence shows that this is not entirely the case.

Moreover, in formal learning situations, participants who teach IC content do not call it IC (i.e., some interpreters already teach IC without realising it). Furthermore, although some participants found the interview questions about IC unfamiliar, they went on to divulge their experiences dealing with intercultural clashes, which provided evidence that they do have knowledge of it. An experienced lecturer, Ava,

said that she teaches and discusses IC ‘without even being aware of it.’ When questioned further, she stated that she already teaches her students the communicative patterns of English speakers from different groups, such as Japanese English pronunciation or the ‘flowery language’ (i.e., superfluous word choice) used by English speakers from India. In another teaching example, Rawee remarked that she challenges her students with English variations. This kind of teaching approach focuses on anticipated communicative patterns. It resembles the *savoirs* or the general knowledge about the specifics of each culture and its people.

One of the leading causes of IC stagnation is that IC teaching is often performed without official acknowledgement. Trainers have yet to validate IC as part of required lessons, causing a delay in development. In informal coaching between work colleagues, participants said that most of the advice they received revolved around skills development rather than focusing on IC aspects. The mentor may only touch upon the etiquette of their clients to familiarise the trainee with the expected practice.

In Chapter 5 (pp. 141–167), the thesis employed a document analysis that investigated research theory, methodology, and the interpreter’s roles, expectations, and mediating choices. As a secondary data source, the collected documents (independent studies) suggested that ICC skills are necessary for interpreters to deal with intercultural discrepancies. There were two main points from the analysis which informed the research questions. First, IC is practised by interpreters of various expertise. Second, the documents show a lack of evidence of how interpreters deal with intercultural conflicts when interpreting.

After conducting the primary research, the interview findings suggested two views on IC and teaching in the classroom context. First, some participants believed that IC is vital to interpretation, from knowing about people of different/similar cultures to having IC inform why certain conflicts occur. Second, the other participants believed that IC is the foundation of interpretation because it allows them to navigate cultural ambiguities; Elizabeth, for example, stated that she taught IC based on her experience as an interpreter. She presented examples based on her interpreting experience to her students. Regardless of which view the participants

took, both perspectives seem to suggest that IC and interpretation are interwoven and significantly affect each other.

With regard to transferring IC knowledge to the interpreting classroom, about one-third of the participants offered two main suggestions:

- First, teachers are to advocate sharing first-hand anecdotes or alternative materials with the students. Direct interpreting experiences are preferred but can be substituted with video clips, movies, and documentaries. These practices can be a training ground for learners to use their skills in simulated situations.
- Second, teachers are to arrange discussions on cultural comparisons, such as comparing contextual idioms. This kind of brainstorming would be an open discussion platform for students to analyse their beliefs and establish the rationale behind cultural values in their culture. However, one participant, Nicholas, disagreed by saying that IC teaching cannot be done without students or attendees of multicultural backgrounds (i.e., teaching IC is to be conducted in the presence of non-locals in a classroom). Nevertheless, such presence or lack thereof should not hinder the teaching of IC.

Overall, the interview findings suggest that IC is taught in the classroom but not explicitly, since participants showed that they either lacked confidence in the subject or were limited by time constraints. An alternative interpretation, to some extent, is that many instructors fail to realise that the materials they bring to class are related to IC.

Here are a few policy guidelines for Thai educators and policymakers from the findings. First, universities or institutes should provide support or training to course instructors to foster an understanding that the current materials are already related to IC so that their class content can specifically be aimed toward IC. Second, further training programmes, particularly at the HE level, are needed, and should be arranged for those who stated that they lacked confidence in teaching IC. Third, IC lessons should be included in the curriculum or we should provide more opportunities

for students to learn about IC outside the classroom. Fourth, it may be necessary to prioritise IC education from the policy level and ensure that teachers have the resources they require to teach this important topic effectively.

Overall, despite the aforementioned gaps in the educational sphere, there remains plenty of optimistic potential for IC teaching improvement. Prioritisation can be implemented from the top-down, such as stipulating a national policy from the Office of the Higher Education, Ministry of Education of Thailand; however, since universities in Thailand have become more autonomous in the past years (Lao, 2015), it is probably better to adopt a bottom-up approach, whereby teachers propose and design an IC course from department to faculty to university level (7.5.2.3 Practical Implications, Chapter 7, pp. 327–330).

## 7.4 Addressing Research Questions

Below, I provide a summary of responses to each of the research questions.

1. What does intercultural communicative competence entail in the interpretation industry in Thailand?

Traversing beyond the conduit role, interpreters often shift their roles by intervening in a conversation. They do this to mediate any contrasting intercultural differences (i.e., the expected meanings and norms of two or more cultures). They do so by utilising ICC in their interpreting routines, which shows that IC is a form of mediating technique. Moreover, interpreters can apply cultural dimensionality to their preparation and attempt to tentatively match the intercultural patterns of the prospective clients. This suggests that ICC is the utilisation of skills and knowledge which can arguably be enhanced through practice and training. In view of ICC, participants principally employed Byram's *savoir comprendre* or interpreting and relating skills as an intermediary connector to the other *savoirs* (1997, 2021).

2. What is the importance of intercultural communication in interpretation classrooms and training programmes in Thailand?

As explored in RQ1, applying IC principles in the context of interpreting is essential for effective interpreting since participants' insights contend that IC could be the basis of interpreting. Early exposure to foreign cultures and languages among individuals from classroom teaching and cultural immersion may have an effect on how an individual's understanding of IC improves (also enhancing the likelihood of one pursuing an interpreting career). As a replacement for foreign environments, teaching interpreting students with IC-based situations and theories is advantageous in terms of gaining practical knowledge. One problem that needs to be addressed is that interpreter trainers do not normally realise that their current resources already employ IC materials, which arguably does not give IC the status it deserves. Thus, trainers need to be reminded of the importance of teaching more IC-focused curricula. At the same time, some trainers do not have the specialised knowledge of

IC or the allotted teaching time for IC lessons, which could be alleviated by the instructor's personal teaching planning or the top-down policy change in education.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This section is divided into five headings: study limitations, research implications, recommendations, final remarks, and personal reflections.

### **7.5.1 Study Limitations**

The first set of limitations deals with issues related to the Covid-19 pandemic, budget, and time constraints. With most people locked inside their homes, the pandemic changed how many scholars conduct research. Unfortunately, the pandemic also diminished the opportunity for postgraduate researchers (PGRs) to exchange ideas with professors, colleagues, and students, which would occur during normal times.

An example of the pandemic's impact can be seen in my data collection. Data collection lasted approximately three months, from late 2020 to early 2021. Whereas the initial plan was to collect interview data in person in Thailand, the pandemic started in early 2020 and all schooling was moved online to adhere to UK law (2020) and the College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee's rules and regulations (2020, para. 3). The restrictions were legally and socially enforced, meaning that even if I had successfully travelled to Thailand for the fieldwork, it would have been impossible to find participants willing to meet in person without breaking any local Covid-19 rules. Moreover, with the dissertation collection being kept in a library and most potential participants residing in Thailand, travelling to the country for fieldwork was initially an optimal decision. This was also the case for accessing the dissertation copies at the library at Chulalongkorn University. These risks were mitigated with a contingency plan for data collection (Chapter 4, pp. 100–140). For these reasons, the data collection had to be done online to be on track with the planned PhD timeline. Online interviewing meant that the interviews would not be suitable for those participants who were less technologically inclined. Even though I provided technical assistance, such as sending out guidelines and detailed

instructions before the interview date, one highly experienced prospective interviewee decided to pass the interview opportunity to others, because the individual did not know how to use online conferencing applications. Nevertheless, conducting online interviews allowed time and location flexibility for the participants and ease of recording and transcribing. In the end, online data collection enabled me to collect data from participants who resided overseas, such as in the US or Australia, which would not have been possible had the interviews been conducted offline.

Another drawback of conducting online interviews is the option for the interviewee to turn the camera on or off. Some were comfortable having the camera on, whereas several decided to only share their audio. While it was not a requirement to have the camera on, having both the visual and audio input would have enhanced and enriched the way I transcribed and interpreted the data. However, the fact that all of the conducted interviews were completely voluntary and unpaid meant that any sort of interviews had to be organised in the most welcoming way possible. Had the interviews been conducted in person, I would have captured the non-verbal cues and nuances more without having to ask the participants to use the camera function. After all, moving the interviews online was a necessary step during a time of crisis. It is important to highlight that the process led to the successful completion of the online interviews, as the total interviewee number reached 40 people.

The third limitation relates to the characteristics of semi-structured individual interviews. Doing individual interviewing requires considerable time, effort, and willingness from participants, which, in my case, meant that the process required close connections with interpreters, interpreter trainers, and interpreter students. I had to rely on individuals or gatekeepers with well-connected networks for a wider audience in order to reach the qualitative target saturation (Saunders et al., 2018).

Moreover, during and after the interviews, there were moments when I noticed that the participants could have expanded the conversation further—that is, the experiences with cultural clashes or how to deal with the vignette scenarios. Had more interpreters joined the conversation (e.g., had I also conducted focus-group interviews), they could have contributed their experiences to the discussion.



In addition, although individual interviews provided opportunities for in-depth enquiries, they are a recollection of events that have already happened. It also reflects the individual's image since the participants are self-aware that they are being recorded.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the in-depth nature of the interviews provided a thorough examination of the difficulties and processes of interpreting, and the semi-structured style meant that the participants had the flexibility to elaborate on the dialogue as needed.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, the creative method of the 'River of Experience' drawings gave the interviewees the flexibility to highlight and explain important life milestones within guided instructions, hence maintaining the semi-structured characteristics of the overall research design. Regardless of how well the interviewees were ensured that their drawings would not be judged based on aesthetics, four participants decided not to draw. Instead, I asked the participants to talk about their entrance to the profession in place of the drawing. Nevertheless, the drawings I did manage to collect led to complex conversations that would typically be overly personal to ask directly, and more importantly, some interviewees even incorporated milestones about culture. Even though a few chose not to draw, the majority gave valuable data and assisted in achieving the study's research objectives.

The fourth limitation is the role of being an insider researcher (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). The role became more pronounced in the interview schedule since personal experience vastly informed the vignette designs and details. It is argued that being a local researcher can transition the researcher to 'the researched' (Al-Natour, 2011). For this research, navigating through comparable experiences allowed me to project the patterns of their answers and ask follow-up questions when appropriate. At the same time, the interview data addressed the research questions and personal curiosity, highlighting the transition from being the researcher to the researched. My stance conforms to the constructivist position that the data is not to be mined (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2007) but co-ordinated, co-interacted, and co-constructed. The researcher and their presence all contribute to the process of knowledge creation.

Researching as an insider meant that I was able to present a unique viewpoint, including experience breadth and depth, to the research and to connect with the interviewees (i.e., connecting the invisible dots between the body of knowledge on IC and my personal experience as a professional interpreter). Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge this limitation to ensure that the research is robust and rigorous.

The last point is the researcher's bias. Since qualitative research through semi-structured interviewing attempts to harness the humanistic parts of the conversation, it is vital to acknowledge the possibility of being prejudiced by one's cultural worldview. With some professional experience obtained from being a part-time interpreter, the advantages of partly being an insider in the Thai interpreting community have informed the research design. To avoid interfering with participants' insights, these advantages were carefully composed to allow participants to share their understandings, such as creating the vignettes in the way that would stimulate responses and being strategically patient for the participants to contemplate and give insights. I ensured that bias was mitigated in other parts of the study. The following is one of the examples where a biased interpretation was made and rectified. In the first draft of the discussion, I found that my cultural worldview, or the perspective of a Thai researcher when viewing my cultural practices and others, vastly influenced the use of the Hofstede scale. For instance, there was a section where participants of all nationalities showed that they would all assist their clients. However, this insight defies the Thai individualism score compared to South Korea and the US. My bias led to a superficial assumption that their willingness to help may have been the result of the foreign participants' time spent in Thailand, which may have left a positive impact on their outlook or even increased their cultural sensitivity. It can be seen that my initial interpretation may have been flawed and in favour of Thai culture. Ex post, more grounded theory techniques would have helped me to distance myself from my own subjectivity.

As a self-reflection on my own cultural biases, I recognised that it is important to be aware of the researcher's reflexivity, which is normally lacking in IC studies. For example, I began the analytical process using a deductive approach with Byram's ICC framework. Although the savoir clusters firmly guided the analysis and the

writing direction, I quickly realised that my analytical lens was limited and overtly focused on a single analytical model that exclusively addressed RQ1 in terms of the ICC characteristics. As the savoirs mainly focus on ICC characteristics, deduction seemed to omit the roles of the interpreter and the specifics of the cultural values of the analysis. After this stage, I switched the reasoning to the inductive approach by thematising ideas according to frequency and extensiveness (Krueger et al., 2000, p. 136) for investigating the complexities of interpreting or communicating. I was also able to correct heavily-biased interpretations by using member checks with the supervisory team for more controversial interpretations. This process increased nuanced and comprehensive comprehension of the studied phenomena and strengthened the research's rigour.

