INTERPRETING SERVICE CALLS :
POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Outline

➢ Introduction

➢ Telephone Interpreting: Pros and Cons

➢ Structure of a Service Call

➢ Potential Problems and Possible Solutions in TI

➢ Some Tips

TELEPHONE INTERPRETING

The telephone is not a new technology…

… but it is an ever evolving one…

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TELEPHONE INTERPRETING

... and gaining momentum in several

contexts

- Business

- Medical

- Emergency/Police

- Tourism and other public services

Interpreting Service Calls: Potential Problems and Possible Solutions

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Service Call

(according to conversation analysis)

A service call is an interaction where a user/client calls a service/institution/organisation to present a request and the receiver decides if and how to respond to that request

Telephone Interpreting

It is a form of "remote" interpreting where one, more than one or all participants in an interaction do not share the same language and are not located in the same place.

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Using Telephone Interpreting:

PROS and CONS

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Pros I

for Institutions/Organizations:

- (almost) Immediate access to an interpreter
  (Kelly 2008, Braun 2012)

- Cost cutting (travel expenses) (ib.)

- Easier to find interpreters for languages of lesser diffusion (ib.)

- (in the health sector) Patient's privacy (Kelly 2008)

Pros II

for interpreters:

- **Safety and security**
  (Andres & Falk 2009, Braun 2012, 2014, 2015, ImPLI Project 2015)

- **Interpreters can work from home even in "remote" locations** (Lee 2007)

- **Flexible working hours** (Lee 2007)

Cons I

- Lack of "social presence" in interactions and consequently difficulty in establishing/building "rapport" (Ellis 2004, Ozolins 2011)

- Lack of some communication components: visual, tactile, kinesics (Poyatos 2002)

- (resulting in) Communicative "uncertainty" among participants (Oviatt & Cohen 1992, Ozolins 2011, Braun 2015)

- Communication difficulty due to poor quality of channel or sound (British Refugee Council 2008. Causo 2011)

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Cons II

for interpreters:

- Fatigue because of lack of context and only audio input (Andres & Falk 2009, Causo 2011)

- Great variety and unpredictability of contents of calls and impossibility to prepare for a specific interaction (Rosenberg 2007)

- Difficulty for speakers in turn allocation since they cannot see each other and need for interpreters to manage turn allocation (Oviatt & Cohen 1992, Wadensjo 1999)

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Using Telephone Interpreting: pros and cons

Most studies suggest that with well functioning equipment/technology, sound interpreters' preparation and experience most disadvantages can be managed and overcome (Andres e Falk 2009, Braun 2012)

shift

SHIFT IN ORALITY:

SHAPING THE INTERPRETERS OF THE FUTURE AND OF TODAY

Structure of a Monolingual Service Call

1. **Pre-opening:** the phone rings and the operator/service dispatcher opens a communication channel;

2. **Opening/identification/recognition:** the institution or service receiving the call answers the phone and self-identifies, the caller recognises that s/he has reached the wanted service or institution;

3. **Request by the caller for a service** (for instance an ambulance in the case of an emergency);

Structure of a Monolingual Service Call

4. **Interview by the operator of the service or institution** who asks a series of questions in order to ascertain whether and how to respond to the caller's request;

5. **Response to the request presented by the caller;**

6. **Closing**: usually expressions of thanks and greetings.

Telephone Interpreting: DATA SET

- ## Simulations (but interpreters are unaware):

- ## 15 health care service calls

- ## 4 calls to the police

- ## 6 tourist service calls

Provided by DUALIA

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Telephone Interpreting

Opening/identification/recognition: the institution or service receiving the call answers the phone and self-identifies, the caller recognises that s/he has reached the wanted service or institution;

Opening in Interpreter-Mediated Service Calls (1)

1. I: Dualia mi nombre es XXX en qué puedo ayudarle?

   Dualia my name is XXX how can I help you?

→ 2. A: hola buenos días es la intérprete de italiano?

   hello good morning are you the interpreter of Italian?

