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Specifics and perspective of the work of a Czech-Vietnamese interpreter

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V Olomouci dne

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V Olomouci dne:

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviation	7
Introduction	8
1. Assumptions regarding the Prospect of Vietnamese Public Service Interpreters in the Czech Republic	11
2. A Brief History of Migration to the Czech Republic	13
3. Public Service Interpreting	18
4. Codification of Public Service Interpreting	24
5. Non-Professional Interpreters and Translator	26
6. The Issue of Non-verbal communication.....	27
7. Integration.....	30
7.1. Integration in the Czech Republic	30
8. Interpreters, Intercultural mediators and gatekeepers.....	32
8.1. Intercultural mediator	34
8.2. The Differences Between an Interpreter and Intercultural Mediator	38
8.3. Interpreter as a “Gatekeeper”	42
8.4. Vietnamese Community Interpreters – Interpreters or Mediators?	46
9. The Issue of Trust between the Interpreter / Intercultural Mediator and the Client.....	52
10. Organisations Offering Interpreting Services for Minorities	56
10.1. META o.p.s.	56
10.2. MOST PRO o.p.s.	57
10.3. Klub Hanoi / SEA-liasion	58
10.4. ICP - Integrovní centrum Praha.....	59
11. Practical Part, Interviews, and Questionnaires.....	61
11.1. Questionnaires	64

11.2. Interviews with Interpreters and Intercultural Mediators	75
11.3. Interviews with Clients of Interpreting or Mediating Services.....	78
Conclusion	81
Appendices.....	86
Appendix 1	86
Appendix 2 - Questions by Mireia Vargas-Urpi.....	87
Appendix 3.....	90
Appendix 4.....	95
Resumé.....	97
List of sources	101

List of Abbreviation

PSI - public service interpreter

INT - interpreter

IM - intercultural mediator

CLIN - client / user of interpreting services

Introduction

The present Master's thesis has emerged from the research originally conducted for my Bachelor thesis, which compared the work, and perspectives of being a Vietnamese interpreter in the Czech Republic and in Vietnam.

I would like to elaborate upon this previous work and continue my research in the field of interpreting for the Vietnamese community in a broader sense. I would like to offer a deeper insight into the work of intercultural interpreters, trying to determine whether there is any room for its improvement and, if so, what can be done to achieve such improvement. In the practical part of my thesis I will be with the permission of Vargas-Urpi replicating her work.

Mirei Vargas-Urpi is a professor at the Department of Translation and Language Sciences of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra¹, has been a great help, offering me an insight into her doctoral thesis "Public Service Interpreting for the Chinese immigrants in Catalonia" (2014). She describes the problems which interpreters and intercultural mediators encounter on a daily basis, the possible obstacles between an interpreter and a client in the Chinese community in Catalonia². I will be using her methods of research and apply it to the Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic.

The theoretical part of the thesis will present a historical overview of the issue of immigration of not only the Vietnamese, but other foreigners to the Czech Republic, the motivation for moving often so far from their homes into a foreign country, which oftentimes has a distinctly different cultural background than their homeland. I will also be referring to the works of Professor Brouček, who has written several studies on the topic of immigration to the Czech Republic and has published several monographs on the Czech Vietnamese community.

The first chapters of my thesis will describe the profession of a public service interpreter, trying to define the differences between an intercultural worker and a public service interpreter. It will also present the organisations in the Czech

¹ "Mireia Vargas-Urpi," *Orcid*, accessed March 31, 2017, <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6302-581X>

² Mireia Vargas-Urpi, "Public service interpreting for Chinese immigrants in Catalonia: a study based on

² Mireia Vargas-Urpi, "Public service interpreting for Chinese immigrants in Catalonia: a study based on interpreters', coordinators' and users' views," *Language and Intercultural Communication* 2014, 14(4), 475-499, accessed April 3, 2017, DOI: 10.1080/14708477.2014.934691.

Republic which offer members of minorities or foreigners living in the country advice, support, and interpreting and mediating services.

In the second chapter I will discuss my primary proposition that public service interpreting for the Vietnamese community will change its character in the future; my assumption is that, in the future, many of Vietnamese from older generations, who are most in need of the interpreting services, will not stay behind in the Czech Republic, and those who will stay may have children who have attended Czech schools, hence they have acquired the language skills without the need to seek the help of interpreters. I will compare my primary proposition with the views of different organisations which offer interpreting and/or mediating services to the members of the Vietnamese community. Immigrants of different cultural backgrounds will be still coming to the Czech Republic, however I believe that future immigrants prior to coming to the Czech Republic will have attended a Czech language course either in their home country or in the Czech Republic. I have met newly incoming Vietnamese who have mentioned attending a Czech language course in Vietnam before coming to the Czech Republic.

Another topic to be addressed will be the issue of gatekeepers and what their roles and position within the community are. In this thesis a gatekeeper is understood as a person who has the 'power' of influencing which and what information will be given further. The topic of mediators is, in my opinion an important one, because sometimes the Vietnamese prefer to turn to a gatekeeper for assistance rather than turning to an interpreter or intercultural mediator. These mediators often assume the role of an interpreter, despite often not having any professional education. The reason why the Vietnamese turn to them is because mediators are able to communicate in both Czech and Vietnamese. That alone would not be enough for them to receive a rather high position in the community; it is their connections to people in the public offices that is, I believe, the key to their success.

The practical part of the present thesis will describe the ethnographic research into the Vietnamese community. I will be replicating the methods used by Vargas-Urpi that is semi-structured interviews conducted with representatives of the organisations which offer interpreting and/or mediating services, namely: Integrační centrum Praha, o.p.s., Klub Hanoj, MOST PRO o.p.s., and META o.p.s.

I will try to focus on the services they offer – their daily work. The main topic of the interviews include what changes they feel there are in the Vietnamese community and interpreting for it, whether there are any changes at all or whether they anticipate that certain changes in these areas will take place. To be able to access a larger number of members of the community, I created an online survey which was posted onto a social media network to be spread amongst the Vietnamese all over the Czech Republic. On the recommendation from Prof. Pöchhacker, I have also conducted interviews with clients of the interpreting or mediating services mentioned above. His recommendation was based on the presumption that the answers for the questionnaire would not differ greatly from each other; however the experience itself might be different from case to case and that can be most easily communicated in an interview. During the interview, the respondent may add some vital information that could not have been as easily conveyed in the questionnaire.

In the last chapter, I will analyse and comment on the results of the survey and the interviews.

1. Assumptions regarding the Prospect of Vietnamese Public Service Interpreters in the Czech Republic

The aim of this MA thesis is to specify and describe the work of a community interpreter in the Vietnamese community and the prospect of interpreters in the future. The first larger wave of Vietnamese immigrants coming to the Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia) was in the 1970s. The prospects for a Vietnamese-Czech interpreter were back then very bright, since very few Vietnamese spoke Czech. The first interpreters were the first workers who came to Czechoslovakia and decided to stay. Later on, the role of an interpreter was taken over by Vietnamese students, who studied in the country and decided to be helpful in their community.

I wanted to see whether Czech-Vietnamese interpreters have any prospect of work in the future, as many of the second or third generation Vietnamese speak Czech as their mother tongue. I presumed that it is often those who came to the Czech Republic in the first or second wave of migration (the first wave of Northern Vietnamese immigrants came in the 1956, 1967, 1973 and after 1989) who do not speak Czech well, or those who came to the country in their teens or adulthood with the prospect of a better or to join their families which were already there.

This assumption was, however, contradicted by INT4, who stated that it is the first generation of Vietnamese that speaks Czech well, because at that time, very few interpreters were present and they were forced to learn the language in order to achieve their goals.

The second or third generation are the descendants of the first or second wave immigrants; these people grew up in the Czech Republic, attended Czech schools and have been taught about Czech history and culture. This is even more accentuated by the phenomenon of the ‘Czech grandmother’; Vietnamese parents often seek help of elderly Czech people, who become nannies for the Vietnamese children. The children, by interacting in school with Czech children and, later, at the homes of those ‘grandmothers’, learn the language very quickly and are integrated into the society. These children are often the first persons their parents turn to when they need help interpreting something.

Based on that, I believed that children who grow up bilingually would be able to live in the Czech Republic without the need of an interpreter. My assumption was based on conversations which I had with several Vietnamese, claiming that their parents or members of older generations of their families will not want to stay in the Czech Republic; therefore, only the younger, bilingual Vietnamese will stay in the country, making Czech-Vietnamese public service interpreters redundant.

In the past, there was no requirement for a language certificate; only when one wanted to be a court interpreter, he or she had to attend and pass the exams. Otherwise, there were no other requirements other than the knowledge of both languages.

When INT3 was asked what compelled him to take on the role of the interpreter, he answered in the following way: 'I started helping out in the Vietnamese community because people needed help, for example, someone needed to go to the hospital, visit a doctor and so on. That is how it started.'

The INT3 has not received any formal education in the field of interpreting; he is self-taught. When he studied at the Czech Technical University in Prague, they only had Czech lessons, implying that he learnt the language there.

After interviewing NGOs, interpreters, and talking to members of the Vietnamese community themselves, however, it is clear that my initial thesis of the redundancy of Vietnamese interpreters was not correct. Unanimously, all representatives of NGOs and the interpreters agreed that the demand for Czech-Vietnamese interpreters will not disappear. They disagreed with the proposition that the first generation of Vietnamese will move back to Vietnam. And even if they would, there will always be enough Vietnamese who will immigrate to the Czech Republic, hoping for a better life, and those Vietnamese will be in need of an interpreter.

2. A Brief History of Migration to the Czech Republic

The number of foreigners coming to the Czech Republic is steadily growing, whether they receive permanent residence status or they have a long-term residence. The number one reason why people are migrating not only to the Czech Republic, but generally emigrating from their home country, is the economic one – that is, better jobs and higher salary. This fact is also reflected in the family situation of immigrants: the Vietnamese primarily come to the Czech Republic for work and only later do they start a family here and/or invite other family members from Vietnam to follow them. Similarly, the Ukrainians have the tendency to have their partner or spouse here with them, while leaving their children in the home country at first³. The data of the Czech Statistical Office shows that one third of children born in the Czech Republic to people of a different nationality than Czech are Vietnamese; since 1995, the number of children with Ukrainian nationality has been on a rise, as well as in the case of the Slovak minority⁴.

According to the statistical data from 1990, 35 198 people were foreigners with a granted stay in the Czech Republic. Between the years 1994 and 1999, the number of foreigners coming and staying in the Czech Republic doubled and, in 1999, more than 228 000 foreigners lived legally in the Czech Republic. A report of the OECD on Economic and Social Aspects of Migration in the Member states shows that during the period 1992–2002, the Czech Republic was the country with the highest increase of immigrants.