Overall, this study employed a qualitative approach through creative interviewing but it was beyond the scope of this study to increase the number of participants. Achieving quantitative external validity is not the focus since the research project is interested in the qualitative insights of the ICC characteristics. Obtaining this data could offer practical changes to the writing of Thailand's professional guidelines, the inception of new study programmes or improvements in IC to the existing curriculum. Since many of the interviewees were on the committee for drafting the country's professional guidelines, it can be said that the current research questions focus more on the fundamentals of IC in Thailand: the characteristics that make ICC and the lessons on IC.

The results of this study offer valuable qualitative insights into the essential traits and lessons of IC in Thailand, despite the small sample size. These results can be a starting point for further study on IC in Thailand and other contexts. Moreover, the study's inclusion of interpretation trainers and committee members guarantees that the findings are consistent with the country's industry standards and best practices.

### **7.5.2 Research Implications**

I will discuss the implications organised into three sub-headings: (1) methodological implications for future researchers, (2) contributions to knowledge, and (3) practical implications and implemented practical benefits.

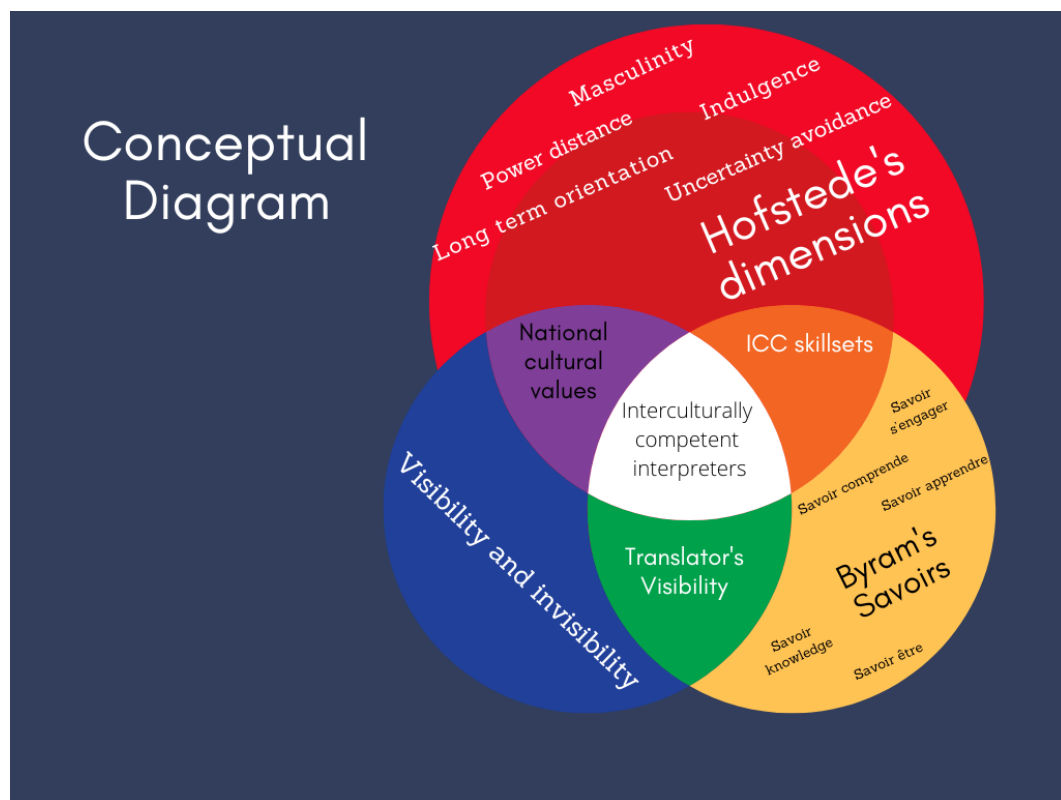
### 7.5.2.1 Methodological Implications for Future Researchers

First, by incorporating creative research methods in the semi-structured interviews, the study has contributed to the way in which we can research IC and interpreting, thus extending existing methods in the interpreting field. The applied creative research methods consisted of two components: photograph-video vignettes and a creative drawing activity. Presented as photographs and videos with synopses, I created the vignettes as research-focused stimuli to encourage the participants to consider IC in relation to interpreting. To avoid forcing IC terms in the interview questions with the participants, I strategically placed the vignettes in the interview schedule before the research-focused questions. After being prompted, it appeared that the participants were more prepared to discuss IC explicitly. The vignettes helped orient the participants to consider interpreting situations where IC is a factor in determining whether they need to mediate the situation. Adapting the vignette as a research method could help future researchers shape the interview direction and increase the research focus in increments while circumventing difficult academic concepts (i.e., using IC stimulating situations prior to specifically asking questions about IC notions). Using photographed and video-facilitated vignettes can stimulate deeper reflection, particularly when researching 'distinct cultural practices' (Elliot et al., 2017, p. 480). In turn, the process led to acquiring high-quality data, which is arguably innovative and a methodological contribution for future scholars. Researchers with an aim to investigate culture through reflection can incorporate such methods to creatively design vignettes to stimulate thinking in order to attain in-depth insights.

Second, in terms of the creative drawing technique, adding the drawing activity enhanced the data collection process, particularly in terms of the underpinning culture and its impact on their journey as an interpreter. The technique may have allowed for a more fine-grained understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the participants, especially in terms of culture and its impact on their careers. To my knowledge, this project was the first research on Thai interpreters to employ such creative research methods. Moreover, combining the primary creative interview data with the secondary data obtained from the document analysis ensured that the data was rigorously triangulated.

### 7.5.2.2 Contributions to Knowledge

There are two major contributions to knowledge. The first is the adoption of tripartite interdisciplinary theories as analytical frameworks. The analysis is predicated on three analytical models. In bridging disparate conceptual models from different disciplinary strands, I created the IC-Interpretation Venn diagram (Figure 32) to visualise the relations between the three analytical frameworks and how they are merged with one another through three strands. Employing this combined model will provide valuable empirical support for the need for further interdisciplinary research into interpreting across cultures. Based on the evidence from my research and having reflected on them, I argue that the Venn diagram can contribute to building a greater understanding of the IC process that interpreters undergo in their interpreting routine.



**Figure 32: Interdisciplinary IC-Interpretation Venn Diagram**

In the first perspective, I presented the interview data by challenging the conventional understanding of the interpreter's role (blue circle). I categorised the participants' approach to their role and the changing of that role as challenged by circumstances within this model while analysing the role of interpreters in the

context of intercultural differences. The framework challenges the conventional understanding of the interpreter's role and how it may change based on circumstances. Adopting this perspective will enable researchers to recognise how their participants use IC to address intercultural issues that they encounter during their interpreting routine.

The second framework (red) is to analyse the rationale and cultural trajectories, which tend to influence the participants' cultural understanding since Hofstede's dimensions (2001; 2020) suggested the fundamentals of national values. Nevertheless, the interview data indicate that the scores do not always align with the participants' insights, which invites further interpreting and critiquing. Accounting for the most analytical space compared to the other two frameworks, this circle primarily investigates the cultural and national values that may influence the participants' understanding of their role. As the dimensions suggest underlying reasons behind conflicts, it will allow scholars to further investigate the skills needed to tackle the problems based on the framework effectively.

The third framework (yellow) consists of the recommended intercultural skills for intercultural speakers. It compares the recommended intercultural skills to the skills used by interpreters to provide culturally appropriate interpretations. Here I compared the recommended skillset based on the model with the skills used to produce contextually and culturally appropriate interpretations and make suggestions regarding skill development. I also argued that these three circles complement and form interculturally competent interpreters at the centre (Nowell et al., 2017).

The three overlapping theoretical perspectives are merged to form a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to be an interculturally competent interpreter in Thailand. While the theories provided the main outline of the analysis, scholars are to contextualise the analysis based on their obtained data. Future researchers should note that the order of theory use is not fixed nor sequential, although certain sections require one theory more than the others, such as the *savoirs* being more germane to RQ2. All of the theories may be revisited as needed.

Another contribution is the conceptualisation of the combined techniques of IC and translation strategies. Below, I summarise how the participants applied IC through a variety of translation procedures (Table 7-2). In conjunction with Byram (1997, 2021); Venuti (2008); and Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), the participants use ICC skills to solve intercultural challenges while doing their daily interpreting tasks. In understanding IC in interpretation, I would argue that IC offers a pathway to a much deeper understanding of the interpreting process which interpreters must undergo in order to produce satisfying outcomes.

**Table 7-2: Proposed IC Translation Strategies Adapted from Byram (1997, 2021); Venuti (2008) and Vinay and Darbelnet Translation Strategies (1995)**

<b>IC and Interpreter's Role</b>	<b>What the Role Entails</b>
IC as Intercultural and Ethical Remit (Responsibility to Intercultural and Ethical Principles)	Balancing between intercultural and ethical responsibilities.
IC as Intercultural Sensitivity (Awareness of Diverse Cultural Backgrounds)	Offering additional assistance outside of the role when asked.
IC as Visibility for Invisibility (Explicitly Establishing Boundaries for Impartiality)	Clearly explaining the boundaries to the clients before interpreting impartially.
IC as Invisibility (Non-Intervention: Not Becoming Involved in the Conversation)	Refraining from interpreting to avoid disturbing the interrogative process.
IC as Visibility (Intervention: Intervening to Mediate in the Conversation)	Necessarily intervening to create an understanding in order to continue the conversation.
<b>Translation Techniques</b>	<b>Translated Messages by Participants</b>
IC as Modulation (Amending the Perspective of the Message)	Instead of 'vous êtes en grande forme,' using 'beautiful, lovely, or good health' to the Thai PM's wife.
IC as Omission (Leaving out Messages)	Leaving out the message spoken a non-specialised dialect.
IC as Adaptation (Amending the Text/Message for Cultural Nuances)	Preparing idiomatic expressions in the target language.
IC as Borrowing (Using Words/Phrases from SL) and Explicitation (Making Implicit Information in SL Explicit in TL)	Borrowing the term 'koalifications' and explicating the rhyme between 'koalifications' and 'qualifications.'
IC as Equivalence (Finding Words/Expressions in TL that Convey the Exact Same Meaning)	'Koalifications' > finding a local joke in place of the original.
IC as Self-Censorship (Omission)	Self-censoring the interpretation of the King-ridiculed messages is a type of self-induced omission to avoid possible prosecution.
IC as Explicitation (Explicating Implicit Information in TL)	Explicitly explaining the donation practice in Thailand in comparison to the US.

Directly addressing RQ1, it is a holistic conceptualisation of the interpreter's employment of IC which is not restricted to the context of Thailand and can be applied in other contexts. Scholars can potentially utilise the procedures to comprehensively construct an understanding of the process of interpreting cultures.

### 7.5.2.3 Practical Implications for Interpreting and Teaching Interpreting in Thailand

The practical implications will be discussed in terms of professional practice and education. The findings can contribute to a better understanding of how



interpreters, recruiters, and policymakers can incorporate IC in their respective roles. For interpreters, acknowledging the significance of the role of culture is imperative to their work. They could develop a learning system through formal or informal learning to prepare themselves for intercultural responsibilities. For example, interpreters can employ Byram's *savoir apprendre/faire*/skills of discovery and interaction (1997, 2021). These *savoirs* can be used to inform a system of acquiring knowledge to respond to the changing dynamics of each cultural interpretation they plan to encounter. In preparation for interpretation, the Hofstede scale (2001, 2020) guides interpreters in terms of the prospective fundamental thinking and communicative patterns of the clients from two cultures; however, the interpreters are reminded to be more attentive to the actual conversation and adapt their mediation accordingly.

As for interpreter recruiters, their decisions can impact the type of jobs interpreters receive, such as understanding correctly paired languages (e.g., Thai and Lao). Recruitment teams can make decisions that place cultural importance before profits. Policymakers, which are often groups of connected interpreters in countries such as Thailand and other contexts, can brainstorm and write professional guidelines based on the findings presented here, which are sorely needed in many developing countries. Furthermore, universities, interpreter associations, and other related private institutes which organise training programmes and classes must consider the intercultural role's underlying importance in the design of new classes or curricula. As this research acknowledges the intertwinement between interpreting and IC, teachers and trainers ought to explicitly include teaching materials due to the generally implicit nature of current IC teaching, such as limited discussions of cultural conflicts. Paying close attention to the cultural nuances encountered during interpretation, and bringing those experiences to the students, are suggested for those who have not touched upon IC in class but nonetheless intend to teach it.

#### 7.5.2.3.1 Implemented Practical Benefits

This thesis has demonstrated a number of practical applications which can be replicated in similar contexts. In terms of Thailand's educational sphere, one of the latest additions to the Thai interpretation programme is the newly approved

Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpretation in the Digital Age at the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University. According to the curriculum draft, the programme is the first full undergraduate degree in interpretation in Thailand in 2023. At the same time, the programme will serve learners instead of other graduate programmes in interpreting studies that have been closed in the past few years. The programme committee asked if I could write the course descriptions based on my PhD findings for an intercultural communication course at the end of July 2022. Based on the programme's details, intercultural communication is written as an integral part of the programme's value because the paper justifies that 'interpreting is a mechanism for transferring intercultural communication and knowledge from one society to others.' As a mandatory course under the strand of English skills, the course will be a 3-credit class grouped with Public Speaking, Writing for Communication in the Digital Age, World Englishes, and World Literature. The listing coincides with how translation has traversed beyond the term of a 'Cinderella subject' to gain its grounding as a legitimate discipline while attaching other adjacent areas to its core, as explained by Bassnett and Damrosch (2016). I decided to name the course *Intercultural Communication for Translators and Interpreters* to emphasise that the learning will be predominantly in the context of translation and interpretation.