3. I: sí

   yes

4. A: ho:la buenos días mire la estoy llamando de aquí desde el Museo del Prado...

   hello good morning look I am calling from here from the Prado Museum...

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Opening in Interpreter-Mediated Service Calls (2)

1. I: Dualia buenos días
   Dualia good morning

→ 2. A: hola buenos días (.)mira te llamo del hospital Virgen del...
   hello good morning (.) look I am calling from Virgen del Rocio hospital (.) in Seville
   (.) I am doctor Ana Gómez and I am calling you from:: eh the s- the:: department of
   oncology (.) look I have o::person on line:: (.) well we are going to contact (.) a:
   *gentleman whose name is Robert **Hutson** and we are going to ask him about hi::s*
   wife ((telephone interference noise)) whose name is Margaret because she has
   leukaemia a::nd we are carrying out a palliative care follow-up to see how she is
   doing OK?
   (.)/

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Opening in Interpreter-Mediated Service Calls (3)

1. I: Dualia buenas tardes le atiende Lidia ((echo))
   Dualia good evening this is Lidia how can I help you? ((echo))
2. A: hola buenas tardes (.)soy la doctora(.) Ana Zamora llamo de la
   de urgencias del hospital de Córdoba Reina Sofía (.)
   [ten]
   hallo good evening (.) doctor (.) Ana Zamora speaking I am calling from the
   emergency department at Cordoba Reina Sofia hospital [I ha]

3. I: [sí]
   [yes]
→   A: go aquí un señor pero no no soy capaz de entenderlo
   ve here a gentleman but I cannot understand him
   (.)
→ 4. I: vale de acuerdo pues (.) si quiere le pasa al teléfono y yo le
   pregunto °por favor°
   OK all right well if you want you can put him on the phone and I will ask him
   °please°
   (.)
5. A: vale gracias
   OK thank you

Opening in Interpreter-Mediated Service Calls (4)

→ 7. B: [pronto:]salve mhm s:alve >mi dovete aiutare< io:: sono qua a
         Valenza e non trovo più mio figlio sette anni (.) e: ci è/
         >mi dovete aiutare< m'hanno dato questo numero
         da contat[tare   e::]
                   [((bip))] m:: non so come u::m cioè per favore datemi
         una mano <perché non lo trovo più>

         [hallo:] hi mhm hi >you have to help me< I:: am here in Valencia and I cannot find my seven
         year old son (.) e: he is/ >you have to help me<I was given this number to c[all e::]
                                                                                    [((bip))] m::
         I do not know how u::m that is please give me a hand <because I cannot find him
         anymore>

→ 8. I: e quanti anni ha? mi ha detto la [se- eh:: ed- d-]
         and how old is he? you told me   [se- eh:: ed- d-]

   9. B: [ha fatto sette anni]
                                                  [he turned seven]

Opening in Interpreter-Mediated Service Calls (4)

```
9. B:                              [ha fatto sette anni]
                                   [he turned seven]

10.I: sì::
      ye:::s
11.B: sette anni [> è un bambi-]
      seven years  [> he is a chi-]
12.I              [sette anni]
                  [seven years]
                              no sette anni< sì
                              ld seven years< yes
→  11.I: O::K un attimo solo che drevo tradurre per mio collega (.)
         O::K just a second I have to translate for my colleague (.)
```

Interpreting Service Calls: Potential Problems and Possible Solutions

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Openings in Interpreter-Mediated Service Calls - Summary

- "routine"

- "ideal"

- "agreement on procedure"

- "distressful"

Request in Monolingual Service Calls

Request by the caller for a service

(for instance an ambulance in the case of
an emergency)

Request in Interpreter-Mediated Service Calls (1)

Request by the caller

Sound Problem

```
4. I: I am going to be your interpreter today how can I help you?
    5. B: hello I would like to have a flu vaccination appointment for my
          daughter please ((echoing voice))
→   6. I: what kind of appointment please?
→   7. B: flu vaccination appointment ((echo))
          (1.5)
→   8. I: ah ca- can you can you repeat please?
→   9. B: yes I would like to have a flu vaccination appointment for my
          daughter ((echo))
→  10. I: a vaccination appointment isn't it?
→  11. B: yes ((echoing voice))
```