As reported by the Czech Statistical Office, by December 31, 2015, almost half a million foreigners lived in the Czech Republic, of which almost 60 000 were Vietnamese. That means that, since the 1970s, the number of Vietnamese immigrant increased almost by half. The Ukrainian minority is the largest foreign speaking minority, followed by the almost same number of Slovaks. The Vietnamese community represents the third largest minority in the country. Other countries whose citizens take residence in the Czech Republic are, for instance,

³ Jiří Němeček, “Cizinci v ČR: Vietnamci u nás zakořenili,” *Český statistický úřad*, Last modified February 2, 2012. Accessed January 13, 2017,

https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/cizinci_v_cr_vietnamci_u_nas_zakorenili20120214

⁴ Jiří Němeček, “Cizinci v ČR: Vietnamci u nás zakořenili,” *Český statistický úřad*, Last modified February 2, 2012. Accessed January 13, 2017,

<https://www.czso.cz/documents/10180/20566735/400811a1.pdf/14a0edab-1b31-4ff9-8e32-34bbb120c61f?version=1.0>

Russia, Poland, Germany, Bulgaria or China. We have to take into account that these are the official numbers by the Czech Statistical Office, so the actual figures might differ. There are also a number of illegally residing foreigners in the Czech Republic or people who commute to work here whilst living in another country.

Even though the number of almost half a million foreigners may seem high, the Czech Republic is, in comparison with other countries of the Western world, still under-average in this respect. The number of 424 291 foreigners represent only 4% of the whole nation, while in other western countries, about 5–10 % of the whole population are foreigners.⁵

The Czech Republic has always been a destination for many foreigners, the Vietnamese included. Since the first migration wave of the Vietnamese in 1956, their number has been slowly growing. Thanks to the international agreement between the Czechoslovakia and Vietnam, 35 000 Vietnamese came to the Czech Republic in the 1970s and 1980s.

The migration wave in 1956 could be called migration out of necessity, because the immigrants were victims of the ongoing war; the Vietnamese migration changed its character at the beginning of the 1990s to be predominantly economic, as stated above (Brouček, 2003: 13).

During the communist era, Vietnamese came to Czechoslovakia as workforce. They were to be taught in Czechoslovakia, gain experience and then to return to Vietnam to spread their experience further. In 1973, an agreement between the Socialist Vietnam and the communist Czechoslovakia was signed, enabling an influx of Vietnamese trainees into the country. The Vietnamese delegation in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic proposed that a group of roughly 10 000 Vietnamese would come to Czechoslovakia to gain work experiences. Brouček mentions that the representatives of the Vietnamese Socialist Republic were very much adamant in convincing the Czechoslovak representatives to allow the Vietnamese gain work experiences in Czechoslovakia, which was supposed to be the key role in the development of the economy of the then Vietnam. Between

⁵“Kde se tu berou cizinci,” *Czechkid*. Last modified November 9, 2011, Accessed February 12, 2017, <http://www.czechkid.cz/si1090.html>

1980 and 1983, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic saw the largest income of Vietnamese workers, roughly 30 000 people.

The year 1989 presents a milestone in the Vietnamese migration, because prior to that year, the immigrants who came to the country were invited by the Czechoslovak government; after 1989 the immigration was chiefly motivated by the previous immigration of relatives in the 1970s and 1980s and had mostly economic motives. Brouček describes the movement of Vietnamese to the Czech Republic since 1992 up until now as forming of communities. Besides the economic factor, the reason for it could be seen in the Vietnamese families' trying to stay in touch with each other in the communities. Moreover, in 1993 Germany ended the agreement with Vietnam and the Vietnamese had to move either back to Vietnam, or went to the Czech Republic as the nearest country with a strong Vietnamese community. Since the 1990s, the Vietnamese have not been immigrating to the Czech Republic just from Vietnam or Germany, but also from Poland, Hungary and other countries.

A significant number of these immigrants decided to stay. Despite being skilled, 'their inability to speak Czech meant that they followed the lead of countless Asian immigrants elsewhere by opening shops or stalls in markets'.⁶ This fact may also be one of the main reasons for the tendency of the Vietnamese to be taciturn and reserved. This tendency has significantly contributed to the stereotypical opinion held by the majority that most Vietnamese have their own shops and do not interact with Czech businesses.

Brouček mentions the connection between the Vietnamese and interpreting, stating that 'University graduates began working as interpreters for the new immigration wave in Czechoslovakia'.⁷ For a newly incoming immigrant, interpreters present a necessity; without them, the immigrant would be facing many hardships when encountering civil servants.

⁶ Colin O'Connor, "Is the Czech Republic's Vietnamese community finally starting to feel at home?" *Český rozhlas*, Last modified May, 29 2007, Last accessed January 5, 2017, <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/talking/is-the-czech-republics-vietnamese-community-finally-starting-to-feel-at-home>

⁷ Stanislav Brouček, "Aktuální problémy adaptace vietnamského etnika v ČR, I. část." *Integrace cizinců na území České republiky* (Výzkumné zprávy a studie vytvořené na pracovištích Akademie věd České republiky na základě usnesení vlády České republiky č. 1266/2000 a 1260/2001) AV ČR. Praha, 2003.

The history of the Vietnamese in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic has been long and rich; despite that, however, many of the especially first generation of Vietnamese do not speak Czech well enough to be able to go to the authorities without the assistance of an interpreter or a mediator. Of course, this is a broad generalisation, but just as Colin O'Connor stated in his story, even though Vietnamese do not speak perfectly Czech, it does not hinder them from achieving their goals.

According to the website infocizinci.cz from 2014,⁸ the motivation of 48,39 % immigrants to the Czech Republic was work related; of almost 17 % was education related; over 27 % of foreigners moved to the country because of their family; and almost 8 % because of humanitarian and other reasons. The number of foreign students receiving their university education in Czech schools has been on the rise since 2003, when only 4 % of the students did not have a Czech passport or a permanent residence. In 2015, almost 12 % of students were foreigners.

The year 2004 was another turning point in the issue of migration, because this is the year the Czech Republic became a member of the European Union and the types of residency in the country got divided into several more categories; there were permanent residencies, visa for stays over 90 day, long-term residence permits and other temporary permits applying not only to the EU members but their families as well. Since entering the EU and becoming a member of the Schengen Area, movement across Europe has never been easier. The number of immigrants, however, has been slowly decreasing in recent years; in the case of the Vietnamese, the reason might be that thanks to the developing economy in the industrial and tourist centres, the Vietnamese from the upper and middle classes do not feel a need to emigrate. The Vietnamese who originally came to the country for trade often based their living on selling cheap clothing from Asia; after the Czech Republic had joined the EU, the market became more open and cheap clothing of a better quality from Europe came to Czech shelves, becoming more appealing to the costumers.⁹ Migration is also influenced by the stability and economic strength of the target country, which can be also seen in the level of

⁸Robbie Flanagan, "Imigrace do ČR," *infocizinci*, Last modified September 8, 2016, last accessed January 30, 2017. <http://infocizinci.cz/cr/imigrace-do-cr/>

⁹Šárka Martinková, Eva Pechová, a Jiří KOCOUREK, *Aktuální sociálně-ekonomická situace a problémy Vietnamců v Chomutově: Zpráva z výzkumu 2011/2012 v Ústeckém kraji*, Last accessed February 4, 2017, DOI: http://www.klubhanoi.cz/zdroj/KH_VZ_Vietnamci_Chomutov_2012.pdf.

immigration to the Czech Republic; in 2008, because of the economic recession, the number of immigrants stagnated and there was a decrease in their number for several years. Many foreigners were laid off because the employees did not fulfil the basic conditions, for example their language skill were not up to par.

In 2012, with the stabilisation and slight rise in the Czech economy, the Czech Republic again became a promising country for foreigners.

In 2013, the Vietnamese became an officially recognized minority. What does that mean for members of the minority? The main thing is that Vietnamese can ask for civil workers in the offices to speak to them in their native language, which is Vietnamese. And municipalities, where at least 10 % of the population is a minority, have to provide all the necessary legal information in the language of the minority.

The newly gained official status of the Vietnamese minority brings out the possibility for the communities to develop their cultures, traditions and languages. Being an officially recognized minority enables Vietnamese to speak Vietnamese with civil servants or in court.¹⁰ Despite being an officially recognized minority, however, the Vietnamese community is still reserved and largely self-contained. It is true that in the past several years, there have been more attempts to bring the cultures of the majority and minority closer together in organising events, workshops, seminars and after-school activities. Overall, many minorities participate in or organize events where they present their culture and traditions, to name a few: Festival arabské kultury (Arabfest) in Plzeň, Tvůrčí Afrika neb Všichni jsme Afričani, Multikulturní týden, Kaleidoskop – a multicultural festival, and Barevná planeta. Integration is often supported by the younger generation, the children of the Vietnamese who came to the Czech Republic in the 1990s.

To enable successful integration, knowledge of the language is a key. The abovementioned minority events are often attended by younger people, teens or even children, who take it upon themselves to entertain and educate the visitors. In a way, they are interpreters and intercultural mediators.

¹⁰ Jan Jiříčka, and Martina Žilková, “Česko má nové oficiální národnostní menšiny. Vietnamce a Bělorusy,” *idnes*, last modified July 3, 2013, last accessed March 23, 2014, http://zpravy.idnes.cz/vietnamci-oficialni-narodnostni-mensinou-fiq-/domaci.aspx?c=A130703_133019_domaci_jj

3. Public Service Interpreting

Čeňková maintains that

We can say that even in the 3rd century there will be a need for good interpreters not even just in Europe, where thanks to new integration processes and because of the expansion of the EU where the number of official languages will grow (2007: 14. Translation of the author of the thesis).¹¹

Colley and Guéry view public service interpreting (PSI) as a profession with a hybrid status. By a hybrid profession they mean a profession which has newly appeared within a certain sector and entails tasks formerly performed by more professions within the sector (for instance, nurses undertaking, besides their own duties, some of the work that originally belonged to doctors). The authors mention that PSI was recognised as a distinct profession only in the late 20th century.

...historical evidence exists of interpreting work dating back to at least 3000 BC (Delisle & Woodworth, 1995). These (evidence) accounts, from a wide variety of scenarios, show that interpreters have always undertaken a hybrid role, often as political mediators, advocates, gatekeepers or peacemakers. Their duties far exceed the basic transfer of a message into another language ... (Colley, 2015: 118).¹²

Čeňková mentions that interpreting is performed all around us; we may not consciously realize that what we hear are interpretations, for example on *television or radios, when there is a broadcast of a discussion with foreign experts, during official travels of the representatives of the Czech Republic, during business meetings* (2001: 5. Translation of the author of the thesis).

Interestingly, Colley and Guéry define that the role of the interpreters has always been connected with their status: sometimes they were looked down on as inferior for speaking *barbaric' tongues; sometimes, they were considered as the power behind the throne* (2015: 118).

¹¹ Ivana Čeňková, *Teorie a didaktika tlumočení*. (Praha: Univerzita Karlova, Filozofická fakulta, 2001), page 14.