The interview findings informed the design of the BA course in two core areas: professional and academic spheres. This design was produced because of this PhD's analytical frameworks, which are macro- and micro-analyses of national cultures, translators' visibility, and ICC (see 9.5.1, Appendices, p. 447). Professionally, the class materials will focus on simulating intercultural problems that interpreters often encounter in their careers. Class materials can comprise, but are not limited to, hypothetical scenarios, personal anecdotes, pictures, video clips, and other symbolic and material artefacts. Students will be challenged to brainstorm with their peers to produce culturally appropriate solutions while sharing their first-hand IC experiences. Moreover, the instructor can introduce the students to interdisciplinary research between IC and translation/interpreting studies and the fundamentals of conducting research, such as research paradigm, design, tools, methods, analytical frameworks, and more. Towards the end of the term, each student will be tasked

with a class project where they must produce a research proposal and conduct the research as partial fulfilment of the course. This curriculum draft is a development stride forward for Thailand, Thai academics, and, more importantly, future students who wish to pursue a professional career in interpretation. Compared to the UK, where a search on the Internet would yield numerous study options, there are very limited options for programmes in interpretation (or interpretation and intercultural studies) in Thailand. A few exceptions in Australian institutes may be due to their proximity to Thailand. As of 2022, the highest level of educational programme in Thai–English interpretation is at the Master’s level offered by Chulalongkorn University (2.5.1.2, Chapter 3, pp. 68–70). Additionally, I have included another course for the Continuing Education Programme as a condensed version of the BA course, designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject to the general public (see 9.5.2, Appendices, p. 451).

With regard to professional applications, the findings suggest useful improvements to the stakeholders of the country’s professional industry. As Thailand and its professional interpretation industry has progressed, the country has reached a point where its industry needs a set of agreed-upon formalised rules and regulations. In December 2020, during my PhD, I participated in an online meeting on the draft of professional standards for professional interpreters in Thailand, organised by The Translator and Interpreter Association of Thailand. It could be said that meeting attendees were high-level stakeholders of the nation’s interpreting industry who are likely to bring the first change to the nation’s rules and regulations for those who wish to interpret professionally. There, I suggested that the panel add elements of cultural competency based on my PhD’s preliminary findings. The meeting was one of the nation’s first attempts to tackle the issues of professional requirements.

Serving as a reference point for other scholars and professional interpreters, these practical applications are only examples. It is important to stress that comparable efforts can be replicated and reproduced in other contexts.

The following section covers the recommendations for future research, which encompasses how future researchers, educators, interpreters, and policymakers can further utilise the research and bring change to their areas.

### 7.5.3 Recommendations

In writing further research questions, the scope could extend to hiring agencies and recruiters to develop a complete picture of IC interpretation in Thailand regarding hiring and language pairs. Moreover, as Thailand becomes more standardised in its licensing in the near future, extending the research scope to this population will investigate how future policies, primarily the ones about language and cultural awareness, are understood and implemented by recruiting companies. We can then work towards a comprehensive overview of interpretation and IC in Thailand and determine how to increase the quality of the services for all stakeholders (i.e., explicitly incorporate IC through teaching, learning, and practising interpretation).

In terms of research methods, creative research methods may help future researchers establish a better-informed understanding of the tacit intercultural influence on translators or interpreters. The implicit characteristics of the drawing enquiry presented opportunities for examining the effects of culture without unnecessarily forcing the participants to emphasise culture when drawing their rivers. Using creative research methods in this study may inspire other researchers to consider the potential benefits of incorporating such methods in their own research on interpreting and IC. If future research is interested in employing creative research methods, scholars could provide options for the participants and the method should not be limited to the use of drawings. Pairing with other conventional methods such as document analysis helps ensure that the obtained data is well-triangulated.

Furthermore, future research is to adopt the observation method while the participants interpret to see how they tackle problems. However, focus groups and observation seem to pose an apparent issue with information confidentiality. The professional circle in Thailand is relatively small, which suggests that it is likely that the participants will know one another and may not be willing to share confidential information to maintain their professional image and reputation. This approach may be appropriate if the industry is of a larger size in the future. As participants would be bound by non-disclosure agreements which oversee confidential information

shared before, during, and after the meeting, future research could explore how to circumvent such restrictions.

Regarding the analytical models, future scholars are to replicate the combined models in order to normalise IC for research about interpreting processes. Future researchers are to consider adopting the following steps to their analytical approach. The order of theory application is flexible, and each of the three models can be re-evaluated as necessary in different sections of the analysis. The Venn IC-Interpretation diagram, together with the proposed IC translation strategies, can be applied to other contexts. However, future scholars are to take into consideration the specific context-based practices that their target population encounters. Since the model and the proposed strategies were principally informed by the data based on the population of Thai–English interpreters, future scholars may further develop by extending context-specific strands and approaches.

The first step, after determining the research inquiries of research, collecting, and analysing the data, is to use the first analytical layer by investigating and challenging the conventional establishment of the interpreter's role, particularly how they may change in different situations. As an inductive thematic approach, this process will entail matching themes from the data and developing arguments based on them. The second layer involves comparing Hofstede's cultural tendencies with the participants' perceptions of culture and their relation to interpreting. Using the framework as structural guidelines while also adding new insights and information to the discussion would ensure a better-rounded, complete, and thorough analytical cycle. Researchers must find a balance between referencing the dimensions and being adaptable and flexible to new insights and studies on IC in order to avoid making generalised assumptions based on one perspective.

The next step is to analyse the recommended ICC skills or the *savoirs*. They are to compare and identify the participants' skills that are needed in the actual interpreting process with the advised skillset. This process will allow them to distinguish where the needed skills diverge with the *savoirs* and where they align with one another. The goal is to reach a set of final recommended skills as suggested by the *savoirs* and findings.

Overall, the qualitative creative methods with semi-structured interviews could elicit in-depth reflections on the conversations. While holding in-depth semi-structured conversations, the researchers are to see value in the lived experiences of the participants. They could maximise the benefits of semi-structured interviewing by patiently allowing the interviewee to speak and share their stories. In the analysis, researchers are also to pay attention to non-verbal communication, such as pauses, puzzled facial expressions, and follow-up questions from the participants. Based on the research design and interview schedule, a level of cultural specificity is required to conduct similar research, including the researcher's knowledge about their own and other cultures.

Future scholars may also wish to investigate other contexts, such as the Cambodian context, rather than generalised continental contexts (e.g., African or Asian contexts). They can (re)design the IC interview schedule so that the participants find it more accessible, perhaps without using technical terms. Doing this would alleviate lexical issues because even though the interviewees had been given a glossary of academic terms beforehand, some questions about IC mediation and necessary skills still posed difficulty. Adopting a cross-disciplinary approach can foster research collaboration between disciplines, especially where scholars of translation/interpreting already work adjacently or within the same department as IC academics. Such a heightened collaboration, if achieved, will promote discussions amongst academics with shared research interests. With specific reference to Thailand, my home country, local research is critical for the country's academic, professional, and educational development because local contributions will help address local problems that have longed for local attention.

#### **7.5.4 Final Remarks**

The interview findings revealed that the interpreters in the current study often work in a space that requires close attention to the expected meanings and norms between two or more cultures. In addressing RQ1, their role is to shift to and fro between the spaces and take up a role that goes beyond being a conduit. They frequently assume a visible role in directing the discussion flow and controlling what cultural differences get explained or withheld while assessing ethical responsibilities

and cultural expectations. Interpreters could methodically prepare themselves for the anticipated unpredictability and evolving needs of each meeting by consulting the Cultural Dimensions Theory or Hofstede's scale (2001; 2020). Using the scores can serve as a general guide to better understanding the intercultural expectations of the interlocutors who will be present at the meeting. When participants are confronted with intercultural differences which demand mediation, the findings (RQ1) showed that the interviewees dynamically utilised nearly all of Byram's *savoirs* (1997, 2021). Nevertheless, the only *savoir* not discussed by the interviewees was *savoir comprendre* or the skills which will allow them to interpret and interrelatedly employ all the other four *savoirs*: knowledge, attitudes, critical cultural awareness, and discovery and interaction. For instance, utilising IC as visibility in interpretation.

In terms of IC teaching (RQ2), the results indicate that there is the possibility that participants' early exposure to foreign cultures and languages, both within and outside of the classroom, may have an impact on how IC develops. This, in turn, may point learners in the direction of a career as interpreters. IC, despite the various terms used, is critical to the act of interpretation. Interpreting students may benefit from a classroom with simulated multicultural exposure, especially those who have not had the chance to live abroad (i.e., class materials and theories about cultural practices). The interpreter trainers in this study were frequently unaware that the materials they were using already encompass IC materials. Therefore, it is necessary to remind them of the significance of implementing more IC-focused curricula. Last, some trainers lacked the specialised understanding of IC or the designated teaching time for IC lessons, however this can be remedied by the trainer's individual lesson planning or a top-down policy change in education.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that IC teaching can either be the grounding of interpretation or vice versa (i.e., there is a reciprocal relationship between IC and interpretation). This implies that there is plenty of room for improvement for educators and policymakers in Thailand's pedagogical systems. This implementation may be made in Thailand at the teacher, curriculum, and policy levels.

For researchers, I offered a variety of methodological and practical implications for future research on IC and interpretation in and outside Thailand. Utilising creative

research methods can help academics better understand the experiences and points of view of interpreters as well as the role that culture plays in their work, such as photograph-video vignettes and a creative drawing activity. Another implication is the use of multidisciplinary theories, such as the Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede, 2010; 2020), to analyse the data and better comprehend how culture affects interpretation (7.5.2.2 Contributions to Knowledge, pp. 324–327). Teachers and curriculum designers should consider the benefits of IC incorporation into their lesson planning and curriculum drafting. Vignettes may be used as class discussion stimuli, where students are encouraged to brainstorm and tackle intercultural issues with their peers. Students may be asked to do a creative drawing activity to raise awareness of self-engagement with IC as a preamble to other IC-related lessons. Instructors can adapt teaching possibilities in the classroom.

At the curriculum level, IC deserves to be a dedicated course in order to fully maximise more focused and in-depth learning opportunities rather than incorporating the content into other subjects. It is a priority that Thailand no longer waits for programmes in other countries to shift their research focus to Thai language and culture. For Thailand and its professional interpreting sphere to be developed, it is imperative to start local programmes so that a body of knowledge, particularly in Thai, can be created and shaped to serve the growing professional scene and the challenges of translating in Thailand. Similar recommendations can be made about working interpreters and their required qualifications.

At the teaching level, school executives and administrators can alleviate the lack of IC by setting the agenda to organise training for teaching personnel who teach interpreting classes and dedicate teaching time for IC lessons as appropriate. Teacher trainers and teachers can incorporate IC into lessons by organising discussions around their personal experiences or teaching artefacts, such as short clips, films, and/or documentaries, or discuss cultural comparisons through idioms.

Last, creating awareness and equipping the interpreters with the tools required to succeed in IC interpreting can be a transformative impact on how interpreters carry out their duties. Doing so could greatly contribute to more productive and interculturally accepting meetings. As Thailand's professional and educational



development is still in its early stages, positive changes could have a long-lasting impact on the industry's foundation, such as security, job clarification, job recruitment criteria for language specialisations, and curriculum directions. It is imperative to underscore that the implemented practical changes discussed in this thesis are simply examples, and that future researchers in other contexts can replicate similar efforts. As per Theodosiou and Aspioti's (2015) suggestion, it is unlikely for interpreters who do not receive the appropriate training to be able to navigate through IC problems, thus I hope this study will inspire scholars and practitioners as an innovative approach to revolutionise IC teaching with interpreting to prioritise and address the issue with a sense of urgency.

### **7.5.5 Personal Reflections**

In the introduction chapter, I explicated how my life events and education have inspired me to pursue this PhD. Similar to other PGRs, my PhD was partly driven by one generic and shared goal—to get a PhD. The goal was simply to match the qualifications that most Thai lecturers will be required to have in the foreseeable future. Here I will close with what I have learned beyond my expectations and how the PhD has greatly contributed to my growth as a researcher and as an individual.

The first is the development of the essential research skills that one requires to produce publications to ascend the academic ranks. I have been able to challenge myself linguistically and intellectually through academic reading and writing conventions to link the two disciplines by using unconventional research methods to unravel new insights. Apart from the classes, workshops and seminars, working as a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) in multiple courses and semesters gave me an outlook on UK Higher Education teaching; many of the skills could be employed when I return to teaching in Thailand. Furthermore, having the opportunity to present at a conference and share my research at PGR-led seminars gave me the platform to be challenged and to reflect on where I was in terms of research development.