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Interview in Monolingual Service Calls

Interview by the operator of the service or institution who asks a series of questions in order to ascertain whether and how to respond to the caller's request

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Comprehension Problems: Name

```
24. A: … pregúntele eh:: dónde se encuentra
       … ask her  eh:: where she is
25. I: eh: buen- madam? eh: where are you?
       eh: we- madam? eh: where are you?
26. B: OK I'm in::: Dinama- Dinamadina?
27. I: Dinamadina?
28. B: yes
29. I: OK (1) en Dinamedina? o:: madina? (1.2) le dice algo?
       OK (1) in Dinamedina? o:: madina? (1.2) does it sound familiar?
30. A: eh: no
31. I: eh: madam in what city are you?
32. B: in Malaga
33. I: in Málaga [OK]
34. B:          [yes]
    (.)
```

Interview in Interpreter-Mediated Service Calls (1)
Comprehension Problems: Name

→   28. B: **yes**

→   29. I: OK (1) en Dina**medi**na? o:: madina? (1.2) le dice algo?

              OK (1) in Dinamedina? o:: madina? (1.2) does it sound familiar?

→   30. A: eh: no

→   31. I: eh: madam in what **city** are you?

→   32. B: in Ma**la**ga

          33. I: in Málaga [OK]

          34. B: [yes]

          (.)

→   35. I: en Málaga

              in Malaga

          (1)

→   36. A: eh: pregúntele si podría ser en Benalmádena

              eh: ask her if it could be Benalmádena

          37. I: eh: madam might it be Benalmádena?

→   38. B: eh: yes I think it's the Spanish eh:(.) °pronunciation° yes

Response to the Request presented by the Caller
Interpreting Problems

4.   I: la señora se encuentra en Sevilla y necesita llegar al
        patronato de turismo le puede dar indicaciones para llegar?

the lady is in Seville and needs to get to the Tourist Office can you tell her

how to get there?

5.   A: sí: dígale que nosotros estamos en la calle Reyes
        Huertas número veintidós

yes tell her that we are in calle Reyes Huertas number twenty-two

(1.0)

→   6.   I: ci troviamo adesso nella in calle Reyes Huertas ventidue

we are now in the in calle Reyes Huertas twenty-two

7.   B: come si chiama scusi?

what's it called sorry?

Response to the Request presented by the Caller
Interpreting Problems (1)

7. B: come si chiama scusi?
    what's it called sorry?

8. I: <calle Reyes Huertas ventidue>
    <calle Reyes Huertas twenty-two>

9. B: [Reyes?]

→ 10. I: [è dove] ci troviamo ade- dove lei si trova adesso
    [it is where] we are no- where you are now

→ 11. B: dove io mi trovo **adesso** o dov'è il Patronato de Turismo?
    *where I am **now** or where the tourist office is?*

12. I: eh:: es donde tiene que ir la señora o es donde están
    donde están ahora?
    eh:: it is where the lady has to go or where you are where you are now?

13. A: ah nosotros estamos aquí en el[Patronato de Tu]rismo
    ah we are here at the [tourist offi]ce

14. I: [ay perdone sí]
                                                [oh sorry yes]

Response to the Request presented by the Caller
Interpreting Problems (2)

```
42. I: va bene adesso riportiamo alla polizia ma abbiamo bisogno del
       numero di telefono per contattarla lei
       Ok now we will report to the police but we need your telephone number to
       contact you
   (.)
43.B: si (.) allora e em:: tre quattro sei?
      yes (. ) well e em:: three four six?
   (.)
44. I: sí?
       yes?
   (.)
45. B: [nov]e sette?
       [((bip))]
       [nin]e seven?
       [((bip))]
   (.)
46. I: sí?
       yes?
   (.)
47. B: due nove?
       two nine?
   (.)
```