¹² Helen Colley & Frédérique Guéry, "Understanding new hybrid professions: Bourdieu, illusio and the case of public service interpreters," *Cambridge Journal of Education* 45, no.1 (2015): 113-131, accessed December 30, 2016, DOI: 10.1080/0305764X.2014.991277

Just as the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom is also a country where many migrants immigrate, and according to the 2011 census, more than 7 % of the UK population was foreigners, who relied on the *community, friends, family members - children, to facilitate their interactions with public services* (Colley, 2015: 119). The theme of children acting as the interpreters is a recurring one in PSI. This issue has also been addressed by one of the respondents of my interview. Also, Caroline Free et al. have performed a study in the UK concerning children interpreters. According to the results,

In the absence of trained interpreters, people used children and friends to interpret. They were not always appropriate. They were not able to explain things clearly and did not interpret everything. Children frequently lacking the relevant skills and vocabulary in Vietnamese (Free et al., 1999: 371)¹³

The public service interpreter differs from a conference interpreter both in terms of his field and the techniques which he/she employs during the interpreting sessions. Conference interpretation is a situation in which one party represents themselves, whereas with a PSI often interprets in situation where the participants of the communication are on one side a representative of the state or an institution, and a natural person. This kind of interpreting happens in everyday life, where the natural person seeks help in offices, government institutions, schools, during an appointment with a doctor, and many more similar situations. It is given, by the nature of the differences of the participants that there will not be only cultural, but also social differences between the participants. This means that the level of education of both parties may differ, as well as their social background; Palašćáková in cooperation with other authors created a publication for a project by InBáze and in their book, it is mentioned that *the representative of the institution is often a member of the majority, which inherently puts him/her into a superior position and puts the member of a minority into a disadvantage* (2014: 207. Translation of the author of the thesis).¹⁴ Furthermore, the formality of the speech and its overall registers will be different as well.

¹³ Caroline Free, Patrick White, Cathy Shipman, and Jeremy Dale, "Access to and use of out-of-hours services by members of Vietnamese community groups in South London: a focus group study," *Family Practice* 16, no.4 (1999) : 369–374, last accessed December 18, 2013, Doi: 10.1093/fampra/16.4.369.

¹⁴ Dita Palašćáková, ed. *Formování profese interkulturní pracovník/pracovnice: zahraniční zkušenosti, praxe a vzdělávání v ČR* (Praha: InBáze, 2014), page 207.

META published a study entitled *Komunitní tlumočníci ve víru integrace*¹⁵, where it describes and defines public service interpreting and its code of ethics, and showcases examples of community interpreting. According to their booklet, PSI

can be seen as the oldest form of interpreting.(...) It is based on interpreting dialogues in both direction. The interpreter works alone (...). What is specific for PSI is the venue where interpreting takes places and also the distance between the interpreter and the speaker (Meta. 2014: 9. Translation of the author of the thesis).

The objective of an interpreter is to ensure an effective communication between the parties. A professional interpreter is someone who has extensive knowledge of the culture of both of the attending parties and who is also skilled enough to prevent potential conflicts arising from the differences between them. The booklet mentions that the venue of interpreting is specific and that it usually takes place at institutions, which have rules and policies which one has to abide by. Examples of such institutions are *Department of asylum and migration policy (OAMP), employment agencies, schools, doctor's appointment, and so on* (Meta, 2014: 56. Translation of the author of the thesis). Furthermore it mentions what abilities should a community interpreter have, such as the ability to work in emotionally strained situations, have knowledge of interpreting techniques and methods, be familiar with the cultures of the parties, be able to work alone, and others. Interpreters also have their Code of Ethics, which is also described in the booklet.

It can be said that court interpreting, as in interpreting in court sessions, is a subcategory of community interpreting. However, court interpreters distinguish themselves from community interpreters because court is seen as an institution in a multi-lingual society; a different education is involved, and, in terms of their wage, court interpreters receive a higher pay. Court interpreting is often institutionalized because the profession of the court interpreter is defined in the law, namely Law No. 36 / 1967 Coll., according to which a court interpreter can be appointed by the competent regional court or the Minister of Justice. To be considered a court interpreter candidate, the candidate has to have the Czech nationality, or, in cases of foreigners, to have permanent residency in the Czech

¹⁵ *Komunitní tlumočníci ve víru integrace*. Praha 2: META, o.p.s. - Společnost pro příležitosti mladých migrantů, 2014

Republic; he / she also has to have a university degree (at least Master's degree), present evidence of 5 years work experience, pass the state language exams and be familiar with the rudiments of the law – either by having a degree from a law school or attend an additional study of law in law schools.¹⁶ The law does not distinguish between translating or interpreting, which may be problematic for the interpreter or translator, because judges often do not distinguish these terms. INT4 also mentions that judges do not know how to cooperate with interpreters, concretely that ‘only one judge has tried to reformulate his questions, when the judge saw that the accused did not understand what was being asked.’¹⁷

In her study “Komunikace s cizinci: právní důsledky tlumočení”¹⁸, which describes the complicated situation concerning interpretation in the V4 countries, Tužínková states that although the individual countries do not have identical problems, some of them are similar in all of the states. One of the problems mentioned is that the *interpreter does not admit not understanding the dialect or has just a partial understanding of it, which might lead to misinterpretation* (2011: 6. Translation of the author of the thesis). Another case of insufficient interpreting occurs when the interpreter *does not speak the language well enough and therefore the meanings of terms may, again, be shifted* (2011: 6. Translation of the author of the thesis).

To every issue, the study provides a recommendation as to how to deal with the concrete problem; for instance, as far as the abovementioned problem of not understanding or not fully comprehending the language is concerned, it is recommended to ensure that the interpreter or his client fully understands the language in which the communication will be done. A proposal has been stated that the civic workers realize that the foreigners come from different cultural and social backgrounds and that they should take this into consideration and be patient with the foreigners. This is something the PSI and intercultural mediator do; they

¹⁶ Karolína Juráková, “Jak se stát soudním tlumočnickem,” *Jazykový koutek*, last modified November 17, 2014, last accessed February 2, 2017, <http://www.jazykovy-koutek.cz/?p=4163>

¹⁷ Quotation of INT4 from interview

¹⁸ Helena Tužínková, “Komunikace s cizinci: právní důsledky tlumočení: Srovnání praxe v zemích V4: v Polsku, v Maďarsku, v České republice, na Slovensku a na Ukrajině,” *migrace online*, last modified January 6, 2012, last accessed February 14, 2017, <http://migraceonline.cz/cz/e-knihovna/komunikace-s-cizinci-pravni-dusledky-tlumoceni>

are the third party present, trying to make both parties understand a difficult situation.

Another problem that occurs is that interpreters only have a limited register; this has been mentioned by INT4 as well. Tužínská states that *'during hearings, interpretation is done by non-professional interpreters who make grave mistakes that may influence the potential decision* (2011: 8. Translation of the author of the thesis). Interpreters mainly lack the appropriate terminology in the field of law and migration and lack knowledge of the culture and country of origin of the foreigner. However, the lack of vocabulary goes in both ways, as INT4 tells me: *'Some of the clients I interpreter for do not know the vocabulary; for example there is a term, and it does exist in Vietnamese, however, the Vietnamese client sometimes does not know what the term in Vietnamese means. Or in remote villages, they use a very archaic Vietnamese, where meanings of words such as mother or wife are different.'*

Tužínská also mentions another complication that is that the interpreter takes over different roles, such as a *lawyer, policeman, psychologist, social worker, social expert, and many others* (2011: 10). This resembles the problems of mediators which will be discussed later on in the present study. What she mentions is that the interpreter inappropriately assumes these roles and the institution does not interfere. Another problem is that the interpreter steps out of his role of a neutral party and expresses his/her view on the topic and gives advice to the client (2011: 9, 10. Translation of the author of the thesis). The recommended course of action is to monitor the role of the interpreter. The institution hiring the interpreter should find out whether the interpreter does obey the Code of Ethics and whether or not the interpreter steps out of his/her role.

The consequences of an incorrect unfaithful interpretation will be dire for the migrant. The migrant depends on the interpreter's giving him a faithful interpretation of what is being said by the representative of the state. If there are discrepancies in the testimony from a client, it may be a cause for mistrust towards the migrant. The study also mentions that migrants, out of fear of being denied access or that the proceedings may be stopped, do not dare to criticise, or complain about, the interpreter. Some of the reasons why there are no complaints

about flawed interpretation are: *the foreigners do not want their already inferior position to worsen, foreigners and interpreters often have the same background and lastly, mistakes during interpreting cannot be falsified, because recordings of the hearings are missing* (Tužínská, 2011, p. 12).

How to fight these problems? The foreign client should be fully advised of their rights and the relevant terminology should be explained to him. Also, he or she should be informed of their right to express doubt about the interpreter. Another suggestion is that, at least in the cases of asylum procedures, the hearings should be recorded.

Further obstacles that complicate interpreting: the person conducting the interview fails to explain the procedure to the migrant, distrusting the migrant, asking closed questions or being rude, interrupting him or her and many more. Therefore, Tužínská recommends that the institutions which deal with foreigners on everyday basis teach their workers to take into account these potential problems and learn how to prevent them. For example, by explaining beforehand to the foreigner the procedure which is going to take place, no interrupting the foreigners, being more open and showing respect to the other person.

4. Codification of Public Service Interpreting

There appears to be a need for a code regulating professional interpreters. In 1981, for instance, there was a case in the UK, when the accused was not granted a proper interpreter and the person interpreting did not speak the same language as the accused, leaving the accused unable to say anything (Townesley, 2007: 164).¹⁹ As a consequence the UK Criminal Justice System recognized that there was a need for *proper arrangement for interpreting in the courts... significant steps have been taken in many areas of public service towards the regulation of previously ad hoc arrangements for interpreting* (2007: 166). The steps that have been undertaken are: 1) creating an objective assessment of the interpreter's skill, 2) providing a certificate, and 3) establishing a central register of qualified PSI (2007: 166).

Klub Hanoj and the Institute of Translation Studies in Prague offer courses, for example 'Rekvalifikační kurz pro odbornou veřejnost - Komunitní tlumočení ve styku s cizinci a menšinami'²⁰, or modules such as: 'Technika mluveného projevu pro tlumočníky, Úvod do konsekutivního tlumočení bez zápisu, Úvod do simultánního tlumočení'²¹ where, at the end, the participants have to pass an exam to receive a certificate about passing the course. With this certificate, the interpreters will be able to interpret especially at civil offices, town halls, police stations, and at doctor's offices.

The Czech standard ČSN ISO 13611 regulation defines criteria and recommendation in community interpreting; however, this regulation merely provides recommendations rather than creating strict rules. The regulations contain a reason why there is a need for interpreters:

Given the diversity of our world... in which participants do not share a language are becoming more common. Community interpreting is a means by which service providers can ensure that the same access to quality of

¹⁹ Brooke Townesley, "Interpreting in the UK community: some reflections on public service interpreting in the UK," *Language and Intercultural Communication* 7 (2) (2008): page 163-171, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2167/laic272.0>

²⁰"Rekvalifikační kurz pro odbornou veřejnost - Komunitní tlumočení ve styku s cizinci a menšinami," *Lingua*, Last accessed March 25, 2017, <http://www.lingua.ff.cuni.cz/>

²¹"Tlumočnické kurzy ČRV pro odbornou veřejnost letní semestr 2016/2017," *Lingua*, last accessed March 25, 2017, <http://linguaczv-public.ff.cuni.cz/>

services is offered to all linguistic communities, regardless of their culture of language'. (translation of the author of the thesis)²²

What is more, the regulation also mentions that interpretation and translation are different services.

Every country has its own Code of Ethics or Codes of Practices²³ which states that the interpreter shall interpret faithfully and truly, without adding extra information, omitting information or changing anything that has been said.

INT4 'I often see that interpreters do not realize that they make mistakes, especially when it comes to describing sequences of events or when they use the wrong tense. By changing the sequence of events, the emphasis inherently changes as well.'