The next area regards my positionality. I have learned that my role as an insider, employing the shared knowledge with the participants for research purposes (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), has allowed me to formulate the research topic (i.e., as an

interpreter and an IC researcher in Thailand). Being a part-time interpreter, and drawing on first-hand work experience and consulting with work colleagues, I knew that there were existing intercultural concerns when interpreting, such as patterns of communication, apparent conflicts, and misunderstandings. Being an insider was also beneficial in terms of participant recruitment. Had I not initiated contacts with interpreters before coming to the UK, particularly with the gatekeepers, reaching my data collection goals would have likely been problematic. Nevertheless, when considering the positions of insider and outsider, I began questioning if my role was truly an insider. Or if my position was biased because I projected to the interviewees that I was an insider. The fact that I have worked as a part-time interpreter is unmatched compared to the experience of full-time interpreters. This shift between insider and outsider became more apparent when I interviewed a participant named Elizabeth, who had taught IC classes at a Thai University and worked as a part-time interpreter. It became evident that both of us became the 'insiders' of the IC topic and 'outsiders' to the interpreting world as both of us seemed to quickly understand the purpose of the questions about IC and the ICC skills needed. I became more aware that it is essential to be mindful of where I stand as the researcher and to know when to appropriately assert or silence myself in order to learn more from the participants. Since I shifted between insider and outsider throughout the study and did not restrict myself to a single definition, defying the dichotomy between a binary choice (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Savvides et al., 2014), the term 'inbetweener' researcher (Milligan, 2014, p. 237) or the researcher who benefits from both stands seemingly fits the descriptions of my positionality the most. I can now say with confidence that I can make more independent research decisions. It is comfortable to know where I sit in the disciplines and where I can take Thailand further.

The next area I have learned is the science/art of supervision in detail, specifically learning when to tighten the ropes, when to release, when to offer empathy, and when to motivate. In this regard, I was quite fortunate to have worked as a lecturer for five years prior; therefore, I walked into my PhD being relatively aware of the responsibilities of a university lecturer. I truly believe this is the only time that I will be able to observe supervision in such great detail. With the combination of leniency and straightforwardness from my supervisors, their good intentions, through

guidance, not instructions, have allowed me to develop the skills necessary for conducting research. In terms of time and life management, despite the oft complaints about its length, the PhD years are a privilege in that one is allowed to sit down, read, reflect, write, create knowledge (or even write this reflection piece) at a relatively one's own pace. The reality in the life of a lecturer is arguably the opposite since you are often overwhelmed by other responsibilities. Therefore, the lesson from this journey that I will live by is consistency to create and manage time to read and write. I am more than certain that I will be able to emulate the guiding patterns when it is my turn to supervise.

Lastly, since the PhD is also a personal quest to explore my curiosity as a person to challenge myself intellectually to learn to the fullest, one question I repeatedly get from people around me is, 'What is it like doing a PhD?' Of course, you could always give a generic answer that it is a 3/4-year programme in the UK. However, the real answer is that it is different for every individual. For me, some days were filled with self-doubt, while others were full of satisfaction and success stories. Even though every new chapter meant more learning opportunities, each also brought with them more uncertainties. However, through the guidance of my supervisors, the camaraderie from my PhD colleagues, and the warm conversations struck by fellow Glaswegians (despite the city's frigid weather), my time in Scotland has allowed me to gratefully experience and see the world in the way that I would never have imagined. Being away from home for the longest time, exacerbated by the pandemic, has taught me the importance of seizing the day, appreciating life, living the moment, and caring for our loved ones. Yes, I would like to think that I have been able to grow as a person. As stated in the introduction, the culturally confusing answer 'yes' from the Thai employee was the beginning of the journey and has led me to this closing.

While this could be the end of my PhD journey, it is the beginning of new chapters and possibilities for knowledge. One of my favourite walks around Glasgow is the Necropolis which has constantly left me in awe but also put things into perspective that life is very short and you only get a glimpse at it. I hope this PhD is a timestamp when future generations look back at the current world of IC in Thai–English interpreters through my well-rounded and rigorous lens.

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## 9 Appendices

Table 9-1: Demographic Information

<i>*Thirty-eight participants are Thai nationals, while there are one American and one Korean</i>					
(*assigned = the pseudonym is randomly given; reassigned = the participant has been renamed for simpler understanding)					
Pseudonym	Experience level	Working languages	Years of Experience	Training Attended before Becoming an Interpreter	License
<b>Beginner (up to 4 yrs; N = 12)</b>					
1. Fabia (reassigned)	Beginner	Thai-English	4 months	Training at the undergraduate level	No
2. Maluma	Beginner	Thai-Spanish-English	8 months	Training at the undergraduate level	No
3. Emma	Beginner	Thai-English	8 months	Training at an association	Screened by a Thai organisation
4. Becca (name reassigned)	Beginner	Thai-English	1 year	No	No
5. Daisy	Beginner	Thai-English	1 year	Training at the undergraduate level	Screened by an organisation
6. Tuapap	Beginner	Thai-English	1.4 years	Training at a court	Screened by a Thai organisation
7. Mark (name reassigned)	Beginner	Thai-English	1.5 years	Private training	Screened by a Thai organisation
8. Cherry	Beginner	Thai-Italian-English	2 years	No	No
9. Omaki	Beginner	Thai-English	3 years	AIIC training, in-house training at work	No

10. Harris	Beginner	Thai-Korean-English	3 years	No	Screened by a Thai organisation
11. Clara (name assigned)	Beginner	Thai-English	4 years	No	No
12. Paul	Beginner	Thai-English	4 years	No	No
<b>Intermediate (5-15 yrs; N = 21)</b>					
13. Elizabeth	Intermediate	Thai-English	5 years	No	No
14. Sara	Intermediate	Thai-English	5 years	A Master's degree in interpretation	No
15. Jo	Intermediate	Thai-English	5 years	Training at an association	No
16. Helen (assigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English-Mandarin	5 years	No	No
17. Magnus	Intermediate	Thai-English	5 years	No	No
18. Tammy (reassigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English	7 years	No	No
19. Angie	Intermediate	Thai-English	7 years	No	No
20. Gavin (assigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English	7 years	No	No
21. Julia (assigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English	7 years	No	No
22. Patricia (reassigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English	7 years	Training at the undergraduate level, in-house training at work	Screened by a Thai organisation
23. Kate	Intermediate	Thai-English	8 years	No	Screened by a Thai organisation
24. Liam (reassigned)	Intermediate	Thai-French-English-German-Portuguese	8 years	Training at a court	Screened by a Thai organisation
25. Pam	Intermediate	Thai-English	9 years	A Master's degree in	No



				interpretation	
26. Pepper	Intermediate	Thai-English	10 years	No	No
27. Hector	Intermediate	Thai-English	10 years	No	No
28. Sky	Intermediate	Thai-English	10 years	No	Screened by a Thai organisation
29. Scarlett (reassigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English	10 years	Training at the undergraduate level	No
30. Lily (reassigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English	12 years	No	No
31. Betty (assigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English	12 years	No	No
32. Nicholas (reassigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English	12 years	No	No
33. Gary (reassigned)	Intermediate	Thai-English	14 years	Training at an association	No

<b>Highly experienced interpreter (more than 15 yrs; N = 2)</b>					
34. Jeff	Highly experienced	Thai-French-English	22 years	No	Screened by a Thai organisation
35. Olivia (highly experienced, 27 yrs) (assigned)	Highly experienced	Thai-Spanish-English	27 years	No	No
<b>Overseas qualifications (international qualifications outside of Thailand; N = 5)</b>					
<b>AIIC *years of experience not specified for confidential purposes</b>					
36. Ava (assigned)	Highly experienced AIIC	Thai-English	AIIC member	No	*AIIC member
37. Rawee	Highly experienced AIIC	Thai-English	AIIC member	No	*AIIC member
<b>NAATI</b>					
38. Claire	Intermediate Overseas qualifications	Thai-English	15 years	Formal training	*NAATI level three through examination
39. Alan	Intermediate Overseas qualifications	Thai-English	12 years	A Master's degree in interpretation from Australia	*NAATI through coursework
<b>USA</b>					
40. Sunisa	Highly experienced Overseas qualifications	Thai-English-Lao-Japanese	30 years	US State Department training	US certification
*AIIC = International Association of Conference Interpreters  *NAATI = national standards and certifying authority					

for translators and interpreters in Australia.					
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## 9.1 Vignette Themes

The vignette section was organised into six vignettes:

### 9.1.1 Video Vignette 1: Tension between person and professional boundaries (Phipps et al., 2014)

At the waiting room, an Urdu-English interpreter tries to do his job professionally, but he is constantly asked about his personal life, his hometown, his dialect, etc. The interpreter then clarifies his role for the patient, stating that he is only there to interpret, not to discuss personal issues. He starts by informing the medical staff and patient as to how interpretation works. He seems overly strict and ends up reprimanding the staff. At the end of the session, the patient asks the interpreter for a ride but the interpreter declines and says that he is not insured to do so. Bear in mind that the patient is limping and seems to need help.

### 9.1.2 Video Vignette 2: Informal disclosure (Phipps et al., 2014)

A French-English interpreter feels uncomfortable and ambivalent when she is told not to interpret by the patient. The patient questions the credentials of the practitioner by saying “un enfant” or “a child” in French. The interpreter lets the patient speak but later interprets everything to the physician. The interpreter refuses to assist the patient when getting up from the chair. The patient leaves the room unsatisfied.

### 9.1.3 Photograph Vignette 3: Did you get a receipt from the shrine?

A US-based investigation team has been sent by a company's headquarters to Thailand to investigate fraud in a subsidiary company. The employee in question is accompanied by an interpreter. The employee does not speak English. The lawyer tells the interpreter to interpret verbatim and not to intervene.

The lawyer in English: So how did you spend the 500 baht?

The employee in Thai: “บริจาคเงินให้ศาลไปครับ”

(I donated the money to the shrine.)

The lawyer in English: Did you get a receipt?

The employee in Thai: “ไม่ได้รับครับ” (No, I did not.)

The conversation goes back and forth for several minutes. The interpreter decides to intervene, realising that the lawyer was not joking and was genuinely confused at the fact that the employee had not received a receipt. After a few exchanges of “Did you get a receipt” and “No, I did not,” the interpreter decided to intervene by asserting that donating to a shrine in Thailand means dropping the money in a donation box.

The lawyer saw this as an intrusion and demanded that the interpreter kept themselves to verbatim interpretation. Thailand, on the one hand, is a predominantly Buddhist country where giving money to a donation box at the temple (or a shrine) is socially expected (De Thabrew & De Thabrew, 2014). The act is considered merit-making, which is an essential practice of Thai Buddhism (Suksamran, 1988). Presumably, the lawyers who are from the USA, on the other hand, may have culturally experienced donation in the form of tithes or ten per cent of a person's overall income (North, 1994). By law, US churches must provide receipts for a donation amount of less than 500\$ with the name of the donor and

church, and descriptions of dates and locations; more detailed records are required for donations with higher value (Berkley, 2000).

#### **9.1.4 Photograph Vignette 4: What happens when the speaker switches to an unexpected dialect?**

While rendering simultaneous interpretation in the booth from Thai into English, the interpreter realises that the Thai speaker on stage has suddenly decided to switch to the Northeastern dialect in order to accommodate and connect with the audience.

The speaker said “สวัสดีครับพ่อแม่พี่น้องผู้ร่วมงาน มีนี่ขอขออนุญาตว่ากับทุกคนสั้นๆเป็นภาษาอีสานได้ครับ” (Hello, everyone. Can I just briefly speak to all of you in the Isan (Northeastern) dialect?)

The interpreter, who is from Bangkok, does not fully understand the dialect. The interpreter reflexively speaks into the microphone, “This is not the Bangkok dialect, and I will try my best to provide the interpretation.” The interpreter delivers about 60% of the overall communication, but everyone seems satisfied. This situation was adapted from a Thai-English simultaneous interpretation session.

Thai is the official language of Thailand (Smalley, 1994), originating from the Tai-Kadai language family, which mainly consists of Central Thai, Isan Thai (Northeastern Thai), Kam Muang (Northern Thai) and Paktay (Southern Thai) (Howard, 2011). Although the Thai Constitution has promoted instruction of other ethnolinguistic minority languages in schools (Kosonen, 2005), both education and administration are still carried out in standard Central Thai (Bradley, 2006). Issues related to dialects have a tendency to arise both in the L1 of the interpreters, in this case Thai, and in the varieties of “Global Englishes” (Rose & Galloway, 2019)(see the Document Analysis Chapter for further reference).

### **9.1.5 Photograph Vignette 5: ‘She’s (Brigitte Macron) is in such good physical shape. Beautiful!’**

Adapted from Hubscher-Davidson, 2017

When US President Donald Trump paid a visit to France on Bastille Day in 2017, he made a comment to the French President’s wife Brigitte Macron that she was “in such good physical shape. Beautiful!” What consecutively followed Donald Trump’s compliment was a watered-down interpretation of

“Vous êtes en grande forme” (you are in great health) delivered to the French audience.

This interpretation was provided by a number of French journalists in news reports (Hubscher-Davidson, 2017).