Response to the Request presented by the Caller

Interpreting Problems (2)

```
(.)
63. B: si:
        yes:
64. I: sette?
        seven?
(.)
→   65. I: manca un numero (.) mi sembra
        a number is missing (.) it seems to me
→   66. B: no e- e- e- è italiano c'è il [prefisso italiano]
        no it i- i- i- it's Italian there is the [Italian country code]
```

Turn Management

15. B: my name is Peter

(1)

16. I: Peter what's the full name sir?

17. B: ah it's it's Peter Rufus

→ 18. I: **Rufus** OK hold on for a moment ah hola
        compañero? me dice que se   [llama...
        hello colleague he tells me [his name
        is…

At any Stage of the Call

References to Primary Participants

```
15. B: my name is Peter

    (1)

    16. I: Peter what's the full name sir?

    17. B: ah it's it's Peter Rufus
```

→ **18. I: Rufus** OK hold on for a moment ah hola

compañero? me dice que se   [llama...

hello colleague he tells me [his name

is…

Closings (1-2)

```
62. B: OK thanks a lot [bye]
63. I:              [thank] you by bye [de acuerdo]
64. B:                        [thank you bye]
65. I:                              buenos días
                                    goodbye

65. A: hasta luego gracias
        bye thank you


105. B: OK thank you very much
        (.)
       106. I: all right thank you very much bye
       107. B: bye
       108. I: eh: pues eh ya se lo he dicho compañero ya está todo arreglado=
              eh: well eh I already tod him colleague everything has been arranged
       109. A: =muy bien muy bien muchas gracias hasta luego
              = fine fine thank you very much bye
       110. I: muchas gracias a usted hasta luego
              thank you very much bye
```

Closings (3)

81. B: [thank you] very much
82. I: thank you **thank** you
83. B: bye
84. I: bye sí e:: compañero? ya: hemos terminado eso es todo? puedo ayudarle en
    algo más?

    bye yes e:: colleague? so we have finished is that all? may I help you with something else?
85. A: **nada** más (.) muchas gracias

    ***nothing** else (.) thank you very much*
86. I: a usted (.)un saludo

    thank you (.) bye
87: A: un saludo (.)buenas tardes

    bye (.) goodbye
88: I: buenas tardes

    goodbye

Closings (4)

31. A: vale (2) vale eh: le podría llamar más tarde para::
    [preguntarle con los resultados?]
    OK (2) OK eh: may I call you later to::ask about the results?
32. I: [sí cuando quiera]   ((echo))
    [yes whenever you want]
33. A: vale fenomenal=
    OK fantastic=
34. I: =sí sí claro venga hasta ahora ((echo))
    = yes yes of course speak to you later then
35. A: gracias hasta luego
    thanks bye
36. I: hasta luego ((echo))
    bye

Potential Problems

- "Human factor": emotional, fragmented narrative, disagreement

- Technical issues: poor sound, bad line, background noise

- Comprehension problems: Names (of people, places, drugs, etc.)

- Interpreting problems (direct vs reported speech, pronouns, deictics)

- Turn management (preventing overlapping talk)

Interpreting Service Calls: Potential Problems and Possible Solutions

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Solutions: a few Tips (1)

Before the call:

- Wear headsets with a microphone so that you can use your hands to write.

- Have paper and pen ready before you start interpreting on the phone.

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Solutions: a few Tips (2)

At the Beginning of the Call:

- Ask the operator/doctor/service dispatcher to give you a short briefing before putting you through to the caller.

- Signal acoustic/poor sound problems to the operator/doctor/service dispatcher and ask to call again if necessary.

- Agree with the operator/doctor/service dispatcher about how to proceed during the call.

Solutions: a few Tips (3)

During the Call:

- Ask other parties to pronounce names slowly and clearly and to spell them if necessary.

- Signal when you are going to interpret so that no one speaks while you are interpreting.

- Signal to parties when they can speak in order to prevent overlapping talk.

- Avoid using deictics, it may generate confusion on the phone.

- Try to prevent misunderstandings by making it clear who is saying what or by using reported speech.

A few Tips

in general:

Try not to make assumptions about people, events or even little details and do not take anything for granted. When necessary, it is better asking to repeat than conveying wrong or misleading information.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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