The National Register of Public Service Interpreters (further on NRPSI), published their own Codes of practices, where it is emphasized that an interpreter *shall not enter into discussions, give advice or express opinions, or react to any of the parties that exceed their duties as interpreters* (NRPSI, 2011: 5. 5.9).²⁴

The Codes of Ethics or Codes of practices have similar recommendations, such as for the interpreters not interfere in the communication, remain impartial, refrain from judgement.

²² Jiří Hrázdil, "ČSN ISO 13611. *Tlumočnické služby - Směrnice pro komunitní tlumočení*," *Normy.biz*, last accessed February 13, 2017. <https://shop.normy.biz/detail/97922#nahled>

²³ In Austria: Universitas Austria. Downloadable file: http://www.universitas.org/uploads/media/UNIVERSITAS_Code_of_professional_conduct_and_ethics_0117.pdf

Australian: AUSIT. Downloadable file: http://ausit.org/AUSIT/Documents/Code_Of_Ethics_Full.pdf

European Code. Downloadable file: http://www.fit-europe.org/vault/deont/European_Code_%20Professional_Practice.pdf

France: SFT. <http://www.fit-ift.org/sft/>

In UK: ITI. <http://www.iti.org.uk/become-a-member/code-of-professional-conduct>

²⁴ "Code of Professional Conduct," *National Register of Public Service Interpreters*, Last accessed April 4, 2017, <http://www.nrpsi.org.uk/downloads/CodeofConduct07.pdf>

5. Non-Professional Interpreters and Translator

To call themselves an interpreter or translator, one does not need any official certificate. Czech jurisdiction does not state anywhere that an interpreter or translator has to have a formal education, with the exception of court interpreters.

The public does not seem to see a need for the interpreter or translator to have a proper education in the field, as long as they have an adequate knowledge of the language(s). Civil workers may find themselves in situations where the other party has an 'interpreter' who is a child or a young adult, interpreting for their family members.

The problem with these non-professionals is that they may sometimes unknowingly accept work for a lower fee than a trained interpreter, which can cause troubles because the demand on the part of companies or clients for translators and interpreters working for a low price exists as a reaction to these non-professionals. It is becoming more common for institutions to ask their employees to have knowledge of at least another foreign language and, when needed, act as interpreters. This situation gives rise for mediators to preserve their position in the community.

The problems of non-trained interpreters offering their services may be seen not only in the verbal aspect, where nuances may not be grasped and appropriately interpreted to the client, but it may also be dangerous for the client if the interpreter does not interpret everything that has been said or certain cultural differences are not interpreted. A trained interpreter, on the other hand, is fully aware of his role and knows how to deal with certain situations that might be impossible or, at least, extremely difficult for an amateur to handle properly.

6. The Issue of Non-verbal communication

NVC is defined as communication without words; it includes apparent behaviours such as facial expressions, eye contact, touching and tone of voice, as well as less obvious messages such as dress, posture and spatial distance between two or more major people.²⁵ NVC is part of our everyday communication even without us realizing it; just as language in the narrow sense of the word, even NVC might differ from culture to culture and require certain amount of interpreting skills; while in most European countries, for instance, nodding means agreement, whereas in Bulgaria, it means disagreement.

The reason why NVC may be of a focus is because expressing certain concepts solely by means of words may be difficult; using gestures and mimic is easier and often universal. As mentioned above, nodding is in most countries understood as an agreement, a puzzled look on a foreigner's face is a possible indication for him being lost, tears show either sadness or happiness, and so on. Another reason why we may concentrate on NVC is the fact that it cannot often be controlled, it is intuitive. NVC is stated to have some basic properties: *universality, simultaneity, spontaneity and iconicity*.²⁶ NVC can be used to express several messages at once, unlike verbal language, which is in many respects more restricted.

Body language can be used as an indicator of the health or psychical state of the person; if one sits too upright, rigid – he/she is very cautious; finger or foot tapping may suggest nervousness. Avoiding eye contact can be interpreted as hiding something or may in some cases be interpreted as a sign of disrespect (or, on the contrary, respect). Vargas-Urpi also mentions in her article that according to Hickson, Stack and Moore (2013: 342)²⁷ NVC conveys 60–70% of the information in communication.

Vargas-Urpi has paid special attention to nonverbal communication, and during interviews, she also asked several questions about it.

²⁵ Tricia S. Jones. "What is Nonverbal Communication," *Nonverbal Communication for Educators*, Last accessed February 4, 2017,

http://www.crededucation.org/resources/nonverbal_communication/what_is_nonverbal_communication.html

²⁶ Mireia Vargas-Urpi, "Coping with Nonverbal Communication in Public Service Interpreting with Chinese Immigrants," *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 42:4 (2013) : 340-360, accessed February 4, 2017, DOI: 10.1080/17475759.2013.838985.

²⁷ Tricia S. Jones. "What is Nonverbal Communication," *Nonverbal Communication for Educators*, Last accessed February 4, 2017,

http://www.crededucation.org/resources/nonverbal_communication/how_does_nvc_differ_from_language.html

In her article “Coping with Nonverbal Communication in Public Service Interpreting with Chinese Immigrants”,²⁸ Vargas-Urpi mentions that *scarce attention has been paid to NVC from an intercultural perspective or to the strategies interpreters employ when dealing with culturally different nonverbal cues* (Vargas-Urpi, 2013: 341). She presupposes that NVC may be culturally conditioned; therefore, differences may come to surface during interpreting sessions, where the role of the interpreter may shift from simply just being an interpreter to the role of a mediator. The reason for the potential change in roles is the fact that both interpreter and mediator are familiar with the culture of both attending parties, whereas the official may not know about the cultural background of the migrant.

Vargas-Urpi realized that there was a significant difference in NVC between people in Catalonia and the Chinese since the Catalans widely use gestures, especially hand gestures and eye to eye contact when communicating to someone face to face. The Chinese, on the other hand, along with many other Asian cultures, prefer to be more subdued and try to ‘save their face’ in conversations. To save one’s face refers to one’s reputation or the image which others have of him/her. The goal of saving face is to keep harmony in the group or, in this case, in the interaction with representatives of either the institution or the state.

I believe that there is also a difference in the NVC between the Czech majority and Vietnamese minority. Being a member of the community enabled me to observe the way how Vietnamese communicate without actually saying anything. I observed that some Vietnamese often smile and nod along in a conversation with a member of the majority, even though they did not understand everything that I was told afterwards. Reason for not admitting not understanding is as mentioned above, not wanting to lose face. I was wondering whether the interpreters and intercultural mediators that I interviewed share the same opinion as I do and as Vargas-Urpi came to. Therefore all interviewees were asked the question, whether they noticed some different NVC when interpreting for their client or not.

²⁸ Mireia Vargas-Urpi, “Coping with Nonverbal Communication in Public Service Interpreting with Chinese Immigrants,” *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 42:4 (2013) : 340-360, accessed February 4, 2017, DOI: 10.1080/17475759.2013.838985.

INT4 mentions that it is difficult to generalize whether the Vietnamese have certain NVC that are more often seen in the minority when compared with other minorities.

IM2, however, agrees with Vargas-Urpi that the Vietnamese definitely hide their emotions; they would rather feign understanding than admit to not understanding something.

An often mentioned example when interpreting for Asians is that Asian very often smile so to show that they are open and polite, even when it may be seen as inappropriate. To ensure that the representative of the state or a civic employee does not misunderstand the smile, the IM or PSI explains to the public official that his or her client is not smiling because the situation is amusing, but because it is deemed impolite in their culture not to smile. The IM/PSI also explains to their client why the interpreter intervened and explains why the official misunderstood the smile. INT1 also mentions that sometimes she steps out of her role as an interpreter and becomes an IM. She gave an example of a concrete case where the client kept nodding to everything that was said, but she felt that the client did not understand what was being said. She asked the client if he understood everything and her intuition did not fail her because the client indeed did not understand but thought it would be impolite to ask during the meeting for clarification. INT1 pointed out to the client that in these situations, the client can ask question – it is even welcome because if he does not show initiative, he may struggle in the future if he were to deal with the situation on his own. INT1 herself realized that she had stepped out of her role and apologized to both sides for doing so. We can see than that both the interpreter and intercultural mediator can be an active party in the communication.

7. Integration

In November 2004, the European Union's Justice and Home Affairs Council adopted the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU. These principles define the foundations of the EU initiatives in the field of integration.²⁹

Integration is a process of integrating immigrants into the society of the hosting country. It is a complex process which is often described as a *dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States*.³⁰

In 2005, a common framework for the integration of third-country nationals³¹ was defined by the European Commission. The competences to implement the basic principles for integration lie in each of the Member States. However, the European Commission has other agendas which support the Basic Principles, as including offering various mechanisms to promote integration.

7.1. Integration in the Czech Republic

The basis of integration in the Czech Republic is based on 15 statutes, which ensure equal access and opportunities for migrants and define an active role of the state in ensuring a successful integration of migrants. Furthermore, the state also has to be active in fighting illegal migration and their illegal actions to ensure safety of its population (Resolution 2005: 12).³²

On April 1, 2004 the integration of migrants fell into the scope of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, four years later by the Resolution No. 979 of 23rd July 2008 the coordination role was transferred back to the Ministry of the Interior.³³ The concept of integration of foreigners has been adopted by the Resolution of the

²⁹ "The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU," *European Economic and Social Committee*, Last accessed January 10, 2017, http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/common-basic-principles_en.pdf

³⁰ "Eu actions to make integration work," *European Commission*, last modified June 6, 2016, last accessed January 10, 2017. <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/main-menu/eus-work/actions>

³¹ "A Common Agenda for Integration," *Eur-lex*. Last accessed January 3, 2017, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52005DC0389&from=EN>

³² "Koncepce integrace cizinců v roce 2005 a její další rozvoj," (annual report, MPSV, 2005), page 12. <http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/2604/koncepce.pdf>

³³ "Integration of Foreign Nationals in the Territory of the Czech Republic," *Ministry of the interior of the Czech Republic*, last modified June 3, 2016, last accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/integration-of-foreign-nationals-in-the-territory-of-the-czech-republic.aspx>

Government of the Czech Republic No. 1266 of December 1, 2000³⁴. The government realized that the integration of foreigners is a complex issue.

The government has to annually publish reports on their implementation of the concept. The 2005 report on the Concept of integration of Foreigner introduces the concept in integration, changes in the present Concept of integration of foreigners, deals with the issue of illegal migration and other illegal activities; the fight against the aforementioned issues is one of the aims of the 2005 resolution. A milestone in the integration appeared 2011 by ‘Aktualizovaná koncepce Integrace cizinců’ (An Updated Concept of the Integration of Foreigners. Translation of the author of the thesis). The resolution from 2012 responds to the 2011 Updated Concept of the Integration of Foreigners. The 2012 resolution states that, for an effective immigration, a successful integration needs to take place (2012: 6).³⁵

The most recent Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic, No.11, has been passed on January 9, 2017.³⁶ The resolution states on which fields the government has to focus their attention. According to the document, the areas of integration policy are: knowledge of the Czech language, economic and social self-sufficiency, orientation of foreigners in the Czech society, awareness-raising, ensuring that the relations between immigrants and the majority society is peaceful, and a focus on the integration on the local and regional level (2017: 2).

