

Integrating interpreting into institutional practice: sign language interpreting in the Police and National Health Service in Scotland

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Abstract

This paper describes the operation and outcomes of the Promoting Equal Access to Services project, which had two aims. The first was to reduce the gap between training and work for sign language interpreters by offering a six-month structured internship, including placements in the Police and National Health Service, alongside mentoring, supervision and coaching. The second aim was to further the integration of interpreting into the institutional practice of the Police and National Health Service. The paper describes the background of the project and the organisationally-centred theoretical framework, based on the work of Dong (Dong 2016; Dong/Turner 2016) and Downie (2016), before outlining the support package offered and examining intern experience and the effects on each of the organisations, before discussing the relevance of the results for future similar projects and for the theorisation of interpreting. It concludes by arguing that, to ease the transition between interpreting and work and to create environments conducive to excellent interpreting, close co-operation between training providers and organisations that use interpreting regularly will be needed.

Keywords

Sign language interpreting, police interpreting, medical interpreting, interpreter training, public service interpreting, interpreting profession.

While interpreter training has been a subject of intense research, much of this work is focused on the classroom and activities for students. Yet the development of interpreters does not cease with the conclusion of their university training. This paper reports on a trial of an experimental form of transition between formative training and entry to the sign language interpreting profession. The approach used was co-constructed with the providers of public services (health and policing) in Scotland to explore the integration of interpreting into professional ecologies of practice. While the *Promoting Equal Access to Services* (PEAS) project took place within a very specific political, linguistic and cultural context, feedback from project partners, including the interpreters involved, provides important theoretical and practical knowledge that contributes to our understanding of the role of different stakeholders in interpreter development. Such knowledge also shows the importance of the theorisation of organisational aspects of interpreting. We conclude by arguing that understanding organisations better is likely to lead to improvements in the transition of newly qualified interpreters into the workplace and to greater efficiency in interpreting services and, correspondingly, in public service outcomes.

Given the unique nature of this project, this paper will first discuss the political and legal context in which the project took place, with emphasis on the importance and effects of the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015. We will then explain the organisation-centred theoretical framework used, which draws upon research by Dong (2016) and Downie (2016). The paper will then outline the support package offered to interns and how the effectiveness of this support was evaluated. The experience of the interns in the Police and National Health Service is then examined and an account of the effectiveness of the support package is provided. The experience of the interns, effects on the organisations and effectiveness of the support package will then be the subject of the discussion, which links these back to the theoretical framework and offers practical suggestions for future projects of this type. The paper ends with a summary of the project and lessons learned. Some may consider this an example of action research: as that term is heavily contested (Hinchey 2016), readers will reach their own conclusions on its applicability in this case.

1. Project background: political and legal context of the project

At the culmination of a lengthy process (see De Meulder 2015, 2017), on 17 September 2015, Members of the Scottish Parliament voted unanimously in favour of a Bill whose approval created the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015. Scotland thus became the first country within the United Kingdom to afford legal status to British Sign Language (BSL) on its own terms as a language.

The 2015 Act required the production of a National Plan for BSL, to be reviewed and renewed on a cyclical basis, showing how public bodies will promote and support BSL. The first National Plan (Scottish Government 2017) included among its 70 actions a commitment to consider any further work needed to ensure the

development of a strong pool of BSL/English interpreters (action 9), while fostering the creation of training programmes to support BSL/English interpreters working in the Health sector (action 47) and in the Police (action 62).

The Scottish Government's Equality Unit therefore initiated the PEAS project, originally to secure the retention of new graduate interpreters within the Scottish workforce after the Scottish Funding Council pump-primed the establishment of a Master of Arts in BSL/English Interpreting at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh in 2011. The programme was designed to bring graduates through to eligibility for registration within the national professional frameworks as trainee or qualified interpreters.

During 2015, Heriot-Watt University and partners developed a pilot scheme whereby qualified graduating interpreters could apply to be placed as interns with an appropriate support package in public service facilities for a designated period. This support package included three areas. The first was mentoring, which involves working with an established interpreter with personal knowledge of the contexts in which the interpreters will work to develop the practical, organisational and interpersonal communication skills required to work in partnership with others in the same organisation. The second was professional supervision, which aims to improve emotional resilience and ethical decision-making during the interpreted event. The third area is technical coaching, which targets the development of techniques such as summarising, public speaking and switching between languages.