One of the reasons this news scoop was adapted into a vignette is because it was reported that the public opinion of the French was ambivalent about the interpretation’s quality (Hubscher-Davidson, 2017). When compared to French, Thai speakers may use complimenting as a technique to convey politeness in Thai (Bilmes, 2001). When complimented, Thai people tend to react in a way that expresses a calm and conforming image. For instance, a Thai smile can be a sign to accept and soothe the situation, thus it can be useful when confusion and misunderstanding may arise (Cedar, 2006). Acceptance of compliments in one culture does not always find equivalence in another; instead, the interpreter needs to understand the rules that govern compliments, not the actual words (Wolfson, 1981).

### **9.1.6 Photograph Vignette 6: The 4-second joke. Adapted from Grace (2021)**

A visiting Australian professor has been invited to speak at a university in Thailand. He makes a joke about kangaroos and koalas.

After a 5-minute long anecdote, the professor delivers the punchline: “The bear wasn’t accepted to the University of Sydney because he doesn’t have the right koalifications.”

The interpreter gets a chance to interpret. She stands up and speaks only a few words. The audience laughs infectiously. The professor is, of course, confused but impressed. He thinks to himself, Thai must be succinct. He compliments the interpreter and asks what she did. She replies, I told them

“The joke is too long. Just laugh.”

This vignette invites the participants to discuss the method by which humour was interpreted. As jokes are generally discussed among interpreters and culturally inspired (Jiang et al., 2019; Yue et al., 2016), the participants can share personal anecdotes from both ends: Thai to English and English to Thai jokes where there may be sociocultural implications.

## 9.2 Interview Schedule

The below table explains the formulation of the interview schedule.

The research methods were put in place in light of two research questions:

1. What does intercultural communicative competence entail in the interpretation industry in Thailand?

2. What is the importance of intercultural communication in interpretation classrooms and training programmes in Thailand?

**Table 9-2: Interview Schedule**

Research questions	Methods	Type of Data	Anticipated Findings
<p>The analysis of the document collection addresses both RQs 1 and 2.</p> <p>IS research topics bring forward various professional fronts where interpretation takes place, and intercultural competence may be required. - RQ1</p> <p>Several theses focus on the classroom</p>	<p><b>Document analysis</b></p>	<p>This is the secondary data analysis of 36 Master's level independent studies (IS) of the Master of Arts graduates in Translation and Interpretation Programme, Chulalongkorn University. The collection contributes to the most focused research area on the Thai interpreting scene.</p>	<p>Although intercultural communication and intercultural mediation are present in Interpreting studies in Thailand, scholars have yet to elaborate in detail on what competencies interpreters adopt when mediating intercultural encounters. The analysis illustrates the lack of IC recognition and the necessity to adopt other methods to answer RQs.</p>



settings, which pertains to RQ2.			
	<p><b>Semi-structured qualitative interviewing is composed of four main interview sections.</b></p>	<p>Each participant is asked to do a pre-interview activity with instructions provided in the pre-interview guide, which the Zoom user guide is attached. Interviewing is aimed at gaining in-depth insights. There is flexibility for potential follow-up enquiries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic and other questions related to their professional experience</li> <li>• Vignettes</li> <li>• Research-focused questions</li> <li>• River of Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wrap-up question</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The participants will be asked to prepare a pre-interview activity. The majority of questions are identical for every group, except for group-specific questions in the demographic enquiries and research-focused questions which investigate the classroom settings. The meeting takes approximately one hour. Despite Zoom's convenience, less technologically inclined participants may need additional help setting up the Zoom programme before the interview.</p>
The demographic profile allows the researcher to distinguish between the	<p><b>Demographic and other personal questions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What pseudonym would you like to use?</li> <li>• How long have you been working as a</li> </ul>	<p>The participants start by choosing their pseudonyms (which they would be asked to consider in the reminder email before the interview). The</p>

<p>participant groups.</p>		<p>professional interpreter?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Or how long have you been an interpreter trainer? - for trainer groups (group 6, 7, 8).</li> <li>○ Or how long have you been an AICC member? - for AICC members (group 2).</li> <li>○ Or have you ever worked as a professional interpreter? (If the participant answers no, skip to the last</li> </ul>	<p>participants will be able to give straightforward answers about their educational and professional backgrounds.</p> <p>Another projected theme is the possibility of multiple roles being held by one participant, for instance, an interpreter who has taken up the role of a trainer. Before the interviews, some of the recruited participants, whom I had thought would belong to the general group, introduced that they had experience training other interpreters. In response, I added the following questions so that participants with training expertise are not left out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional questions - Have you ever worked as an interpreter trainer? (If the participant</li> </ul>
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		<p>question) - for students of interpret ation (group 5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What modes of interpretation have you employed as a professional interpreter: simultaneous, consecutive and whispered interpretation?</li> <li>• Had you ever received any training before becoming an interpreter?</li> <li>• Were you required to pass a license test in order to work as a professional interpreter? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Or were you required to pass any application tests before</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>answers no, skip this section)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long have you been an interpreter trainer?</li> <li>• What modes of interpretation have you employed as a trainer in the interpreting classroom : simultaneous, consecutive and whispered interpretation?</li> <li>• Had you ever received any training before</li> </ul>
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		being enrolled in the programme? - for students of interpretation.	becoming a trainer? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were you required to pass a license test in order to work as a trainer?</li> </ul>
Vignettes 1-6 generate patterns of ICC skills needed for tackling intercultural misunderstandings. The solutions offered can be analysed into patterns of competencies applicable to RQ1.  Insights from the participants may not directly answer RQ2, but suggestions and advice regarding the production of	<b>Vignettes</b>  After each vignette is presented, the following guide questions are asked.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe what you have just seen or heard in as much detail as possible.</li> <li>• Explain what happened in the video clip/ the situation.</li> </ul>	There are six vignettes; four of which are photograph-based, while the other two are video clips. Each vignette is multi-dimensional. The synopsis is factual and requires the participants to use their judgements of the situations.  Vignette 1: Issues with professional and personal roles - Tensions between personal and professional boundaries	Vignette 1: I anticipate that the participants will have divided opinions about the shown interpreter's professional role. Some may approve of the actions, while others may not condone them. What will be worth noting is to what extent the participants agree with the interpreter's

<p>interpretation for each vignette can be useful for developing IC lessons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you see any cultural differences that may become an issue(s)?</li> <li>• You mentioned..., what do you mean by that?</li> <li>• Other follow-up questions may be asked]</li> </ul>	<p>Vignette 2: Issues with professional and personal roles - How the interpreter handles informal disclosure</p> <p>Vignette 3: Issues with cultural differences - Did you get a receipt from the shrine?</p>	<p>approach in the video, which direction the majority of participants support and the reasons for their agreement or disagreement. The follow-up questions are to determine if they have been in a similar situation when interpreting from Thai-English.</p> <p>Vignette 2: Participants may have a difficult decision to make, especially those with origins where age and seniority play a role in many social spheres, such as Thailand (Fry, 2018). I expect them to feel sympathetic to the interpreter. They will likely share their encounters with demanding clients and how the issues were resolved.</p> <p>Vignette 3: Since this vignette challenges the differences in terms of religious and social values, the participants</p>
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		<p>Vignette 4: Issues with cultural differences - What happens when the speaker switches to an unexpected dialect?</p>	<p>may say that the responsibility may fall on the interpreter to create an understanding for those new to the culture. Furthermore, participants may consider the development of roles (i.e., how the interpreter's role extends beyond interpreting to that of an investigator in police interpretation, a mediator in court interpretation, etc. and how they handle other associated responsibilities beyond that of an interpreter).</p> <p>Vignette 4: Since the issues of dialects have a tendency to arise both in the L1 of the interpreters, in this case in Thai, and in the variations of English spoken by native and non-native speakers or "Englishes" as coined by Kachru (1990; 1992), I anticipate the participants to share their anecdotes in</p>
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		<p>Vignette 5: Borderline compliments - “She’s (Brigitte Macron) in such good physical shape. Beautiful!”</p> <p>Vignette 6: Interpreting jokes - The 4-second joke</p>	<p>dealing with different dialects, jargon and technical lexicons both in Thai and English. I look forward to hearing both fail and success stories.</p> <p>Vignette 5: This vignette challenges the participants to evaluate the quality of the interpretation where cultural appropriation and equivalence are in effect. It presents an array of potential discussion points such as equivalence, ethics, level of closeness, familiarity between the clients, and how well the client and the interpreter know each other.</p> <p>Vignette 6: This vignette invites the participants to discuss the method by which humour was interpreted. As jokes are generally discussed among interpreters and culturally inspired (Jiang et al., 2019; Yue et al., 2016), the</p>
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		<p>In conclusion, I created a variety of interpreting themes to connect with the ones that resonate with them the most; this is to prompt them to share experiences from their respective fields.</p>	<p>participants can share personal anecdotes from both ends: Thai &gt; English and English &gt; Thai jokes where there may be sociocultural implications.</p>
<p>These questions address both RQs questions.</p> <p>The first five questions particularly address RQ1 as they seek to examine the following concepts: Intercultural Communication , Intercultural (Communicative) Competence and Intercultural Mediation.</p>	<p><b>Research-focused questions</b></p>	<p>There are five questions for every participant group and two additional questions for groups 5-8, students, and interpretation trainers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since becoming an interpreter, have you received any training?</li> <li>• What has been the focus of the training? Were there any elements related to Intercultural Communication?</li> <li>• Have you ever heard of the term Intercultural</li> </ul>	<p>Since the previous vignette section is aimed at stimulating the participants to think about intercultural situations, research-focused questions were placed explicitly in view of the research questions. I expect the participants to be more ready to tackle these more direct questions as the previous section will have prompted them. The participants may not have heard of the exact technical terms before, but I anticipate the concepts of dealing with cultures to be quite familiar to them, at least peripherally. Despite not knowing the</p>



<p>Question 5, however, investigates the availability of training on IC and their prior experience.</p> <p>Questions for students and trainers of interpretation are pertinent to RQ2, examining the educational contexts of interpretation.</p>		<p>(Communicative) Competence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What skills do you need as an interpreter in order to mediate cultures successfully?</li> <li>• Have you ever received any training related to Intercultural Communication?</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional group-specific questions (for groups 5-8 - students and trainers of interpretation)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please describe what learning intercultural communication in an interpreting classroom is like.</li> <li>• Have you ever discussed the concept of intercultural competence and mediation in the classroom? Could you tell me more about it?</li> </ul>	<p>terms, I will use the question, “What skills do you need as an interpreter in order to mediate cultures successfully?” to probe further.</p> <p>Similar to the demographic questions related to the training expertise, I decided to include the following questions.</p> <p><b>Teaching or learning interpreting skills (answer if applicable)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please describe what learning intercultural communication in an interpreting classroom is like.</li> <li>• Have you ever discussed the concept of intercultural competence and mediation in the classroom? Could you tell me more about it?</li> </ul>
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<p>The drawing of their experience illustrates their journey of becoming an interpreter. Whether positive or negative, their moments of significance may be related to previous intercultural experiences through training and personal encounters. This can fit into the scope of RQ1 and RQ2.</p>	<p><b>River of Experience</b></p>	<p>This creative research method is designed to gain the participants' insights by asking them to reflect on their experience through a drawing "without imposing [own] preconceptions" (Iantaffi, 2012, p. 271). They need to visualize a river as a journey and each river curve as a milestone, a struggle, or a significance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please could you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss the drawing of your River of Experience.</li> <li>• What is your River like?</li> <li>• What is your River like?</li> <li>• Tell me about the first bend.</li> <li>• What does it signify?</li> <li>• What makes it important to you?</li> <li>• What about the second bend?</li> <li>• And the third bend?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The instructions about the drawing demonstrate a step-by-step procedure provided in the pre-interview guide.</p> <p>First, I expect the participants to prepare the drawing beforehand; however, some less technically inclined participants may need assistance when following the drawing instructions and submitting their photos.</p> <p>Second, from walks of professional and educational backgrounds, the participants can share moments of significance and freely express their path that they might not have contemplated. These milestones may manifest experiences related to cultural differences and help elicit their perspectives. The milestones do not have to be chronologically arranged.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do you consider to be the most significant bend to your journey so far?</li> <li>• Was there perhaps a particular bend that inspired you to become a professional interpreter?</li> <li>• Is there anything else you would like to explain about your drawing?</li> </ul>	<p>It is important to note that the participants may ultimately determine the level of discussion depth, expression and openness, regardless of the interviewer's elicitation. The researcher's role is to allow the participants to harness how much they share and express, not to create an environment of pressure where they feel forced to disclose more than they wish.</p>
<p>This question serves as a PGR-compliant question to ensure that the interview ends with a positive remark for the participants.</p>	<p><b>The last interview question</b></p>	<p>The purpose is to leave the participants on a positive note.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given your experience as an interpreter, what has been your most memorable and satisfying experience to date?</li> </ul>	<p>The answers to this question are likely to be positive. Since it is an open-ended question, the answers may be (or not) relevant to the topic studied and to the analysis. The participants may share their living and educational experience and special events, including discussions of their role models, dream career, etc. I expect the participants to have been exposed to the</p>

			intercultural environment, which may have influenced them to become an interpreter.
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### 9.3 Participant Clusters