The representatives of NGOs who offer interpreting and translation services to the members of minorities have mentioned that the Ministry of Interior is more supportive, although there are problems with financing.³⁷

³⁴“Usnesení Vlády České republiky,” *Vláda České republiky*, Last accessed April 10, 2017,

https://kormoran.vlada.cz/usneseni/usneseni_webtest.nsf/0/92EB0C1957A6DAECC12571B600709317

³⁵ “Postup při realizaci aktualizované Koncepce integrace cizinců, Společné soužití 2012,” *Vláda České republiky*, last accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/file/usneseni-vlady-cr-ze-dne-4-1-2012-c-6-k-postupu-pri-realizaci-kic-pdf.aspx>

³⁶ “Postup při realizaci aktualizované Koncepce integrace cizinců Ve vzájemném respektu 2017,” *Vláda České republiky*, last accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.mvcr.cz/soubor/postup-pri-realizaci-aktualizovane-koncepce-integrace-cizincu-ve-vzajemnem-respektu-2017-usneseni-vlady-c-11-ze-dne-9-ledna-2017.aspx>

³⁷ Interview with IM2.

8. Interpreters, Intercultural mediators and gatekeepers

When it comes to interpreting in the sphere of public service, there are several roles an interpreter may assume. I would like to mention the main two of these roles and then mention one last one, which is special, since the role of a mediator or sometimes gatekeeper is not present in every community.

Who or what is an interpreter? There is a widespread misconception that any bilingual person could be an interpreter. Many clients, therefore, hire people whom they know to be able to speak both necessary languages. Very often members of a community, in this case of the Vietnamese community, turn to their children, who grew up in the Czech Republic and have a knowledge of the language to interpret for them. The reason for why many members turn to their family members or friends for interpreting services has to do with the issue of trust. Many Vietnamese tend to trust a person from their own country to interpret what they say more accurately than a person of another ethnicity. Even IM2 and IM1 and INT1 agreed with these views, having seen the Vietnamese (or in IM1's case the Ukrainians) preferring 'their own people' to do the interpreting, because otherwise they would have feared losing of their face if they had to share their problems with a foreigner.

An interpreter is a person who is able to speak his own mother-tongue and at least one foreign tongue at an expert level and is able to switch between each language code; knows interpreting techniques and the code of ethics; knows that his role is that of a third, neutral party and that he is a medium that breaks down the language barrier between the two parties. Interpreting involves more than just switching between language codes – the interpreter does not just convert the message. Pöchhacker also mentions memes in his book *Introducing Interpreting Studies*, he admits that memes *are used in relation to Chesterman's account of Memes of Translation* (2004: 56).³⁸ Pöchhacker states he has 5 memes of interpreting: 1) processing activity, 2) communicative activity. 3) verbal transfer, 4) making sense, and finally 5) cognitive information processing skills.

The first meme, processing activity is the first mentioned by Pöchhacker for the reason, that interpreting is viewed mostly as a process. Where input is being

³⁸ Franz Pöchhacker, *Introducing interpreting studies* (London: Routledge, 2004), page 56 -60

transformed into output. Generally, the input and output are described as a verbal, however further in this it is seen that this view is not always correct.

The second meme is the communicative activity. Communicative activity is mentioned because the processing activity is done by a person for another person thus creating a communication is a concrete situation. This combines not only the verbal part but also the listening part. Hand in hand with the communicative activity is the third meme, of making sense, *which conceptualizes the interpreter's task as grasping the intended meaning (sense) of the original speaker and expressing it for listeners in another language* (Pöchhacker. 2004: 57). This third meme has been for a long time considered as the main role of the interpreter, which is a very basic and almost naive way of understanding the role of the interpreter.

Second to last meme, making sense, Pöchhacker stresses the context and previous knowledge on the topic. To be able to make sense, the interpreter has to be a listener and producer of the speech. *If the interpreter's mission is to enable understanding, s/he must adapt the message to the audience's prior knowledge* (2004: 60).

Cognitive information processing skill includes cognitive skills such as 'speech recognition, memory storage and verbal output generation' (Pöchhacker. 2004: 57). We can see that the interpreter not only has to recognise the language he is working with, he should recall from his memory the register of the topic and produce the same output in the target language. One of the supermemes is that the interpreter produces the verbal output, however that is not correct, since the target output does not have to be verbal, such as in the cases of interpreting for the deaf the output is either in a sign language or tactile signing (where the interpreter converts the message by dotting the palm of the client).

To summarize shortly, the interpreter ensures an effective communication between two parties, has to grasp correctly the sense and be able to convey the sense in the target language. The interpreter should remain impartial and unbiased. He has a code of ethics to abide by and has to treat both parties with respect.

8.1. Intercultural mediator

There is a distinction between an intercultural mediator and an intercultural assistant. For the definition of these terms, I have consulted the *Czech-English glossary for intercultural work* which has been published by InBáze in 2014 in cooperation with a number of authors.³⁹

Intercultural assistance is ‘a service offered to migrant, mainly by non-governmental organisation, which provides assistance in communication and dealing with authorities... and helps overcome social and cultural barriers (e.g. interpreting)’(2014: 15).

Intercultural worker ‘provides assistance (including interpreting) in dealings between migrants and public institutions, encourages coexistence between the majority and migrants, helps migrants and migrant communities integrate into the majority society’(2014: 177).

Intercultural mediation is defined as *method of intervention of a third party (mediator), focused on preventing and resolving a conflict by achieving mutual understanding* (2014: 83).

The definition of a mediator is following: *a professional trained in preventing and resolving conflict. He/She is impartial, independent and bound to confidentiality* (2014: 85).

An intercultural mediator: *an expert on facilitating communication geared towards preventing and solving disputes and in negotiations with persons from different culture* (2014: 85).

Finally, a community interpreter is, according to the *Glossary*, a synonym for a social interpreter, who *facilitates communication between institutions with regards to the social and cultural background of the parties* (2014: 263). The Czech Republic does not have any regulation on required qualification for community interpreters.

³⁹ Eva Dohnalová et al., *Česko-anglický slovník pro interkulturní práci: Czech-English glossary for intercultural work* (Praha: InBáze, 2014) pages 83-85, 236.

Interculturality is defined as an *interaction of people from different cultures*.⁴⁰ The aim of intercultural work is supporting migrants in becoming more independent on other members from their community; intercultural work encompasses encouraging public institutions to cooperate with migrants. Intercultural workers and work offer professional serve to break down the language and socio-cultural barriers that hinder migrants from fully integrating into the majority society.

The focus of intercultural work and, consequently, intercultural mediators is enabling and ensuring communication and mutual understanding between a majority and migrants who move to the hosting country. Intercultural workers/mediators try to present a legal way of welcoming and integrating migrants; they try to replace non-professional interpreters and gatekeepers.

Multiculturalism can be seen as a reflection of interculturalism. Interculturalism has also been seen in the non-profit sector of the state, and is concerned with situations when members of two different cultures come to contact.⁴¹ If there is no attempt to eliminate the language barrier, different cultural and social backgrounds of various groups of people living in one country may in future or in the long run lead to conflicts.

Palaščáková mentions intercultural mediation as something separate from intercultural work (2014: 55) with the explanation that in the Czech Republic, the word mediation bears a possibly different connotation than in does in other countries. Palaščáková cites Carlos Giménez Romero's definition of intercultural mediation, which he published in his book "La naturaleza de la mediación intercultural" published in 1997:

Intercultural mediation may be understood as an intervention by a third party, especially in a situation when multiculturalism is present. The aim of mediation is, therefore, to create respect towards the other party, bring both parties closer, communication, mutual understanding ... regarding

⁴⁰ "How are culture and interculturality different?" *Learn NC*, last accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/linguafolio/6125>

⁴¹ Dita Palaščáková ed. *Formování profese interkulturní pracovník/pracovnice: zahraniční zkušenosti, praxe a vzdělávání v ČR* (Praha: InBáze, 2014), page: 55.

parties of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Translation of the author of the thesis).⁴²

Intercultural mediation aims at preventing conflicts in situations when the parties come from different background. Its intentions is to find alternative strategies to solve cultural conflicts via communication.

On the website descubrimomento.de,⁴³ I have come across a text entitled “Interkulturelle Kommunikationskonflikte in polizeilichen Vernehmungen mit Migranten” (Conflicts in Intercultural Communication at Police Hearings. Translation of the author of the thesis), where the author Nicole Schaupke describes situations when foreigners are taken to police stations. Although the article focuses on the situation in Germany, I believe that some general ideas are applicable to the Czech Republic as well. First, the author states that the mutual understanding is a key in communication; stereotypes, on the other hand, present a hindrance in communication. When migrants are taken to police stations, the officers deal firstly with the language barrier; intercultural communication, however, does not deal only with language problems, because second- or third-generation migrants, who grow up in the hosting country which is for them their homeland, are able to speak the language of the majority, since it is either their first or second mother tongue.

The German article mentions the author Gregor Sterzenbach, who, in his article “Aspekte der interkulturellen Praxis zwischen Polizei und Fremden” (Aspects of intercultural practice between the police and foreigners. Translation of the author of the thesis),⁴⁴ affirms that there are problems in communication between representatives of the state and migrants.

Mutual understanding is not based solely on the verbal aspect, but there is a need for an understanding of the roles of the participants in the specific situation, as

⁴² Romero C. Gimenez, “La naturaleza de la mediación intercultural” *Migraciones* n° 2, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, Madrid, 1997 quoted in Dita Palašáková, *Formování profesí interkulturní pracovník/pracovnice: zahraniční zkušenosti, praxe a vzdělávání v ČR* (Praha: InBáze, 2014), page: 55.

⁴³ Schaupke, Nicole, “Interkulturelle Kommunikationskonflikte in polizeilichen Vernehmungen mit Migranten,” *descubrimomento*, last accessed April 22, 2015, <http://www.descubrimomento.de/2011/09/interkulturelle-kommunikationskonflikte-in-polizeilichen-vernehmungen-mit-migranten/>

⁴⁴ Gregor Sterzenbach, “Aspekte der interkulturellen Praxis zwischen Polizei und Fremden“. *Zuwanderung und Integration* 16 (2004) : page 297.

well as an understanding of the situation that they find themselves in. For the migrants to understand that the state is not automatically against the migrant.

The author further mentions that non-natives are in an inferior position in such hearings, because the migrants are not able to express in words what they want/seek. To counterbalance the situation, an interpreter is called into the hearings to assist. The author refers to Ute Donk and her work *Strukturelle Probleme in der Vernehmung nicht deutschsprachiger Beschuldigter* (Structural problems in questioning non-German speaking accusers. Translation of the author of the thesis), in which Donk wrote that, before the beginning the questioning, the roles of each party have to explained. Which includes that the interpreter to introduces him or herself and explain their role.

To minimize any potential problems, the author recommends that police officers educate themselves on the topic of interculturalism in order to be more sensible towards intercultural conflicts. The issue of trust comes up, because police officers need to be able to fully trust the interpreter to do his or her job well and to be sure that what the foreigner says is also properly interpreted. To gain the trust of police officers, the author recommends a long time cooperation between interpreters and police officers, as well as further education of interpreters in the field of criminal law. This can already be seen in the Czech departments for asylum and migration, because intercultural workers have their own small offices there, where foreigners can come to inform themselves, or police officers ask these workers to interpret when the situation calls for it.