The partners were principally Police Scotland and the National Health Service Board for Greater Glasgow & Clyde (hereafter simply NHS), along with an advisory group including the British Deaf Association, the major Deaf organisations in Scotland's Central Belt region, and the relevant professional bodies at the time: the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters and the Association of Sign Language Interpreters. The resulting proposal was designed to support interpreter retention and explore aspects of a potential solution to several additional issues. It offered the prospect of assisting in bridging a perceived readiness to work gap between graduation and independent practice; it created scope for public services to start addressing a longstanding concern by securing reliable availability of well-informed, confident interpreters; and it generated circumstances within which progressive approaches to interpreting could begin to be implemented through closer collaborative engagement between practitioners and public service professionals. This political and conceptual background to the project is undergirded by pertinent theoretical developments in Interpreting Studies which will now be examined.

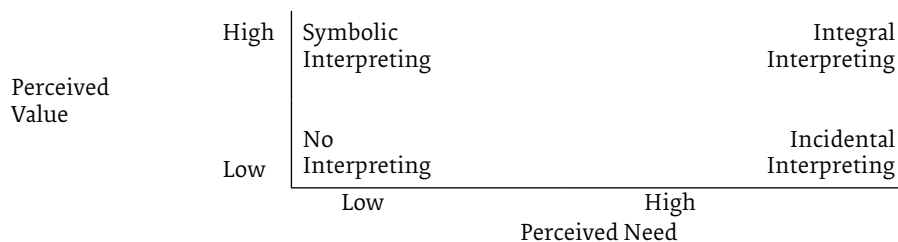
2. Theoretical underpinning: interpreting and organisations

Given the dual-role of the PEAS project in helping to bridge the "readiness to work" gap (cf. Godfrey 2010) for new graduates and addressing the concerns expressed by the National Health Service and Police Scotland, this project rests on the fledgling theorisation of interpreting within organisations. Part of the wider sociology of interpreting (Inghilleri 2003, 2005), discussions of the place of in-

interpreting within organisations seek to understand why and how organisations manage and deploy interpreting and how such management could be improved. This entails viewing research as a process by which knowledge is shared between the parties involved and in which all parties are empowered to use the research process to further their aims (Turner/Harrington 2000). Like research, interpreting itself is viewed as a collaborative process, in which meaning is created within the interpreted event and within the organisation (cf. Turner 2005).

Jiqing Dong (2016; Dong/Turner 2016) examined the work of an interpreting agency in its role as an agent of professionalisation of Public Service Interpreting. Dong pointed out the importance of the internal values of the organisation in guiding organisational behaviour. In her specific case, the determination of the leaders of the agency to prioritise the promotion of quality standards in the face of increasing commercialisation (Dong 2016: 76–77) led to a focus on ethical behaviour, service efficacy and interpreter wellbeing. This in turn prompted a deliberate decision by the agency to work with a smaller pool of interpreters, so that the management would know them personally (*Ibid.*: 62). In Dong’s case study, organisational values were therefore reflected in organisational practice. Her emphasis on the link between agency values and interpreters’ delivery of services provides theoretical insights that are important in the context of this study.

The link between organisational values and organisational practice was also posited in work by Downie (2016). His study of expectations of interpreters in two multilingual churches suggested that such expectations are determined by how valuable interpreting is seen to be for the future of the organisation and how much is deemed to be needed for current operations. Four possible positions were sketched out, giving the following diagram:



Matrix of organisational approaches to interpreting (Downie 2016: 172)

In symbolic interpreting, interpreting is a symbol of the organisation’s aim to be open to linguistic diversity, but it does not take into account the needs of speakers of other languages and so fails to fulfil a communicative function (Downie 2016: 171–172; cf. Vigouroux 2010). In incidental interpreting, interpreting is deemed to be necessary for the functioning of the organisation but not valuable for fulfilling of its mission (Downie 2016: 169). It is therefore peripheral to organisational operations and seen as a means to an end. Finally, integral interpreting takes place when it is deemed to be both necessary for organisational functioning and is understood to be valuable for the attainment of its mission (*Ibid.*: 171). It is thus viewed as central to the organisation, to the

point where the organisation adjusts its practices so that interpreting can produce the best results.