Table 9-3: Participant Groups

Participant Group	Selection Criteria	How the Contacts Were Made
The first group consists of 15-20 interpreters from various levels of professional experience. I contacted potential participants via three private groups by posting a participant recruitment poster. The photos and icons used in the poster are from three sources: licensed photos from <a href="http://gettyimagesbank.com">gettyimagesbank.com</a> and non-copyrighted images from <a href="http://unsplashed.com">unsplashed.com</a> and the <a href="http://nounproject.com">nounproject.com</a> .	They are Thai-English interpreters (no minimum professional experience required).	<p>Personal professional network via LINE group</p> <p>A Facebook private group called The Translators and Interpreters Association of Thailand (TIAT).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Via Thammasat Facebook private groups:</li> <li>• Thammasat Alumni Marketplace.</li> <li>• Liberal Arts Freelance Group.</li> </ul>
Group 2: 3-5 Thai <> English AIIIC interpreters ( two more new members are expected to join AIIIC	They are currently Thai-English interpreters of the International Association of	Gatekeeper number 1

Thailand by the time the interview is carried out).	Conference Interpreters (AIC).	
Group 3: 3-5 Thai <> English interpreting officers of the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs.	They are currently employed as Thai-English interpreting officers or have a partial role as an interpreter in the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They may be in Thailand or at a post in a foreign country.	Gatekeeper team 2
Group 4: 3-5 interpreters at the Administrative Court	They are currently employed as Thai-English interpreting officers or have a partial role as an interpreter at the Administrative Court in Bangkok, Thailand.	Gatekeeper number 3
Group 5: Five students of Master of Arts Programme in Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakit Center of Translation and Interpretation, Chulalongkorn University	They are current students or alumni of the Master of Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakit Center of Translation and Interpretation, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.	Gatekeeper number 1
Group 6: 3-5 professors of the Master of Arts Programme in Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakit Center of Translation and Interpretation, Chulalongkorn University	They are lecturers of Thai-English interpretation at the Master of Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakit Center of Translation and Interpretation, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.	Gatekeeper number 1

Group 7: 3-5 trainers at the Translator and Interpreter Association of Thailand.	They are Thai-English interpreter trainers of the Translator and Interpreter Association of Thailand.	Gatekeeper number 1
Group 8: 3-5 interpreter trainers at the Thai Court of Justice	They are Thai-English interpreter trainers of the Court of Justice, Thailand.	Gatekeeper number 4

Table 9-4: Amendments to Interview Schedule

Interview Section	Original Question	Amendments
Amendments to the introduction	The interview consists of three sections.	The interview consists of four sections. (The River of Experience added)
Amendments to the demographic profile	How would you like to be called your pseudonym?  Have you worked as a professional interpreter before?  What modes of interpretation have you worked as a professional interpreter...?  Did you receive any training before becoming an interpreter?	What pseudonym would you like to use?  Have you ever worked as a professional interpreter before?  What modes of interpretation have you employed as a professional interpreter...?  Had you received any training before becoming an interpreter?
Amendments to the video vignettes	Vignette: How the interpreter handles informal disclosure  Vignette: Royal Thai	Source language added: <i>“un enfant” or “a child” in French.</i>  Removed as it presented a potentially flat discussion.
Amendments to the photo vignettes (source language added; Photo watermark removed)-	Vignette: Did you get a receipt from the shrine?  Vignette: What happens when the speaker switches to an unexpected dialect?  Vignette: Did you NOT commit the crime?	Source language added:  <i>The lawyer in English: So how did you spend the 500 baht?</i> <i>The employee in Thai: “บริจาคเงินให้ศาลไปครับ”</i> <i>(I donated the money to the shrine.)</i> <i>The lawyer in English: Did you get a receipt?</i> <i>The employee in Thai: “ไม่ได้ครับ” (No, I did not.)</i>  The speaker said “สวัสดิ์ครับพ่อแม่พี่น้องผู้สู่น คนนี้ขอยขออนุญาตเว่อกับทุกคนสั้น ๆ เป็นภาษาอีสานได้บ่ครับ” (Hello, everyone. Can I just briefly speak to all of you in the Isan (Northeastern) dialect?)  Vignette removed as it presented a potentially flat discussion about a single

	<p>Vignette: What year is it? It's the year 2573 in Thailand.</p> <p>Vignette: She's (Brigitte Macron) is in such good physical shape. Beautiful!</p> <p>Vignette: The 4-second joke After a 5-minute long anecdote, the interpreter gets a chance to interpret. She stands up and speaks only four words</p> <p>Vignette voice recordings</p>	<p>language structure discrepancy.</p> <p>Vignette removed as it presented a potentially flat discussion about year conversion.</p> <p>Source language added: <u>"vous êtes en grande forme" (you are in great health)</u></p> <p>Source language added and joke contextualised. After a 5-minute long anecdote, the professor throws the punchline of <u>"The bear wasn't accepted to the University of Sydney because he doesn't have the right koalifications."</u></p> <p>She stands up and speaks only a few words.</p> <p>The recordings embedded in the top right corner were removed as the vignettes require in-depth explanation.</p>
<p>Amendments to the research-focused questions</p>	<p>How much is intercultural communication taught in the interpreting classroom?</p> <p>Questions related to the terms "intercultural communication, intercultural mediation, and intercultural communicative competence."</p>	<p>Is intercultural communication taught in the interpreting classroom?</p> <p>Operational definitions are prepared in advance and can be orally given to the participants during the interview as the terms can be foreign to them.</p>
<p>Amendments to the River of Experience instructions</p>	<p>I am interested in your experience as an interpreter. Please tell me your story and your experience in dealing with intercultural differences using the River of Experience to reflect on the question; for instance, having to mediate between people from different cultures. Imagine each river bend (a curved part) as a significant moment in your journey as an interpreter. This is not an artwork</p>	<p>Instructions changed: the participants will draw the River as a pre-interview activity because the activity requires more drawing time than expected.</p>



	activity, so please do not worry about your drawing skills.	
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## 9.4 Interview Materials

### 9.4.1 Overview




**The Role of Culture in the Act of Interpretation in the Thai Interpreting Industry**  
 Natthaphon Tripornchaisak  
 PGR - PhD in Education (Research)

**WORLD CHANGERS WELCOME**



### 9.4.2 Demographic Questions



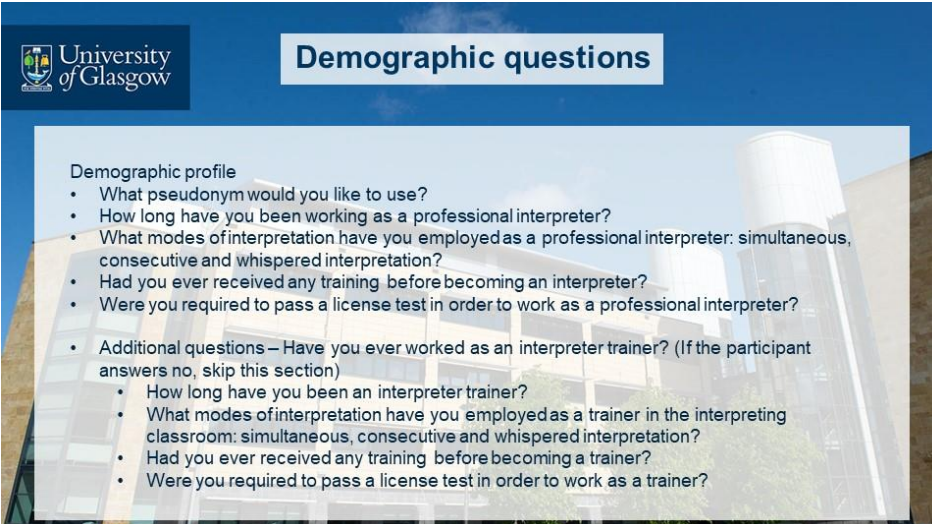
**Demographic questions**

Demographic profile

- What pseudonym would you like to use?
- How long have you been working as a professional interpreter?
- What modes of interpretation have you employed as a professional interpreter: simultaneous, consecutive and whispered interpretation?
- Had you ever received any training before becoming an interpreter?
- Were you required to pass a license test in order to work as a professional interpreter?

Additional questions – Have you ever worked as an interpreter trainer? (If the participant answers no, skip this section)

- How long have you been an interpreter trainer?
- What modes of interpretation have you employed as a trainer in the interpreting classroom: simultaneous, consecutive and whispered interpretation?
- Had you ever received any training before becoming a trainer?
- Were you required to pass a license test in order to work as a trainer?



### 9.4.3 Vignettes



# Vignettes



## Vignette 1: Issues with professional and personal roles – Tensions between personal and professional boundaries



At the waiting room, an Urdu-English interpreter tries to do his job professionally but is constantly asked about his personal life, his hometown, his dialect, etc. The interpreter then clarifies to the patient stating that he is only there to interpret, not to discuss personal life. He starts by informing the medical staff and the patient how interpretation works. **He reprimands the staff for not following his advice.** At the end of the session, the patient asks the interpreter for a ride but the interpreter declines and says that he's not insured to do so. Bear in mind that the patient is limping and seems to need help.



## Vignette 2: Issues with professional and personal roles - How the interpreter handles informal disclosure



A French-English interpreter feels uncomfortable and ambivalent when she is told not to interpret by the patient. The patient questions the credentials of the practitioner by uttering **'un enfant' or 'a child' in French, implying that he's just a child.** The interpreter lets the patient speak but later interprets everything to the physician. The interpreter refuses to assist the patient when getting up from the chair. The patient leaves the room unsatisfied.

### Vignette 3: Issues with cultural differences - Did you get a receipt from the shrine?

Photo courtesy: licensed photo 322202993 Joey Khonlasang shutterstock.com



A US-based investigation team has been sent from the headquarters to Thailand to investigate fraud in a subsidiary company. The employee in question is accompanied by an interpreter. The employee does not speak English. The lawyer tells the interpreter to interpret verbatim and not to intervene.

**The lawyer in English: So how did you spend the 500 baht?**

**The employee in Thai: 'บริจาคเงินให้ศาลไปครับ'**  
[I donated the money to the shrine].

**The lawyer in English: Did you get a receipt?**

**The employee in Thai: 'ไม่ได้ครับ'**  
[No, I did not].

The conversation goes back and forth for several minutes. The interpreter decides to intervene realising that the lawyer was not joking and was genuinely confused at the fact that the employee had not received a receipt.

### Vignette 4: Issues with cultural differences - What happens when the speaker switches to an unexpected dialect?

Photo courtesy: licensed photo by 1146303752 Igor Parsadanov - shutterstock.com



While rendering simultaneous interpretation in the booth from Thai into English, the interpreter realises that the Thai speaker on stage has suddenly decided to switch to the Northeastern dialect in order to accommodate and connect with the audience.

**The speaker said 'สวัสดีครับพ่อแม่พี่น้องผู้สุคนธ์มือนี้ขอยกอนุญาติว่ากับทุกคนสั้น ๆ เป็นภาษาอีสานได้ครับ'** [Hello, everyone. Can I just briefly speak to all of you in the Isan (Northeastern) dialect?]

The interpreter, who is from Bangkok, does not fully understand the dialect. The interpreter reflexively speaks into the microphone 'This is not the Bangkok dialect, and I will try my best to provide the interpretation.' The interpreter delivers about 60% of the overall communication, but everyone seems satisfied.

### Vignette 5: Borderline compliments - "She (Brigitte Macron) is in such good physical shape. Beautiful!"

Adapted from Hubscher-Davidson (2017)

Photo courtesy: licensed photo by 121221864 ©Palinchak - dreamstime.com



When US President Donald Trump visited France on Bastille Day in 2017, he complimented the French President's wife Brigitte Macron, saying that she was 'in such good physical shape. Beautiful!' What consecutively followed Donald Trump's compliment on was a watered-down interpretation of

**'vous êtes en grande forme'** [you are in great health]

delivered to the French audience. This interpretation was provided by a number of French journalists in news reports (Hubscher-Davidson, 2017).

### Vignette 6: Interpreting jokes - The 4-second joke

Adapted from Almutel (2012)  
Photo courtesy: Prostok-studio\_1149644411 - shutterstock.com



A visiting Australian Professor has been invited to speak at a university in Thailand. He makes a joke about kangaroos and koalas.

After a 5-minute long anecdote, the professor throws the punchline of *'The bear wasn't accepted to the University of Sydney because he doesn't have the right koalifications.'*

The interpreter gets a chance to interpret. *She stands up and says only a few words.* The audience laughs infectiously. The professor is of course, confused but impressed. He thinks to himself, Thai must be succinct. He compliments the interpreter and asks what she did.

*'The joke is too long. Just laugh.'* she tells him what she's just interpreted.

## 9.4.4 Primary Questions



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### Research-focused questions

- Since becoming an interpreter, have you received any training?
- What has been the focus of the training? Were there any elements related to Intercultural Communication?
- Have you ever heard of the term 'Intercultural (Communicative) Competence'?
- What skills do you need as an interpreter in order to mediate cultures successfully?
- Have you ever received any training related to 'Intercultural Communication'?