Some of the issues and conflicts which minorities and the majority may have between each other can be solved rather quickly, such as the language barrier; however, the cultural differences and deeply rooted cultural values are often difficult to overcome. These will take a long time, because ignorance about these may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts.

8.2. The Differences Between an Interpreter and Intercultural Mediator

Whether an interpreter and an intercultural mediator differ from each other and how, is a matter of discussion of many linguists and there is no universally accepted conclusion. Franz Pöchhacker, for example, says that every interpreter is a mediator; however, he also adds that the interpreter is a mediator between the language and culture. He emphasises that while every interpreter is a mediator, not every mediator is an interpreter. David Katan in his book *Translating Cultures* compares the role of interpreters and cultural mediators and concludes that in the future interpreters as well as translators will have to take on some of the functions of the mediator. Katan emphasizes that the interpreter has to be very careful in the cross-cultural communication, because when interpreter does mediate, s/he then takes on an active role in the communication.⁴⁵

Intercultural mediation can take place in any situation where the attending parties are of a different cultural or social background. The client and the representative of the state very often come from different cultural background, which entails different norms and traditions and values, sometimes even different levels of education. The IM may or may not come from the same background as the client; however, as mentioned before, members of minorities do prefer to have an interpreter or an IM of the same cultural background.

Vargas-Urpi has mentioned this in her study *Public service interpreting for Chinese immigrants in Catalonia*. She mentions that intercultural mediation is a broad term and discusses different opinions on interpreters and IM (2014: 477).

Vargas-Urpi suggests that an interpreter becomes an intercultural mediator when he/she *provides cultural information to help build a mutual understanding and overcome cultural barriers* (2014: 477). In their *The community interpreter*, Marjory Bancroft and Lourdes Rubio-Fitzpatrick mention that the interpreter has three responsibilities: *interpreting, mediation and mediation outside the session*

⁴⁵ David Katan, *Translating cultures: an introduction for translators, interpreters and mediators*. 2nd ed. (Manchester, St. Jerome, 1999), page 13

(2011: 185).⁴⁶ By mediation, they mean that the interpreter asks whether his or her client understood cultural references; mediation outside the session provides the client support and help with activities, such as making phone calls, making appointments, and others (Vargas-Urpi, 2014: 478).

Vargas-Urpi mentions ‘Giménez Romero, a Spanish author who considers PSI and IM to be two different professions.’ According to his definition, IM is an *intervention of third parties* (2014:478).⁴⁷ The intercultural mediator then tries to make the other party understand the cultural background of his/her client to ensure an effective communication. By trying to make the other party understand the cultural background, the interpreter aims at preventing potential conflicts which may arise from not understanding the culture of the opposite side in the dialogue. Both these roles share similarities and differences. One problematic field which both professions share is crossing the boundaries between professionalism and friendliness. Both an interpreter and an intercultural mediator spend a lot of time in the presence of their clients, making preparations, giving advice, meeting for the briefings and then the actual work.

As I have mentioned before, the Vietnamese prefer an interpreter or an IM from their own community since they feel that they can trust them more. However, this trust can be of a burden if the IM or interpreter is successful in helping their clients. For the IMs the client’s gratitude is more than enough. Members of the community see that they were helped and can trust these professionals and tend to turn to the workers more often, even with problems which do not fall into the framework of the worker, or call them late in the evening. It is flattering for the interpreter or IM to see they are trusted; however, they know that they have to draw the line. INT1, IM1 and IM2 have had such experience and each have their own way of dealing with the situation. IM2 says that she picks up the telephone; however, she assertively says that the caller is calling outside office hours and if he or she needs help, they should come or call during the office hours. IM2: ‘I ask

⁴⁶ Marjory A. Bancroft, and Lourdes Rubio-Fitzpatrick, *The community interpreter: professional interpreter training for bilingual staff and community interpreters*. 5th ed. (Columbia, MD: Culture and Language Press, 2011), page 185.

⁴⁷ Mireia Vargas-Urpi, “Problems and strategies in public service interpreting as perceived by a sample of Chinese-Catalan/Spanish interpreters,” *Perspectives* 24, no. 4 (2015) : 666-678, last accessed April 4, 2017., DOI: 10.1080/0907676X.2015.1069861

them whether it is a matter of life and death. If the answer is no, I ask them, politely but firmly, to come by tomorrow.’⁴⁸

IM1 and INT1 say they each have their way of ensuring that the clients do not overstep the boundaries. IM1 even said: ‘We need to show them that, although we are here to help them, we are not their friends. We all have our own tricks and tips that we have learned over the course of our work.’

IM2 says: ‘The Vietnamese pose the biggest challenge for me because they are such a closed off community. We can never guess what they are thinking. We work with many Vietnamese; however, we have not managed to become closer with the community. During my whole career, I have met only one good interpreter and only this one interpreter gave me the feeling that he/she actually is interpreting what I say. We sometimes have the feeling that the interpreters interpret their own opinions, advices. Since the Vietnamese language is so different from Czech, we cannot deal with this problem. And if it is not the case, where we suspect the interpreter to interpret his/her own opinion, another problem arises and that is that the interpreters also accepted money from the Vietnamese.’⁴⁹

As a Vietnamese, I have been able to be present at meetings / interviews of Vietnamese, where the client did not directly answer the question ask, but talked about different things that were not always related to the question. Some of the clients then personally admitted that the Vietnamese tend to avoid directly answering.

When IM1 and INT1 were asked about their experience on this matter and how do they deal with this situation, both admitted that sometimes they find themselves in situations, where their client does not actually answer directly but rather tells information that is sometimes irrelevant.

INT1 mentions that some Vietnamese tend to focus their attention to something not important, and they spend a lot of time giving a detailed explanation without creating the whole picture. INT1 in such cases interrupts the client and asks the question again. INT1: ‘That is the difference between us, community interpreters, and court interpreters. I asked them the question again and ask them to answer

⁴⁸ Quote from interview with IM2

⁴⁹ Quote from interview with IM2

directly to what has been asked about. Or, in cases when the story is not so long or completely about something else, I interpret what I view as important or what is the key information related to the case in progress.'

8.3. Interpreter as a “Gatekeeper”

The role of the interpreter is very often connected with the role of the gatekeeper.⁵⁰ Gatekeeping as a concept has been first introduced by psychologist Lewin in the 1950s⁵¹ later on it has been taken up on by others in various fields such as: journalism, psychology, sociology and interpreting/translation. A simple explanation of who a gatekeeper is can be best described in the example in journalism, where the gatekeeper is a person, who was given the task to filter out information, to choose which information will be published.⁵² In interpreting a gatekeeper is therefore someone who has the power to control information that will be passed on and regulate and control the flow of the communication. Gatekeeping therefore is associated with trust, power and control over the communication. As Wadensjö mentioned:

As do all professionalized intermediaries, interpreters work at providing a particular *service*. Simultaneously, they – of necessity – exercise a certain *control*. Obviously, there is a potential conflict between the service and the control aspects which sometimes surfaces in dilemmas reported in the literature on institutional communication. It largely remains to be investigated how this conflict is handled in institutional interpreter-mediated talk, where the gatekeeping is, in effect, doubled.⁵³

The concept of gatekeeping was also discussed by another author, Davidson,⁵⁴ who, in his book, wrote that interpreters are not always the impartial party in the communication but they are the *informational gatekeepers* who ensure that the participants of the communication are *on track* (Pöllabauer. 2000: 400).

In her article “Gatekeeping Practices in Interpreter Social Service Encounters”, Pöllabauer mentions that gatekeeping is not connected to interpreting or linguistics purely; the concept has been a topic in *communication*

⁵⁰ Stuart Soroka, “The Gatekeeping Function: Distributions of Information in Media and the Real World,” *The Journal of Politics* 74, no. 2 (2012) : 514-528, last accessed April 25, 2017, <http://www.snsoroka.com/files/GatekeepingJOP.pdf>

⁵¹ Pöllabauer, Sonja. “Gatekeeping Practices in Interpreted Social Service Encounters.” *Meta* 571 (2012): 213–234, last accessed February 5, 2017. DOI: 10.7202/1012750ar

⁵² “What is a media gatekeeper?” *Reference*, last accessed April 26, 2017, <https://www.reference.com/technology/media-gatekeeper-8ad05306bf88ea8c#>

⁵³ Cecilia Wadensjö, *Interpreting as Interaction*, (London/New York: Longman, 1998), pages 68-69

⁵⁴ Brad Davidson, “The interpreter as institutional gatekeeper.” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4, no. 3 (2009), pages 376-405

studies/journalism, law, political science, ... management, public affairs and ethnolinguistics (Pöllabauer, 2012: 216) All the studies that have been written on this topic focus on *controlling, selection, filtering and brokering of decision-making processes and the flow of information* (Barzilai-Nahon 2009: 3-9).⁵⁵. Despite there being so many studies on the subject, there is no unified definition of what gatekeeping is; furthermore, the lack of new theories or studies on gatekeeping keeps us from developing a clear concept of what gatekeeping is in the first place. Following Kurtz, Pöllabauer defines gatekeeping as follows: *Gatekeepers are persons who help people “gain access to resources needed to solve problems in one or more contexts”*.⁵⁶

As mentioned before, there have been a number of studies conducted and many papers written; however, Pöllabauer mentions one study that is often cited when the topic of gatekeeping and interpreting studies come up, namely Erickson and Shultz’s “The Counselor as Gatekeeper. Social Interaction in Interviews”.⁵⁷ Pöllabauer cites Erickson’s and Shultz’s definition of counsellor. By counsellors, the authors mean academic workers who are the *institutional gatekeepers* as they *have the responsibility and authority to make decisions about the social mobility of students. In the social service settings, social servants, bureaucrats, interviewers, and counsellors are the gatekeepers*⁵⁸.

That is because these civil servants are in the position to grant or withhold services, *their decision-making processes are based on specific institutional routines and regulations* (Pöllabauer. 2012: 217) This is the logic behind every decision, which has to be made in line with certain conventions and norms.

When a foreigner, immigrant or anyone who does not speak the language of the migrants, civil workers have to call for interpreters, who then may assume the role of gatekeepers. The reason for that is that “*Language*” is a *central element in gatekeeping* (Pöllabauer. 2012: 217). As gatekeepers receive information to

⁵⁵ Karine Barzilai-Nahon, “Gatekeeping: A Critical Review,” *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*. 43, no. 1 (2009), page 9 <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/aris.2009.1440430117/epdf>.

⁵⁶ Norman R. Kurtz, “Gatekeepers: Agents in Acculturation,” *Rural Sociology*. 33, no. 1 (1968), pages 64-70.

⁵⁷ Sonja Pöllabauer, “Gatekeeping Practices in Interpreted Social Service Encounters,” *Meta* 571 (2012), pages 213–234.

⁵⁸ Cited in Pöllabauer 2012

produce a message, language is used to give information and, consequently, to make decisions.