This theoretical framework suggests that interpreter development is a process of socialisation that must go beyond unidirectional interpreter programmes akin to traditional mentoring, as important as such programmes may be (Pearce/Napier 2010). Instead, it will be important to understand how organisations view interpreting and the place that it is given in organisational practice. Adjusting organisational practice includes socialisation of all users into the idea that all participants share responsibility for successful communication, an idea emphasised in the work of Kauling (2020) on the level of the individual event.

3. The PEAS project

3.1. The support package offered to interns

The PEAS project provided for supervised and coached interns to be embedded within Police Scotland for three months, with a further three-month placement within the NHS immediately after the completion of the placement in the Police. Two interns accepted placements, both recent graduates of the Heriot-Watt University undergraduate BSL interpreting programme. Interns would undertake a range of duties, from observing the structure, hierarchy, and procedures of each institution, to undertaking interpreting suited to their skills and ability at this early career stage. It was made clear from the outset that the interns would not undertake interpreting assignments where any legal process was involved and that any interpreting for patient contact would be pre-assessed and deemed appropriate and consented to by all parties. Specific types of assignments undertaken are identified in sections 4.1 and 5.1. The nature and purpose of the mentoring, supervision and coaching provided will now be described in turn.

3.1.1. Mentoring

Mentoring was provided throughout the entire project by the Project Officer, who has several years' experience as an interpreter, team leader and trainer, and has extensive, long-term knowledge of working within the deaf community as both interpreter and staff member of a deaf organisation. The aim of such mentoring was to help the interns to be supported in the practical, logistical, and political aspects of their work, such as learning to decide whether assignments were suitable, how to navigate their relationships with the Police, NHS and the deaf community and dealing with service user feedback. As such, the Project Officer was able to mentor the interns for both public service interpreting work and some community networking opportunities to increase their visibility within the deaf community. She was also able to act as a sounding board should the interpreters require advice on advocating within the Police or health sectors.

One important additional factor in enabling the interns to carry out their work in a sustainable manner was the engagement of a professional supervisor, to encourage reflective practice. The importance, role and outcomes of this supervision are detailed in the next section.

3.1.2. Supervision

Supervision is a well-established common practice in comparable professions such as social work, counselling and palliative care fields. In the UK, for example, all doctors in postgraduate training are required by General Medical Council guidance to have an appropriately trained, named clinical supervisor for each of their placements. The need for supervision of interpreters has mainly focused on practitioners working in domains of mental health (Knodel 2018) or domestic violence (Costa 2016). There are very few academic publications specifically addressing the need for supervision for sign language interpreters (SLIs). While Hetherington (2012) was one of the first in the UK to highlight the importance of this aspect of support for practitioners.

The Professional Supervision element of the PEAS project, delivered throughout the entire project by experienced and qualified professional supervisor and sign language interpreter, Jules Dickinson, aimed to support the interns to become resilient and effective practitioners by developing the interns' skills and strategies for managing the emotional load of interpreting assignments. It was designed to encourage the interns to consider the wider contextual aspects of the interpreting process and the impact these might have on their delivery. While there are a number of models that can be applied to Professional Supervision, Proctor's (1987) widely used model of supervision was chosen in this case. It argues for three main functions of Professional Supervision, which are described as formative, normative and restorative.

The *formative* function focuses on the development of supervisees' knowledge and skills through guided reflection and exploration of their work. This function can have an educative aspect, depending on the level of the supervisee's experience and stage of their professional development. The *normative* aspect of the model provides the element of quality control. It enables the supervisor to monitor and evaluate the supervisee's professional practice, whilst also encouraging them to account for their actions. This aspect also provides the supervisee with space to explore their "human failings, blind spots and areas of vulnerability" (Hawkins/Shohet 2007). Interpreters rarely have the structured opportunity to reflect on positive and successful outcomes of their practice, yet this is essential for a practitioner to maintain confidence and self-esteem. The *restorative* function provides support to alleviate the emotional impact of the job. This function brings in to play the essential element of self-care. This is particularly important for interpreters, who are frequently exposed to highly emotional and traumatic material, with resulting responses that include fear, sadness, and shame, to mention but a few (Watson-Thomas/Darroch 2015).