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### Teaching or learning interpreting (answer if applicable)

- Please describe what learning intercultural communication in an interpreting classroom is like.
- Have you ever discussed the concept of Intercultural (Communicative) Competence and Intercultural Mediation in the classroom? Could you tell me more about it?

## 9.4.5 River of Experience Questions

University of Glasgow

### River of Experience

A reflective and creative research method called the 'River of Experience.'

This activity aims at shedding light on the crucial incidents in your life that led you to where you are just now in terms of being an interpreter. (This activity does not require you to produce any artwork so do not worry about your drawing skills!)

University of Glasgow

### River of Experience

Interviewee #2  
River of Creative Experience

Starting to give up cello because don't really have the time.

Women in music topic in musicology – aware that female composers are very lacking from the canon

University – became a feminist, suddenly much more aware of how women are portrayed in music (especially sexualised in pop)

Grade 8 clarinet – big sense of achievement

Give up saxophone – feel I am rubbish at jazz

GCSE music – start to realise I want a future in music

Learn saxophone – brass and jazz seem quite male-dominated places

Secondary school – more serious about clarinet

Sister told me to be quiet when practicing – felt like I was awful

Recorded club – friends said I was good – felt pleased

Learned cello

Learned clarinet

Drawing example

Each curve represents a milestone.

Shihabi, Z. (2018). Music Education in the UK: The Power of Omission and the Potential of Awareness.

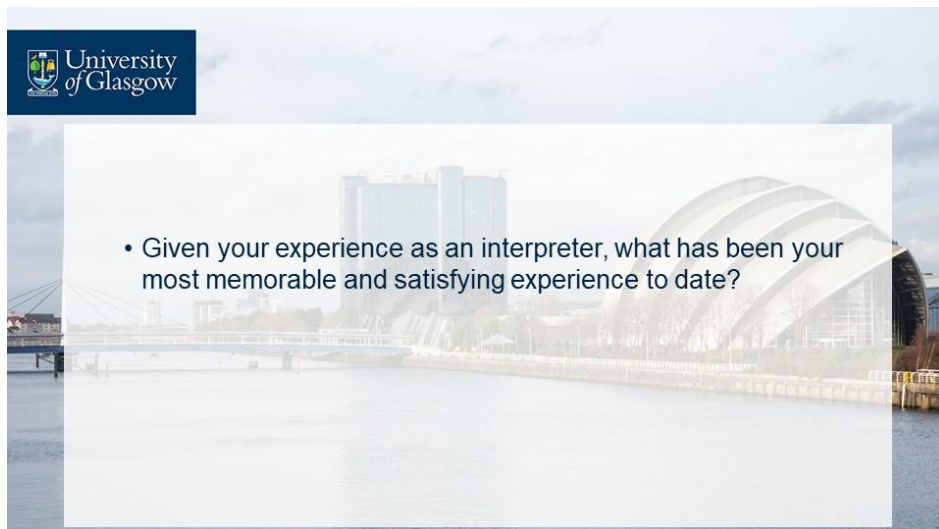
University of Glasgow

### The River of Experience of an Interpreter

We will now refer to the pre-interview activity.

Please could you:

- discuss your drawing of your River of Experience. What is your river like?
- tell me about the first bend. What does it signify? What makes it important to you?
- What about the second bend?
- And the third bend?
- What do you consider to be the most significant bend to your journey so far?
- Was there perhaps a particular bend which inspired you to become a professional interpreter?
- Is there anything else you would like to explain about your drawing?



## 9.4.6 Participant Information Sheet

1



College of Social  
Sciences

### Participant Information Sheet

**Project:** The Role of Culture in the Act of Interpretation in the Thai Interpreting Industry

**Researcher:** Natthaphon Tripornchaisak

**Supervisors:** Dr Dely Elliot, Senior Lecturer – People, Place and Social Change

Dr Enza De Francisci, Lecturer – Theatre Translation

**Course:** PhD in Education (Research)

You are being invited to take part in a research project exploring Thai-English interpreters' experiences in relation to the role of culture in interpretation. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. You must be at least 20 years old to participate in the research. Take some time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

#### 1. What is the purpose of the research project?

This research is funded by Thammasat University, Thailand. The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of culture in the act of interpretation as experienced by Thai-English interpreters. This is because cultural differences are arguably one of the challenges that interpreters face and are in the position to mediate when two or more people from different cultures come into contact. Nevertheless, mediating cultures often receive very little attention from researchers. The study intends to provide insights into the accounts of interpreters, trainers, and students of interpretation in light of culture. It also aims to understand more comprehensively the nature and characteristics behind the intercultural process during the act of interpretation. Doing so can highlight the embedded role of culture and how it manifests during the act of interpretation. This research intends to contribute to the curriculum development of Interpreting Studies.



## 2. Why have I been chosen?

I am asking you take part because you are currently a student or an alumnus of the Master of Translation and Interpretation, Chalermprakit Center of Translation and Interpretation, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.

## 3. Do I have to take part?

No, you do not need to take part in the research project. All participation is completely voluntary. Even if you agree to take part in the study, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, including during and after the interview.

If you change your mind at any time, you can let me know of your decision. In this case, I will not use any information you have given me in my writing and destroy immediately any data that may have been gathered. You will be provided with a transcript record of the interview. However, you will not be able to withdraw your data from the study once you have verified and approved the transcript of our recorded conversation.

## 4. What will happen to me if I take part?

The interview has been divided into four parts.

1. In the 1<sup>st</sup> section, I will ask you demographic questions about your experiences before and after becoming an interpreter or an interpreter trainer.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> section consists of a series of intercultural situations through video and photo vignettes. After being shown the content, you will be asked to share your thoughts on the topic. You may be asked to respond to a set of follow-up questions.
3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> section comprises research-focused questions related to the role of culture and interpretation.
4. The 4<sup>th</sup> section consists of an activity called 'the River of Experience' which aims at shedding light on the crucial incidents in your life that led you to where you are just now in terms of being an interpreter. You will be asked to do a pre-interview activity as instructed in the pre-interview guide.

During the interview, if there are questions you do not wish to answer, you do not have to answer them. You have the right to pause or stop the conversation at any time if you feel uncomfortable with the question.

Your participation will consist of a one-on-one semi-structured interview which will take approximately 45 minutes or a maximum of one hour. The conversation will be in English. During the interview, you can take breaks whenever necessary, and you can decide to stop the interview at any point. The interview will be online, using a video conferencing service called Zoom. I will record our video and audio conversation. Although Zoom automatically transcribes the recording, I will listen carefully to our conversation after the interview and make sure that the transcript is correct. I will share this transcript with you so that you can verify it is an accurate reflection of the interview and approve it. The transcript will form the basis of my data analysis for my thesis.

**5. Will the information I give you be kept confidential?**

It is important to understand that confidentiality is not something that can be guaranteed. That being said, I will take all necessary precautions to safeguard any personal information about you and will endeavour to ensure confidentiality by:

- Allowing you to choose a pseudonym for yourself, which I will use when writing up the dissertation;
- Changing or generalising the names of other people, places or organisations you mention during the interview. For example, if you say that the meeting took place at IBM, I would instead say that the meeting took place at one of the biggest North American conglomerates;
- Ensuring all anonymised research data are stored securely until 30 September 2032 in encrypted folders on an encrypted laptop and any hard copies in a locked file, destroying them at or before that time;
- Making research material accessible to future researchers or usable in future publications only in a form that protects individual, personal information; and,

- Securely storing all personal data, such as email addresses and telephone numbers, on the University of Glasgow's Outlook software on an encrypted laptop, destroying all personal data gathered on or before 30 September 2021.

Please note: if during our conversation I hear anything that makes me worried that you might be in danger of harm, or there is any evidence of wrongdoing, I may have to inform the relevant authority of this.

#### **6. What will happen to the results of this study?**

I will present the written-up research in my thesis for my PhD in Education (Research). All participants will receive a written summary of the findings and may choose to receive the thesis in full. Participants are free to share the summary and thesis with others. I will also share the study findings with colleagues at the University of Glasgow and to other parties who may have an interest in the findings of the research. As a result of the study, there may be further opportunities to present the study at conferences and other fora, as well as in publications.

Please note that confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible. The data will be processed by the University of Glasgow and stored for a period of 10 years.

#### **7. Who has reviewed the study?**

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee, University of Glasgow.

**Whom do I contact for further information?**

If you have any questions about this study or would like to take part, please contact me on:

Natthaphon Tripornchaisak,

Alternatively, you may also contact:

Supervisors, Dr Dely Elliot, [Dely.Elliot@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Dely.Elliot@glasgow.ac.uk); or,  
Dr Enza DeFrancisci, [Enza.DeFrancisci@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Enza.DeFrancisci@glasgow.ac.uk).

If you have any questions about the conduct of the research: contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer, Dr Muir Houston, email: [Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk)

Should you be caused distress by any of the themes or topics raised during your involvement in the study, you can access information on a wide range of helplines and other services at

1. Departmental Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand can be reached through the 24-hour hotline number “1323”, via Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/helpline1323/> or via <http://www.helpline1323.com/>
2. Samaritans Thailand can be reached through the following channels:
  - o <https://www.facebook.com/Samaritans.Thailand>
  - o Bangkok 02-713-6793 (12:00-22:00)  
Bangkok English Line 02-713-6791  
Chiangmai 053-225-977 (ext. 78) (19:00-22:00)

## 9.4.7 Consent Form & Privacy Notice



College of Social  
Sciences

### Consent Form

Title of Project: The Role of Culture in the Act of Interpretation in the Thai Interpreting Industry

Name of Researcher: Natthaphon Tripornchaisak  
Supervisors: Dr Dely Elliot and Dr Enza De Francisci

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. I consent to interviews being recorded.

I understand that I have the right to pause or stop the conversation at any time if I feel uncomfortable with the question.

I understand that the transcript of my interview will be checked, verified and approved by me before the researcher begins the analysis.

-----  
I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I acknowledge that participants will be identified by pseudonym in any publications arising from the research.

I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.

I acknowledge that there will be no effect on my grades/employment arising from my participation or non-participation in this research.

- ♦ All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- ♦ The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- ♦ The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.
- ♦ Personal data will be stored in the secure University of Glasgow OneDrive. All personal data will be disposed of when it is no longer necessary for processing or by 30 September 2021.
- ♦ Anonymised material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research until 30 September 2032.
- ♦ The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.
- ♦ I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.
- ♦ I acknowledge the provision of a Privacy Notice in relation to this research project.

I agree to take part in this research study

I do not agree to take part in this research study

Name of Participant ..... Signature .....

Date .....

Name of Researcher: Natthaphon Tripornchaisak ... Signature ...

Date .....9 June 2020.....

# PRIVACY NOTICE

**Privacy Notice for Participation in Research Project: The Role of Culture in the Act of Interpretation in the Interpreting Industry in Thailand**

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## Your Personal Data

**The University of Glasgow** will be what's known as the 'Data Controller' of your personal data processed in relation to your participation in the research project

The Role of Culture in the Act of Interpretation in the Thai Interpreting Industry

This privacy notice will explain how The University of Glasgow will process your personal data.

## Why we need it

We are collecting basic personal data such as your name and contact details in order to conduct our research. We need your name and contact details to arrange semi-structured interviews with vignettes via Zoom conferencing software or potentially follow up on the data you have provided.

We only collect data that we need for the research project and will de-identify your personal data from the research data (your answers given during the interview, for example) through pseudonymisation.

In order to ensure confidentiality, personal names, names of individuals, companies and/or organisations will be pseudonymised. Please note that your confidentiality may be impossible to guarantee (for example, due to the size of the participant group, location etc.)

Please see accompanying **Participant Information Sheet**,

## Legal basis for processing your data

We must have a legal basis for processing all personal data. As this processing is for Academic Research we will be relying upon **Task in the Public Interest** in order to process the basic personal data that you provide. For any special categories data collected we will be processing this on the basis that it is **necessary for archiving purposes, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes**

Alongside this, in order to fulfil our ethical obligations, we will ask for your **Consent** to take part in the study. Please see accompanying **Consent Form**.

## What we do with it and who we share it with

All the personal data you submit is processed by staff at the University of Glasgow in the United Kingdom. In addition, security measures are in place to ensure that your personal data remains safe: pseudonymisation, secure storage, and, encryption of files and devices. Please consult the **Consent form** and **Participant Information Sheet** which accompanies this notice.

Due to the nature of this research, it is very likely that other researchers may find the data collected to be useful in answering future research questions. We will ask for your explicit consent for your data to be shared in this way.

We will provide you with a copy of the study findings and details of any subsequent publications or outputs on request.

### **What are your rights?\***

GDPR provides that individuals have certain rights including: to request access to, copies of and rectification or erasure of personal data and to object to processing. In addition, data subjects may also have the right to restrict the processing of the personal data and to data portability. You can request access to the information we process about you at any time.

If at any point you believe that the information we process relating to you is incorrect, you can request to see this information and may in some instances request to have it restricted, corrected, or erased. You may also have the right to object to the processing of data and the right to data portability.