Pöllabauer mentions an example how in a situation with a Turkish citizen, who has no knowledge of German, an institutional worker, and the interpreter, there are several ‘*gates, where information is filtered, appears to be have been lost or whether it is not clear whether specific bits of information have passed the gate*’ (Pöllabauer. 2012: 225). She goes on analyzing the situation where the interpreter, who is a relative of the Turkish citizen, steps out of his role as the interpreter and does not explain to the institutional worker neither to his relative that the ‘interpreter’ stepped out of his role as an interpreter; it is also hinted that since the client and interpreter are related, the interpreter may have acted in favour of the client. The interpreter assumes an active role, stepping out of the role of the interpreter and may [*seem*] to view himself not as an interpreter, but rather as a *spokesperson* - meaning he becomes an *authority in transmitting certain information* (Pöllabauer: 2012: 227). As already stated, language may have given the interpreter the authority to become a gatekeeper. In this concrete case of the relative being the ‘interpreter’, the relative who did not speak the German was very much dependent on the ‘interpreter’. This is a controversial and risky situation, because gatekeepers *protect their own from outside influences* (1991: 326)⁵⁹ which complicates the situation for the civil worker or any person representing the state.

Three of my interviewees mentioned that the ‘gatekeepers’ of the Vietnamese community do the same. They try to keep the Vietnamese secluded from the majority so that they could exercise power over the members of the community. IM2 mentions that the organisation has problems finding good interpreters; a concrete example: ‘Even if we have a young interpreter, when an older interpreter tells them to stop doing their job, the young interpreter stops his cooperation. ... It happens in all communities, but in the Vietnamese community it is even more prominent that the Vietnamese will trust someone from their own country more than a person of a different race’.

⁵⁹Cheryl Metoyer-Durand, “Information-Seeking Behavior of Gatekeepers in Ethnolinguistic Communities: Overview of a Taxonomy,” *Library and Information Science Research* 13, no. 4 (1991) page 326.

To summarize, gatekeeping as a concept was first mentioned in the 1950s by the psychologist Lewin who observed how food consumption has been influenced by World War II. It has since then been studied in various fields, often associated in linguistics and journalism. By Barzilai-Nahon's definition gatekeeping is a *process of controlling information as it moves through gates or filter and is associated with exercising power* (2008: 1496)⁶⁰. Those gates can be the language skills of the interpreters, lack of professionalism on the part of the interpreter, meaning that the interpreter, for instance, uses written material, non-verbal communication, he is withholding information or stepping out of his role. The gatekeeper may, for various reasons, selectively choose information that he or she wants to transmit.

⁶⁰ Karine Barzilai-Nahon, "Toward a Theory of Network Gatekeeping: A Framework for Exploring Information Control," *Journal of the American Information Science and Technology* 59, no. 9 (2008): page 1496. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3e87/da50eb306ed6dc8326b2fd63c75aaf523c80.pdf>

8.4. Vietnamese Community Interpreters – Interpreters or Mediators?

In many communities living in a foreign country, a phenomenon of a ‘mediator’ exists. Mediator is a person of a high status, who has a good command of both languages and has many contacts that acquired over the time. These people are, in a way also, IMs, because they have knowledge of how the system in the host country works.

These mediators enjoy great authority because most migrants depend heavily on them, especially when they first arrive in the country. The mediator is often the first person whom they meet, apart from their family members. The mediator then takes it upon himself to help his fellow countryman. This is, of course positive, as one court interpreter said, ‘They do not do anything bad, one cannot put them all in one basket’.⁶¹ However, both the IMs and INT1 disagree with this opinion. They say that the mediator is the reason why it is so difficult for the members of the Vietnamese community to become more involved in the hosting country and its society. The mediator often takes over everything what his or her client should do and does it instead of them. IM2, too, disagrees with the services which these mediators offer, because ‘they take money for service which the authorities offer for free’.

IM2 gives an example: ‘He came in, with a passport and said that his children needed to be enrolled at school; however, I knew that this person had no children. When I confronted him with the fact, he admitted fairly quickly that it wasn’t for him, but for his brother. I had to tell him that if his brother needed help, he should have come.’

IM2 also mentions that it happens too often that the mediator has several clients who have to go, for example, to the OAMP (Department for Asylum and Migration Policy) The mediator collects all their personal IDs or passports and goes alone to the OAMP to deal with all the paperwork, while the clients either sit in the car waiting for him/her or they are at home or in the waiting room. If there is a need for a signature, the mediator goes and fetches the person whose signature is needed. Further on, IM2 says that the Ministry of Interior supports

⁶¹ Quote from interview with INT4

organisations which try to eliminate the work of those mediators. 'Because the OAMP has interpreters present at the branches, who will help the person fill out the documents. But the mediators threaten our interpreters because they steal their jobs.'

'This goes against our principle of work, where we try to encourage the Vietnamese to take matters in their own hands. We are there to help them, assist them; however, we do not do things instead of them. How else will he be able to do this stuff on his own?' Both IM1 and INT1 share this opinion. Their aim is to help the Vietnamese citizens to be more independent and be able to handle everyday situation on their own, without the need for an assistant. The mediator, in a certain way, takes away their potential independency. It is true that by doing everything for the citizen, the citizen does not feel a need to search for a contact with the majority population, since everything that needs to be done can be done by the mediator.

'This is also the negative side of mediator. They thrive on the fact that they can keep the Vietnamese citizens apart from the hosting community. Because, when the citizens do not interact with the majority, there will always be a demand for the services of mediators. Who demand high fees which the citizens pay without hesitation because they have not been taught otherwise. They are not aware of the fact that they can get advice and help from our office; they can even get consultations with experts in the presence of an interpreter. IM1 even goes so far as to call them 'mafia' – not in the Vietnamese community, however, but in the Ukrainian community. It is understandable why the IM would say so: the mediators are wilfully preventing minorities from receiving information, going even as far as threatening interpreters who dare to go against them, the mediators', decisions. IM2 suspects that the reason why some of the interpreters quit their job at the office is because they have been threatened; although they have not said it directly, the way they expressed themselves gave rise to the suspicion.

Vietnamese do not see any harm in using the services of these mediators, since, as mentioned before, the mediators enjoy a high status in the community. The members of the Vietnamese community assume that they are reliable because, otherwise, they would have not had a chance to be in the position. The Vietnamese

thus do not question the fact that there is a mediator. When the Vietnamese hear about the possibility of participating in various seminars or courses to learn the language, the older generation often declines the offer because their priorities are in the business.

IM3 mentions in the interview that the older members of the Vietnamese community do not go to these seminars/courses because they focus more on their businesses. Attending these, often free, courses would take away too much of their time. IM3 even mentioned that, if those people have children, they often depend on them as their interpreters, which is very problematic for the organisation and its workers because the NGO offers interpreting, IM and translation services. Implicitly saying there is no need to rely on children as interpreters when the parents can turn to the NGO. IM3 commented on that particular problem and gave a very general example, when a parents of a child comes to a teacher-parent conference, where the child acts as the interpreter; there is a high probability that the child will not say everything the teacher says. IM3 went on saying that, when the teacher criticizes or says something negative about the child, the child will keep it to themselves, since: 'No one wants to admit to someone else, they did something bad.'

IM3 does not often meet mediators, since her field is educational intercultural mediation, meaning that IM3 accompanies her clients to school together with an external interpreter. IM3 is there as a specialist who tries to overcome potential difficulties which the parties may face in a first time meeting. Despite this, IM3 says that mediators are not a positive phenomenon in the community, but did not elaborate.

Another interviewee (CLIN1), under the assurance of keeping them anonymous, told me that mediators often abuse the ignorance of their fellow countrymen, which goes hand in hand with what IM1 said. 'If you asked a Vietnamese who speaks Czech whether you can, for example, apply for a permanent residency, they would find you all the information and give it to you. However, if you were to ask a mediator whether you could apply for a permanent residency, they would tell you immediately that yes, without finding or looking up the information for you. Of course, it is implicitly said that it will not be cheap.'

CLIN1 gave examples of how the mediators use the unfamiliarity with the law of their countrymen. 'I know how to file for a Trade Certificate in my job. So I knew what to do, where to go and what papers to fill in. A colleague of mine did not know anything, so, of course, they turned to the mediator for help, whom everyone knew, because he enjoys the high position in the community. The mediator, of course, agreed to help, and told that colleague of mine that it would cost him 10 000 CZK. I knew that it cost only 5000 CZK; however, my colleague to this day firmly believes that a Trade Certificate would cost him 10 000 CZK. Do you know why it cost him 10 000 CZK? Because 5000 were for the authorities and 5000 were his [i.e., the mediator's] fee!'⁶²

The respondent was well aware of the difference between an interpreter and a mediator. Which makes it more interesting, since they admitted using the services both of an interpreter and a mediator. When asked whether they knew the difference between these two professions, the response was: 'An interpreter is someone who has a certificate from the official authorities. The mediator is someone who has the language skills, but does not have the certificate. They are the ones with many contacts, who can get you almost anywhere you want.'

When the interviewee, during our appointment, realised the full scope of my research and that it included the issue of mediators as well, they told me that if I were to ask other Vietnamese questions concerning mediators, I would not receive any answers; moreover, I could even risk that the interview would end after asking such questions. 'If you ask the mediator, whether he/she is an interpreter or a mediator, they will not answer you. They would say something along the lines of: I am just helping out my fellow friends.'

However, just as the court interpreter (INT4), another respondent (CLIN4) does not see the service which mediators offer as something negative either; 'I mean, is he not more effective and always on the side of the client? Even though it may sometimes be in conflict with the rules.'

⁶² Quoted from the interview with CLIN1

The Czech-Vietnamese society (CVS), posted on their website a link to the website of the Czech tabloid newspaper Blesk, which published an interview⁶³ with Marcel Winter, the chairman of the organisation. The topic of the interview was mediators, more specifically the issue of the ‘visa mafia’. The problem was that many students and workers were not able to receive their visa to travel to the Czech Republic to either study or work. The problem, according to Winter, lies in not being able to book an appointment at the Czech embassy. On the homepage of the CVS, Winter published an email which he had received from a Czech person living in Vietnam, describing the situation:

The mediators have it under their control. They state who goes when in line. ... I have tried to book an appointment via Visapoint, but it was impossible. ...The mediator told me that if I needed help to book an appointment via Visapoint, it would cost me 7000 dollars, without a guarantee of getting the money back, because the mediator cannot ensure receiving the visa. The guarantee and ensuring of having a job would cost an additional 8000 dollars. I couldn’t see how it was possible to book an appointment via Visapoint, so he he showed me on his phone and there the writing ‘Visapoint’ lighted green^{64,65}. (Translation of the author of the thesis)

Further in the article on blesk.cz, Irena Valentová, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, denies that there are problems with the Visapoint. Valentová states that only Vietnam, Ukraine and Mongolia experience capacity issues, because the demand for visas in these countries is exceedingly high. In other countries, the Visapoint system works.