3.1.3. Coaching

Coaching was carried out throughout the project by the first author, who is an experienced consultant conference interpreter and interpreting researcher, using a combination of in-person group sessions, online individual sessions, and ongoing practice exercises to create a balance between mutual support among the interns and individualised skills training.

Each coaching session comprised a review of recent interpreting, including performance challenges that the interns had faced. Discussion then moved to a review of progress with the coaching exercises from the previous session, and agreement on areas to work on and exercises for the next session. This aimed to produce cumulative targeted performance gains, while gradually handing over responsibility for technique development to the interns. At the outset, exercises on summarising and verbal fluency were used to ascertain their current skill level. Over time, the coaching exercises and practices evolved to cover areas such as public speaking, verbal fluency, understanding and interpreting humour, switching between languages, summarising, register shifts and attention switching.

The materials used for these exercises therefore moved from being general to tracking more closely the kinds of texts and topics covered in assignments on placement. All coaching sessions took place with both interns and the coach. It was not clear whether the interns met together separately to work on coaching together.

The long history of research on cognition in spoken language interpreting, especially conference interpreting and the resulting concentration of teaching resources and research on this area of practice (Djovcos/Djovcosova 2013; Gillies 2013) made this an ideal source of coaching exercises. This is especially the case as the exercises are intended to be valuable no matter the language(s) used by the interpreter.

3.2. Means of evaluation

Given the nature of the project, evaluating its success meant gathering a variety of data. These ranged from interviews with key stakeholders in the NHS and Police, feedback from the Advisory Group, data on intern deployment and front-line staff satisfaction, to records of coaching, mentoring and supervision meetings. These data offer a pragmatic view of the project's success from the point of view of all key stakeholders. A summary of the key themes from this data, in the light of the aims of the project and the themes of this paper are found in the three sections that now follow.

4. Police experience

4.1. Typical intern assignments

Interpreter deployments in Police Scotland can be usefully categorised into three broad areas. The first area involved familiarising the interpreters with the contexts and protocols of different Police settings, from Police stations and custody

suites to jails and courts. These activities did not require the interns to interpret but were created opportunities for useful conversations and exchanges of knowledge between interns and Police personnel.

A second category of assignment involved interpreting at public information, consultation and community liaison meetings between the Police and other organisations, from educational institutions to deaf associations. These visits took advantage of the interns' presence to provide an environment where the interns could practise and offer a forum for the Police to inform and consult deaf people in a way that is often hard to achieve given the aforementioned lack of resource and shortage of interpreters. At one or two events of this kind, the interpreters were able to work alongside an experienced interpreter.

The final category of assignment covers all the work that is more traditionally related to interpreting for the Police. The project's overt principle was that interns would not do any work that could have direct legal consequences, but might interpret on occasions where the Police were looking to establish the nature of an enquiry or complaint, or when information was being conveyed on progress with ongoing enquiries.

Such deployment therefore gave the interpreters access to a useful cross-section of Police work, without putting them in a position where they would be interpreting matters that would have any legal weight. This is important, given the standard practice in Scotland for newly qualified sign language interpreters to wait until they have had two years of experience, before looking to work with the Police on assignments with legal standing.

4.2. Feedback from interns

Interviews with the interns revealed vignettes that offer evidence of the outcomes of their presence embedded within the Police force. For example, both reported that their familiarisation visit to a prison allowed them to see how the prison system worked and allowed staff to see gaps in current policy. In the prison, there are glass-walled rooms that are made available for advocacy visits. Talking to the interpreters made staff aware that the use of these rooms was a direct threat to the privacy of BSL users as other prisoners who used BSL would be able to see what was being signed. Something that was presumably intended as a safety feature, so prison officers could ensure the security of visiting legal professionals, had therefore been reconsidered as a potential breach of prisoner confidentiality. Procedures therefore needed revisiting. It is not known why no prior interpreters had brought this up, but it does seem likely that the teamwork and atmosphere of mutual learning generated by the PEAS project made raising such points easier.