Where we have relied upon your consent to process your data, you also have the right to withdraw your consent at any time.

Please note that as we are processing your personal data for research purposes, the ability to exercise these rights may vary as there are potentially applicable research exemptions under the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information on these exemptions, please see [UofG Research with personal and special categories of data](#).

If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please submit your request via the [webform](#) or contact [dp@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:dp@glasgow.ac.uk)

### **Complaints**

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact the University Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter.

Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted at [dataprotectionofficer@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@glasgow.ac.uk)

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) <https://ico.org.uk/>

### **Who has ethically reviewed the project?**

This project has been ethically approved via the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee or relevant School Ethics Forum in the College.

### **How long do we keep it for?**

Your **personal** data will be retained by the University only for as long as is necessary for processing and no longer than the period of ethical approval (**before or by 30 September 2021**). After this time, personal data will be securely deleted.

Your **research** data will be retained for a period of ten years in line with the University of Glasgow Guidelines until 30 September 2032. Specific details in relation to research data storage are provided on the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form which accompany this notice.

I consent to the University processing my personal data for the purposes detailed above.

I have read and understand how my personal data will be used.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

## 9.5 Intercultural Communication Course for Interpreters Proposals

The following are the course descriptions I proposed to the Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpretation in the Digital Age (BTi) committee:

### 9.5.1 Title: Intercultural Communication for Translators and Interpreters (BTi)

Intercultural communication in the translation and interpreting contexts with a twofold objective of theoretical knowledge and professional development; increasing intercultural sensitivity through class materials which simulate the dynamics of interculturality-demanding current job markets; equipping students with interdisciplinary research skills and theoretical understanding - encompassing the shared areas among translation, interpretation, and intercultural communication domains.

In Thai

ชื่อวิชา: การสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมสำหรับนักแปลและล่าม

การสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมในบริบทการแปลและการแปลล่าม โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์สองประการ ทั้งด้านความรู้เชิงทฤษฎีและการพัฒนาวิชาชีพ เพิ่มพูนความอ่อนไหวต่อการสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรมผ่านสื่อการเรียนรู้ซึ่งจำลองพลวัตของตลาดงานปัจจุบันที่มีต้องการความสามารถในการสื่อสารความ วัฒนธรรม เตรียมความพร้อมให้กับนักศึกษาด้วยทักษะการวิจัยแบบสหวิทยาการและความเข้าใจเชิงทฤษฎี โดยครอบคลุมศาสตร์การแปล การแปลล่าม และ การสื่อสารระหว่างวัฒนธรรม



<b>Evaluation:</b>	Attendance and participation	10
	Class activities/ assignments	40
	Term paper/ project	20
	Midterm	10
	Final	20
	Total	100

**Exam Dates:** Midterm and final exam dates are to be announced later.

**Grading Criteria:**

90 up	A
85-89	B+
80-84	B
75-79	C+
70-74	C
65-69	D+
60-64	D
59 or less	F

**Table 9-5 Tentative Schedule of the BTi Course (Three-Hour Sessions)**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Course introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course overview</li> </ul>
2	Where is IC in interpretation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is culture?</li> <li>• General and scholarly background</li> </ul>
3	History of interpretation in Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The birth of consecutive interpretation (CI) and simultaneous (SI)</li> <li>• Founding interpreting studies</li> <li>• Types of conference interpretation</li> </ul>
4	Intercultural communication and interpretation practices in Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constantine Gerakis</li> <li>• Interpretation demands</li> <li>• Language statuses</li> <li>• Intercultural communication, intercultural competence, and intercultural communicative competence</li> </ul>
5	Language and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language reflects the culture?</li> </ul>
6	Interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks and real-world practicality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation visibility: going beyond the conduit role</li> <li>• Hofstede's dimensions</li> </ul>
7	Interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks and real-world practicality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hofstede's dimensions</li> <li>• Byram's ICC model</li> </ul>
<b>Midterm week</b>		
8	Introduction to qualitative research in interpreting studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for the final project</li> </ul>
9	Research methods/ Creative research methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for the final project</li> </ul>
10	Culture in interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hierarchy culture</li> <li>• Culturally expected assistance</li> </ul>
11	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When ethical responsibilities meet cultural expectations</li> <li>• Ethics in unfamiliar culture-related interpretation</li> </ul>
12	Censorship in interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical interpretation</li> </ul>

13	Intercultural communicative competence (ICC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inadvertent intercultural communicative competence formulation</li></ul>
14	Term project presentations	
15		
<b>Final Week</b>		

Add-drop without W: TBA

Withdraw period: TBA

Holidays: TBA

### 9.5.2 Course Proposal for Continuing Education at Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University (30 hours)

As for the Continuing Education courses, I am planning to propose the following course to the organising committee of the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University. It will be a thirty-hour course designed for the general public. It is a condensed version of the BTi course, aimed at providing an overview of the interrelatedness between intercultural communication and interpreting studies. The course is based on the BA course, but omits the term project and detailed research elements. The course descriptions closely resemble the BA course but will leave out the research components, while changing the word ‘students’ to ‘learners’ to serve a broader population.

Intercultural communication in the translation and interpreting contexts with a twofold objective of theoretical knowledge and professional development; increasing intercultural sensitivity through class materials which simulate the dynamics of interculturality-demanding current job markets; equipping learners with interdisciplinary theoretical understanding - encompassing the shared areas among translation, interpretation, and intercultural communication domains.

**Table 9-6 Tentative Schedule of the Continuing Education Course (Three-Hour Sessions)**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Course introduction Where is IC in interpretation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course overview</li> <li>• What is culture?</li> <li>• General and scholarly background</li> </ul>
2	History of interpretation in Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The birth of consecutive interpretation (CI) and simultaneous (SI)</li> <li>• Founding interpreting studies</li> <li>• Types of conference interpretation</li> </ul>
3	Intercultural communication and interpretation practices in Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constantine Gerakis</li> <li>• Interpretation demands</li> <li>• Language statuses</li> <li>• Intercultural communication, intercultural competence, and</li> </ul>

		intercultural communicative competence
4	Language and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language reflects the culture?</li> </ul>
5	Interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks and real-world practicality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation visibility: going beyond the conduit role</li> <li>• Hofstede's dimensions</li> </ul>
6	Interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks and real-world practicality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hofstede's dimensions</li> <li>• Byram's ICC model</li> </ul>
7	Culture in interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hierarchy culture</li> <li>• Culturally expected assistance</li> </ul>
8	Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When ethical responsibilities meet cultural expectations</li> <li>• Ethics in unfamiliar culture-related interpretation</li> </ul>
9	Censorship in interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical interpretation</li> </ul>
10	Intercultural communicative competence (ICC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadvertent intercultural communicative competence formulation</li> </ul>

Year	Country	Region	University	Overall Score
2023	Thailand	Region	Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok, Thailand)	41.4
2023	Thailand	Region	Mahidol University (Nakhon Pathom, Thailand)	38.1
2023	Thailand	Region	Chiang Mai University (Chiang Mai, Thailand)	601-650
2023	Thailand	Region	Thammasat University (Bangkok, Thailand)	651-700
2023	Thailand	Region	Kasetsart University (Bangkok, Thailand)	801-1000
2023	Thailand	Region	Khon Kaen University (Khon Kaen, Thailand)	801-1000
2023	Thailand	Region	King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (Bangkok, Thailand)	801-1000
2023	Thailand	Region	Prince of Songkla University (Hat Yai, Thailand)	801-1000
2023	Thailand	Region	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (Bangkok, Thailand)	1201-1400
2023	Thailand	Region	Suranaree University of Technology (Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand)	1201-1400
2022	Thailand	Region	Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok, Thailand)	41.9
2022	Thailand	Region	Mahidol University (Nakhon Pathom, Thailand)	38.1
2022	Thailand	Region	Chiang Mai University (Chiang Mai, Thailand)	601-650
2022	Thailand	Region	Thammasat University (Bangkok, Thailand)	601-650
2022	Thailand	Region	Kasetsart University (Bangkok, Thailand)	801-1000
2022	Thailand	Region	Khon Kaen University (Khon Kaen, Thailand)	801-1000
2022	Thailand	Region	King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (Bangkok, Thailand)	801-1000
2022	Thailand	Region	Prince of Songkla University (Hat Yai, Thailand)	801-1000
2022	Thailand	Region	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (Bangkok, Thailand)	1001-1200
2022	Thailand	Region	Suranaree University of Technology (Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand)	1201+
2021	Thailand	Region	Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok, Thailand)	41.6
2021	Thailand	Region	Mahidol University (Nakhon Pathom, Thailand)	37.5
2021	Thailand	Region	Thammasat University (Bangkok, Thailand)	561-570
2021	Thailand	Region	Chiang Mai University (Chiang Mai, Thailand)	601-650
2021	Thailand	Region	Kasetsart University (Bangkok, Thailand)	801-1000
2021	Thailand	Region	Khon Kaen University (Khon Kaen, Thailand)	801-1000
2021	Thailand	Region	King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (Bangkok, Thailand)	801-1000
2021	Thailand	Region	Prince of Songkla University (Hat Yai, Thailand)	801-1000
2021	Thailand	Region	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (Bangkok, Thailand)	1001+
2021	Thailand	Region	Suranaree University of Technology (Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand)	1001+
2020	Thailand	Region	Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok, Thailand)	38.3
2020	Thailand	Region	Mahidol University (Nakhon Pathom, Thailand)	33.4
2020	Thailand	Region	Chiang Mai University (Chiang Mai, Thailand)	601-650
2020	Thailand	Region	Thammasat University (Bangkok, Thailand)	601-650
2020	Thailand	Region	Kasetsart University (Bangkok, Thailand)	801-1000
2020	Thailand	Region	Khon Kaen University (Khon Kaen, Thailand)	801-1000
2020	Thailand	Region	King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (Bangkok, Thailand)	801-1000
2020	Thailand	Region	Prince of Songkla University (Hat Yai, Thailand)	801-1000
2020	Thailand	Region	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (Bangkok, Thailand)	1001+
2020	Thailand	Region	Suranaree University of Technology (Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand)	1001+

Figure 33: QS World University Rankings - Thai Universities from 2020 to 2023

Table 9-7: Thai–English Interpreting Courses Taught at Top Thai Universities According to QS Ranking as of October 2022

University	Programme	Available Interpreting Courses
Chulalongkorn University (Faculty of Arts, 2019)	Master of Arts Programme in Translation and Interpretation, Chalernprakit Center of Translation and Interpretation	2241641 Consecutive Interpretation from a Foreign Language into Thai I 2241642 Consecutive Interpretation from a Foreign Language into Thai II 2241661 Discourse Analysis for Interpretation 2241663 Sight Translation 2241664 Conference Interpretation 2241665 Seminar in Interpretation 2241666 Simultaneous Interpretation from a Foreign Language into Thai II 2241662 Public Speaking Techniques for Interpreters
	Graduate Diploma Programme in Interpretation, Chalernprakit Center of Translation and Interpretation (Faculty of Arts, 2019)	2241641 Consecutive Interpretation from a Foreign Language into Thai I 2241643 Consecutive Interpretation from Thai into a Foreign Language 2241644 Simultaneous Interpretation from a Foreign Language into Thai 2241645 Simultaneous Interpretation from Thai into a Foreign Language 2241661 Discourse Analysis for Interpretation 2241663 Sight Translation

		<p>2241501 Listening Comprehension in Foreign Language</p> <p>2241502 Listening Comprehension in Foreign Language II</p> <p>2241504 Public Service Interpreting I</p> <p>2241505 Public Service Interpreting II</p> <p>2241506 Reading for Community Interpreting</p> <p>2241508 Languages and Cultures in Contact</p> <p>2241510 Individual Study</p> <p>2241623 Translation Resources and Terminology</p> <p>2241635 Translation in Business</p> <p>2241639 Translation Assessment and Editing</p> <p>2241662 Public Speaking Techniques for Interpreters</p> <p>2241667 Multi-disciplinary experiences and practices of linguistic communication</p>
Mahidol University Office of the President, 2018)	Bachelor of Arts Programme in English	LAEN 456 Interpretation
Chiang Mai University (Faculty of Humanities, 2018)	Bachelor of Arts Programme in English	ENGL 415 Introduction to Interpreting
Thammasat University	Master of Arts in English-Thai Translation (Faculty of Liberal Arts, 2022c)	TP 756 Basics of Interpreting
	Bachelor of Arts (English) (Faculty of Liberal Arts, 2018)	EG 365 Introduction to Interpreting EG 466 Consecutive Interpreting EG 467 Simultaneous Interpreting
	Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpretation in the Digital Age (Faculty of Liberal Arts, 2022a)	Thailand's first Bachelor's Programme in Interpreting studies as of October 2022
Khon Kaen University  (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2022)	Bachelor of Arts Programme in English	Introduction to Interpretation Consecutive Interpretation Simultaneous Interpretation
King Mongkut's Institute of	Bachelor of Arts (English)	16016139 Introduction to Interpreting

Technology Ladkrabang (Faculty Liberal Arts, 2022b)		
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