In short, both interns felt that their presence on the ground with Police officers afforded them useful developmental opportunities. This is mutually informative work that community interpreters are used to doing with professionals in many settings within daily working experiences. The structured opportunity in particular to engage in this dialogue away from the pressure of immediate service

provision was noted to be uniformly beneficial, with clear long-term value in terms of inter-professional co-operation. Officers would chat with the interns in preparation before assignments or would ask them questions about interpreting during familiarisation visits. One intern reported that officers would begin to ask “what if?” questions, which is a sign of greater reflection on best practice within the force. Indeed, the presence of interpreters within the force during this project may act as a catalyst for the Police revisiting how they procure and manage such services.

4.3. Feedback from Police

The impact of the project on frontline officers was measured in two ways. Pre-work and post-work surveys were sent to officers, to gauge whether working alongside the interns had affected views of interpreting. Six pre-work survey responses and five post-work survey responses were received. All of these were from front-line officers working in public-facing roles. Responses to the pre-work survey tended to reflect the idea that the interpreter was there *for* the deaf participant, rather than for the benefit of the Police. One response indicated that the interpreter was there for the member of the public by saying they were present “to communicate with the member of the public in a way that they will be able to understand” – true as far as it goes, evidently, but profoundly unilateral in its point of view.

Responses to the post-work survey tended more towards showing expectations aligned with a more collaborative view. This shift alone underlines the significant potential of the internship scheme. For example, three respondents saw interpreters as positively aiding or assisting communication in some way. These described the role of an interpreter being “to assist [in] communicating with other people”, “to aid and guide communication” and “to enable us to communicate effectively”. Interpreters’ participation is thus seen actively to help the Police to do their job.

More complex data was generated in the question where respondents were asked to tick all the answers that corresponded to the feelings they have when working with interpreters. Officers were twice as likely to agree that they can “communicate clearly with someone who speaks another language” after working with the interns despite recognising that the officer may be less in control of the situation if they are ceding in part to the professional authority of the interpreter. In terms of practicalities, officers started to learn that facilitating interpreting can ultimately increase the speed and efficiency of their procedures, whilst moving strongly towards an appreciation that consistency of standards across encounters can be expected through close inter-professional co-operation.

Beyond the survey, an interview with Stephanie Rose, Safer Communities Team, Police Scotland, revealed that there is now better understanding within the force of what it will take to dispel SLIs’ fear of Police interpreting. Work is already underway in this vein, in the form of more targeted training and in opportunities for the Police to work with interpreters during the two-year post-quali-

fication period in which interpreters are usually expected to avoid working with the Police. The object of this work would be to prepare the ground for them to provide services in Police settings once this time has elapsed.

PEAS also revealed the potential impact of working across the Justice sector to increase standards across the board. The arranged familiarisation visits testify to this potential and there is willingness within the Police to continue this. A further stage of such partnership could be for interpreting agencies or deaf organisations to arrange and manage the internships, rather than the Police trying to set up working opportunities. The aim of such working and indeed of the project itself is to increase of pool of those who are able to work with the Police. Work towards this goal is ongoing but the PEAS project has pointed to specific, tangible changes that can be made, including the aforementioned improvements in training and support. The Police experience therefore showed that exposing interns to a cross-section of Police work, while offering them enhanced support, has benefits beyond improving the interns' readiness for work. The existence of the project and the need for intentional planning, cooperation and partnerships between different stakeholders meant that the Police were made aware of practical and procedural issues that needed to be rectified to better embed interpreting into the service and to ensure that the rights of BSL users were upheld.

If the Police experience of PEAS represents an almost ideal case, with new awareness and practices percolating through the organisation, while the interns gain valuable experience, the experience of NHS represents a less universally positive set of outcomes. It is to this part of the project that the paper will now turn.

5. NHS experience

5.1. Typical intern assignments

During the NHS placement, the interns were most frequently asked to work at internal staff meetings, including their own induction meeting. Familiarisation visits were also common during the placement and tended to involve a member of staff showing the interns the geographical layouts of different hospitals and where to go if they had an assignment there. Finally, there were no opportunities to shadow experienced interpreters. This represents a much less diverse set of assignments than was on offer during deployment within the Police. This lack of diversity is reflected in the other outcomes of this part of the project.

5.2. Feedback from interns

The interns' impressions of the NHS placement reflect the differences between the frequency and variety of deployments in the NHS, compared to the Police Scotland stage of the project. Both interns noted that deployments in the NHS were not accurate reflections of the kinds of work that a typical SLI would undertake in the NHS. They reported feeling that they had been interns in the NHS Equalities Team,

rather than developing their interpreting skills. Thus, they felt that the second part of their internship achieved little in getting them ready to deliver services for the National Health Service more broadly. In an exit interview, one intern reflected that the NHS placement had at times prompted reduction in confidence and re-consideration as to whether they were suited for the profession, although reflection on earlier parts of the project was enough to resolve this.

While there was some familiarisation work, both interns felt that this work in the NHS offered very little contact with frontline staff and few opportunities for the same kinds of exchange of expertise found earlier in the project. The lack of work-shadowing opportunities was also viewed as a factor in the less favourable impression of the NHS placement. Neither intern reported feeling entirely ready for work with the National Health Service after their placement. It should be taken into account that the position of the NHS placement as coming after the more successful Police placement will have affected intern impressions, especially as they had now seen how such placements could be integrated more effectively into practice.

5.3. Feedback from NHS

As the interns were not afforded the opportunity to do clinical work and had little direct contact with frontline staff, the impact of the interns' work upon frontline staff was limited. This is borne out in the inability to repeat the same pre-work/post-work surveying that produced such interesting results during the Police part of the project as no responses were received to either survey. Some impact of the PEAS project was, however, felt at the level of management. The NHS liaison officer felt that they were in a better position to set up future internships and to improve interpreting throughout organisational practice. On the most practical level, the project foregrounded the need to pre-organise detailed inductions for interpreters and to familiarise them with the wide range of situations in which they might work. Thus, the project generated a desire within the NHS to work with medical training institutes to embed initial familiarisation into training courses.

An unexpected additional roadblock was a lack of willingness among current interpreters to offer work-shadowing experience to the interns. While it was anticipated that some patients would exercise their right to refuse access for observation, the NHS did not foresee interpreters' resistance to providing such opportunities. It is not known why NHS interpreters did not provide shadowing opportunities. An immediate effect of the project may be that future contracts may require existing interpreters to facilitate and allow shadowing experiences for newly qualified colleagues, in the same way that medical professionals routinely learn through frontline observation.

Much like the Police part of the deployment, the NHS part of the project therefore foregrounded how the development of interpreters should not be seen as a process that only involves individuals and their personal career trajectories. The link between the types of deployments possible and readiness for work, and in-

deed the lack of access to frontline staff to facilitate expertise exchange, all point in the same direction. Organisations that will later go on to require the services of interpreters have an important part to play in their development.

While the Discussion section of this paper will discuss the organisational outcomes of the project, it is important to realise that organisations working with interpreting are not the only stakeholders whose work was evaluated in this project. Given its nature, this project also uncovered some important insights for the design of any future interpreter development projects. This paper will therefore now turn to an evaluation of the support package offered.

6. Support package evaluation

6.1. Supervision

The impact of supervision is not something that can be measured quantitatively but is best determined by the changes the interns noted in relation to their attitude, confidence and approach to interpreting. Feedback was welcomed throughout the Professional Supervision process and a formal review was conducted at the end of the two placements. Both interns found Professional Supervision to be beneficial to their practice. The process fostered a sense of being “good enough” and the interns were able to move away from the potentially damaging quest for perfection. They were better able to understand that good interpreters will need to interrupt, clarify, and work with other participants to achieve effective communication. Both interns realised the importance of stating their needs in assignments, demonstrating that they were developing good practice in terms of self-care. Importantly, Professional Supervision helped the interns to hold realistic expectations of both themselves and of others.

Supervision enabled the interns to have a more nuanced understanding of what everyone brings to the interpreted event and how those elements impinge on the interaction. The weekly scheduling of Professional Supervision provided an opportunity to “get it all out”, which stopped issues and stress building up and, as one intern noted, “keeps you sane”. Instead of the supervisee holding on to issues, both the supervisee and the issues were contained and held by the supervisor. Having someone external from the workplace meant that the interns had to explain and expand upon what happened, and this simple process of recounting helped them reach their own conclusions. At the same time, having an experienced interpreter in a supervisory role meant that the issues raised were understood with empathy.

Professional Supervision validated feelings and emotions around assignments and provided a reality check, encouraging the interns not to think about what they *should* have done but instead to look at what they *could* do differently next time. The process helped to ground expectations, encouraging the interns not to compare themselves with others.

6.2. Mentoring

Lacking daily contact and hands-on control of the interns' diaries, the Project Officer was not in a position to keep track of workload and closely regulate the nature of the work being undertaken. This left the interns with considerable challenges – despite the project team's extensive preparatory work with Police Scotland and NHS representatives – to make decisions about their own workload and the appropriateness of each assignment. As new entrants to the profession, operating in environments where respected healthcare and policing practitioners were making demands of them according to their own judgment and pressures, the interns felt the need for the steadying hand of a senior interpreter. The Project Officer's role as intermediary was valuable in that it enabled the university team to maintain an overview and gave interns and partners recourse to an advisor in moments of uncertainty.

6.3. Coaching

Unlike supervision and mentoring, coaching concentrated on the interns' technical interpreting skills. As previously mentioned, the coaching exercises were set according to the areas initially identified by the interns as their weakest. The accuracy of their assumptions was validated when, during their Police placements, they were asked to handle longer speeches on different aspects of public safety and hate crime. Following their difficult experience with this one assignment, specific attention was paid to summarising and dealing with a speaker who paused infrequently during their presentation.

The problem with this approach is that it was necessarily retrospective and the challenges of particular assignments would not often be repeated during the relatively brief project. Thus, both interns reported that the exercises were useful but not necessarily perfectly attuned to the work they would seek to do regularly. Both reported enjoying the coaching but feeling that it was somewhat disconnected from their perceived needs at this specific stage in their career. In general, they felt that they wanted to concentrate on interpreting in contexts involving conversations and dialogue, rather than longer speeches. Nevertheless, the interns reported that they would have welcomed more frequent in-person coaching sessions, perhaps even weekly, including individual and group time.

6.4. Summary evaluation

In all cases therefore, the support package offered important space for the interns to develop their practice and skills outside of the confines of specific events. There is no doubt that improvements could be made to any such support package in future. It is clear that the project allowed a holistic view of interpreter development, in which the role of the interpreters themselves, training institutions, more experienced colleagues, and organisations requiring their services were all

placed in the limelight. Given the focus of this paper, attention will now turn to what this project has demonstrated in terms of the role of organisations requiring interpreting, the aspects of a good support package and the practical and theoretical outcomes of this project for Interpreting Studies.

7. Discussion

7.1. Role of the organisation in the success of interpreter development

This project deliberately sought to involve a wide range of stakeholders in the development of interpreters and in the embedding of interpreting within two large statutory public service organisations. This offered a holistic view of what is needed to responsibly develop early-career practitioners and pragmatically embed interpreting into organisations that use it regularly. The practical applications of this are obvious: to truly bridge the gap between graduation and professionalisation, it is important that the development of interpreters is not seen to end with the completion of their university training.

It is equally vital to note that interpreters can only operate within the parameters set by the institutions they serve. Institutional learning is therefore also critical, as demonstrated by the PEAS approach. The development of interpreters is a multi-stakeholder process, in which organisations commissioning interpreting engage in self-reflection in much the same way as new interpreters do and with much the same outcomes. The contrasting results of the PEAS project in Police Scotland and the NHS suggest that all parties involved in interpreter development must learn to adjust their practices and expectations. In organisational terms, this adjustment seems to reflect a move from incidental to integral interpreting: from interpreting as a contracted service to interpreting as a structurally embedded part of organisational operations. Such a movement is not automatic. It involves understanding how excellent interpreting creates a net gain for the organisation, even as it may initially require increased financial investment and revisions to existing practices. In short, organisations gain from interpreting, and from the development of interpreters, in proportion to how much they are prepared to invest time, money and thinking into it. The long-term efficiencies from generating a consistent set of norms and procedures, co-developed by (and therefore with buy-in from) all professional participants, can be envisaged through the lens of this short-term pilot work. Clearly, adding community-wide engagement with such processes would fuel vital enhancement in promoting mutual confidence and respect.

In organisations taking an incidental approach, the embedding of training may go no further than having agreed onboarding or familiarisation procedures that allow interpreters to understand organisational expectations and internal bureaucracy. This would be similar to the integration of new staff in other roles. The mirror image can be seen in the notion of exposing health or policing trainees to interpreting during their initial education: it may be useful, but in reality, frontline staff will often never encounter an interpreter again in their work for

many years, by which time the lessons have been forgotten. Organisations using integral interpreting should instead look to form long-term partnerships with interpreter-training organisations and other relevant stakeholders to allow a consistent flow of learning and information between stakeholders, resulting not just in ongoing organisational evolution of practice but in training and support of interpreters that is attuned to changing work requirements.

Yet it would be a mistake to assume that the only organisations who need to make such shifts are those who will become regular interpreting users. The varied feedback on the support package on offer, as well as the communication issues that arose in the project, point to a need for interpreter training organisations to take on board the need for cross-sectoral partnership with the very organisations who will later be hiring or contracting their graduates. The need for training organisations to reflect on their own practices also means designing support packages for new graduates that respond to their felt needs. The next section of this discussion will therefore briefly reflect on this area.

7.2. Features of a good support package for interpreters

The support package offered in the PEAS project included supervision, mentoring and coaching. Feedback on all three shows that they are useful elements for future support but that they must respond to the needs of interpreters.

Mentoring provides a helpful protective mechanism for interpreters, but its scope is limited by the amount of access the mentor has to the interpreters' working lives. The quality of mentoring and project support on offer to interpreters is therefore largely determined by the quality of the partnership that exists between the parties involved. Similarly, supervision became an important lifeline for the interpreters, allowing them to debrief assignments and work on the emotional resilience and coping skills they would need to respond to challenges. Increasing the frequency of supervision seems to be key to increasing its effectiveness. Coaching is one area where practical improvements will be closely linked to developments in theory. The effectiveness of interpreter coaching will also be closely linked to the coach's awareness of the precise issues the interpreters are likely to face and the availability of targeted exercises. Recent calls for improved intra-disciplinary dialogue (e.g. Gile/Napier 2020; Downie 2021) can and should be answered if interpreter development is to extend beyond the classroom.

8. Theoretical & practical outcomes and conclusion

This paper discussed the PEAS project, which aimed to ease the transition between graduation and the establishment of new interpreters in the workplace while improving the integration of SLI into the Police in Scotland and the NHS in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde district. The project was understood within its unique political and historical context but was viewed as an example of ongoing research into institutions' approaches to interpreting. More projects of this kind

are encouraged in the future, with the scope for enriching institutional permeability to learning, improvements in coaching and supervision, and the deepening of cross-sectoral relationships being key areas for future work.

This project illustrated that in interpreting, there is nothing as practical as a good theory, by underlining the fundamental importance of understanding institutions' roles within the theorisation of interpreting. The experience of the interns and the results of the project seemed to depend largely on the approach taken by the two public service organisations and by the operational practices fostered by their particular cultures. This is in line with the research of Dong (2016), Dong/Turner (2016) and Downie (2016). While it is entirely possible that organisations might write guidelines describing the place of interpreting, actions speak louder than words and thus it would seem sensible to attempt to understand organisational views through their instantiation in practice.

In practical terms, such theoretical developments shadow the need for a growth in mutual understanding across all key interpreting stakeholders. Reducing the "readiness to work" gap (Godfrey 2010) and easing the transition from study to work will mean hitherto unseen partnership across services. In this study, the role of universities in forming cross-sectoral partnerships and the role of organisations that use interpreting regularly in working to integrate interpreting successfully into organisational practice has been illuminated. It is noteworthy that several recent graduates of Heriot-Watt University are now in newly created salaried posts as NHS interpreters in Scotland, evidence perhaps of institutional learning about what works in this context. While the PEAS project occurred in a unique political, historical and social environment, its achievements in fostering cross-sectoral co-operation and addressing key logistical, political and practical challenges seem applicable in many different contexts. Similar initiatives would benefit other public services. Work is needed to improve the coaching available, increase the supervision on offer, and build greater co-operation across all stakeholders before, during and after direct interventions.

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