⁶³ Veronika Šmídová, “Do Česka za 180 tisíc: Vízová mafie ‘rýžuje’ na cizincích, firmy si zoufají,” *Blesk*, last accessed March 11, 2017, <http://www.blesk.cz/clanek/zpravy-udalosti/453538/do-ceska-za-180-tisic-vizova-mafie-ryzuje-na-cizincich-firmy-si-zoufaji.html>

⁶⁴ Miloš Kusý, “Blesk.cz zveřejnil reportáž o vízové mafii ve Vietnamu,” *Česko-vietnamská společnost*, Last accessed April 20, 2017. <http://www.cvs-praha.cz/?p=2704>

⁶⁵ “Šéf Česko-vietnamské společnosti je v šoku. Toto si prý řekla mafie za to, že v ČR otevře konzulát.” *Parlamentní listy*, Last modified June 1, 2016, last accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/rozhovory/Sef-Cesko-vietnamske-spolecnosti-je-v-soku-Toto-si-pry-rekla-mafie-za-to-ze-CR-otevre-konzulat-438449>

There have been older news reporting on the problem of receiving a visa by bribe; on February 20, 2017, the Czech Television, in its programme ‘Reportéři ČT’, also reported on the problem of bribes.⁶⁶

At this point, I do not dare to make any assumption or even general summarising observations regarding the topic of mediators in the Vietnamese community, since still I have little information and the few interviews which I conducted present only a small fraction of all the workers in the intercultural mediation and interpreting sphere in the Czech Republic. To be able to reach more conclusive results, a nationwide survey would have to be conducted in order to receive data which could offer a more deeper insight into this issue.

⁶⁶ “Úplatky za vyřízení českých víz pro Ukrajince tečou do Polska,” *Česká televize*, last modified February 20, 2017, last accessed April 20, 2017, <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/svet/2040956-uplatky-za-vyrizeni-ceskych-viz-pro-ukrajince-tecou-do-polska>

9. The Issue of Trust between the Interpreter / Intercultural Mediator and the Client

In their studies, many authors have mentioned that trust plays a key role when it comes to interpreting. Rosalind Edwards emphasizes that power and trust are exercised on a daily basis, as *they are rooted in and emerge from exchanges between people* (Edwards, 2013: 505).⁶⁷ These concepts are relational, because to understand and see them, it is to compare power and trust in different roles of the communication, either whether it is the civil worker or interpreter or any third party to a communication. *Power is continually shifting around... as situations change. ... It is relayed in everyday practices in informal, implicit and unspoken ways.* (Edwards 2013: 505)

Misztal (as cited in Edwards 2013: 505) describes trust in the following way:

The concept of trust draws attention to the quality of social relationships between people and the obligations inherent in them, encompassing a belief about the way that other people will behave.⁶⁸

Trust involves overcoming gaps, doubts and ignorance. The gap may be larger or smaller, depending on the relationship which the person has with the partner; with family members and friends, the gap is of course smaller.

In the case of interpreters and IMs, the gap may over the time become smaller or sometimes, it is inherently smaller, as INT1 mentioned: ‘They tend to trust me more easily, since I am Vietnamese.’ This confirms Edwards’s notion that research assistants as gatekeepers drawn from the group who is the focus of research commonly are assumed to be ‘insiders’ in the research literature. That is, they are thought to be part of and know the community; and have established relationships of acceptance, trust and empathy... (Edwards 2013: 508)

⁶⁷ Rosalind Edwards, “Power and trust: an academic researcher’s perspective on working with interpreters as gatekeepers,” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 16, no. 6 (2013), pages 503-514, last accessed October 20, 2016, DOI: 10.1080/13645579.2013.823276

⁶⁸ Barbara Misztal, *Trust in Modern Societies: The Search for the Bases of Social Order* (Cambridge: Policy Press, 1996), quoted in Rosalind Edwards, “Power and trust: an academic researcher’s perspective on working with interpreters as gatekeepers,” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 16, no. 6 (2013), page 505.

Further on she states that research assistants make use from their network of connections, which enabled them to successfully conduct the interviews. Some assistants mention that their 'belonging' in the community has been a benefit, since it could have proven to be difficult to conduct interviews in some institutions, for example in community centres. Because people get suspicious of a person they have not heard of wanting to conduct an interview.

In literature, there is a common recommendation to establish a neutral situation, when the interpreter is invisible. An arrangement fulfilling this need is the triangular seating. The triangular seating ensures that both parties of the communication see eye to eye. To ensure that it is as neutral as possible, the interpreter should interpret in the first person. However, as INT1 mentioned: 'I had failed the test to be a certified interpreter, because I did not interpret in the first person. I still do not do it, because it confuses not only me, but the client as well. I prefer to specify who speaks, as in "He says...".'

In her paper, Edwards states that it had happened to her that the interviewees 'place the interpreter as a gatekeeper to another gatekeeper, to someone who they believed could exercise some power and influence on their behalf' (2013: 507).

The power and trust relations are, as mentioned above, fluid and multifaceted. They shift at different stages. Researchers are very much dependent on interpreters/gatekeepers in situations where the community is very much closed off and it is difficult to reach it from the outside. Power is 'inherent in the interpreter/research assistants' gatekeeping relations with their hard-to-reach community that researches wish to utilise' (Edwards 2013: 512).

Communities are not entirely homogenous and consensual, and trust is contingent and variable. ... People leverage power to attempt to reduce doubt and enhance trust, and claim trust to leverage power. (Edwards 2013: 512)

Trust may be seen as a double edged sword because once the client trusts his interpreter/IM, the line between professionalism and friendship may blur for him (the client). Clients often seek help or advice from the interpreter/IM or mediator even during interpretations. I asked my respondents what they do in such cases and whether it happens. INT1 and IM1 both agree that it does happen. INT1: 'I

interrupt them, tell them that I am not the specialist in the field. I am only an interpreter and my job is to convey the message. Sometimes this can lead to the client not wanting to talk about it anymore. But more often than not, they accept the fact and ask me “Can you than tell her...”. The client needs to realize what our role is; that we are not lawyers, experts in the field or social worker. That any questions the client has have to be directed to the “expert”.’ IM1 adds: “Another thing is that we do not want to take over the responsibility of the client. He represents himself.”

It is possible to imagine that this may be the reason why mediators and interpreters of the same nationality as their clients are more successful in gaining trust of their client.

The topic of trust also opens up the topic of lying on the part of the client.

IM1: ‘People do lie, but that is not because they are bad people; I think it may be that they do not feel comfortable. They are afraid. They do not trust us. The IM has to understand this; the client does not want to cause problems, he is just afraid. We do not have any evidence to prove that they are lying, so we cannot say, yes, the client lied to us. But sometimes it is a gut feeling. And we have to trust our gut feeling. We need to remind the client that he is speaking to a social worker or lawyer, where the notification obligation does not apply.’

IM1 explains to the client that what has been said will be kept confidential; they assure the client that honesty is the best way to reach the goal, because only when what has been said is true, they are able to help him/her. IM1 says that her colleagues understand this and, in sessions, they try to explain this to the client. They do not, however, pressure the client to say the truth; instead, they are constantly assuring the client that it is a safe environment.

INT1 has not experienced yet that a client would lie, ‘they do keep things to themselves, but with time it all comes to the surface’.

Both IM1 and INT1 say that keeping things to themselves or not saying the truth can in some cases have a negative impact on the situation or even dangerous consequences, it all depends on the circumstances.

Trust may be gained more easily when interpreters or IM are from the same country, and even more, when it comes to communities which are rather dependent on their interpreters, IMs or mediators. It often happens that the client forgets that the interpreter is someone who offers his/her services and, after the job is done, there is no further social connection. Vietnamese, when they have a positive experience with someone's work, tend to rely on, and turn to, those people more; it can happen that the client, when they have a phone contact, turn to the interpreters/IMs even after their work hours. INT1 adds: 'Yes, at the beginning I had this problem. My Arabic colleague as well. But we all have our tricks and tips how to prevent this from happening. After a consultation, we leave the room a while after the client leaves. We try to create a distance. Because there is the possibility, when you leave together, that you go in the same direction together and the client starts chatting to you about personal life and asks questions that can be troublesome. When this happens, the worker has to try to calmly explain the client his role.'

IM1 adds that if the worker is a professional, these situations do not happen because the IM is supposed to describe his/her role before entering a consultation.

IM2: 'There are certain kinds of clients who do not have anyone and when they meet someone who is kind and helpful, they become attached to that worker. The social worker or IM has then the responsibility to clarify the situation. I had to tell my colleague who is Mongolian to advise her clients that they need to start learning Czech because they constantly called her to ask her to accompany them to the bank or a shop.'

10. Organisations Offering Interpreting Services for Minorities

There are several NGOs in the Czech Republic that offer interpreting and mediating services to minorities. I will shortly introduce four organisations; META o.p.s., MOST PRO o.p.s., Klub Hanoi SEA-liasion, and ICP, because I have had the chance to interview workers from these concrete organisations. There are a number of other organisations, for example InBáze, SLovo21, Charita, and more, that offer interpreting and mediating services, but I will focus on those, with whose workers I had a chance to talk.

10.1. META o.p.s.

META is an NGO established in 2004, which focuses mainly on mediation and supporting foreigners to get equal opportunities in education and at the workplace. META helps not only individual immigrants who seek out their help, but also offers support and courses to educators, teachers and schools attended by immigrant children.

According to IM3, the organisation consists of two sections: the first helps foreigners with their everyday struggles when coming to a new country, the second being responsible for the educational part; it offers help to teachers, who deal with foreign children in their classrooms. The departments//sections are at separate addresses in Prague.

The organisation helps schools with problems which they may encounter when a foreign student attends a class; they educate the teachers about the cultural differences that may occur, explain to them how to respond to potential situations. Another service offered by the organisation is creating educational systems to encompass all the needs of all the pupils or students and to develop the potential of those pupils or students. META, just like other organisations, offers courses and seminars for educators and language courses, helping members of minorities to integrate more easily into the society; they publish booklets presenting their goals, aims and future projects and have published a comic about the struggles of a migrant called *Jednou se zase setkáme, Sanam (We Shall Meet Again, Sanam.*

2015)⁶⁹. This comic has been a subject of vivid discussions, because it was (and still is) very topical and aroused many comments and responses, both positive and negative. The organisation's employee whom I met has even told me in the interview that the organisation has received many backlashes, even threatening phone calls .

META has their own house assistants who help migrant students in their studies at school; however, that comes with problems. IM3: 'The teachers do not understand quite that the assistant is there for the child, helping him or her understand what is going on. Sometimes it has even happened that the teacher asked our assistant to create a test for the pupil and grade it because the teacher did not have a special test for the pupil. Another assistant mentioned that she was asked to give the pupil the final grade on their report card at the end of the academic year, because "you know their abilities."' So the assistant had to explain that this definitely was not within their scope of her work'.

10.2. MOST PRO o.p.s.

Most Pro is an NGO situated in the Pardubice region and provides help to foreigners. IM2: 'We help all foreigners, regardless of their residency status or where they come from. We have several core activities. One of the main one is providing social advice; we offer education for foreigners, mainly children but adults as well. We focus mostly on children because we believe it is most important for the child to be able to integrate into society – at school, with their peers – and to receive education without having to struggle with language or cultural barriers.'

Their organisation's services are for free. They include consultations for foreigners (especially in the social sphere), and interpreting services in the following languages: Polish, Mongolian, Vietnamese, Russian, and Bulgarian; their workers may take on the role of an assistant for foreigners at a doctor's appointment, at school or at offices. Further on, Most Pro offers afterschool activities in Multiklub pod Mostem, where children and adults may learn Czech,

⁶⁹ Oskar Ekman, *Jednou se zase setkáme, Sanam: příběh o cestě za svobodou*. (Praha: META, o.p.s. - Společnost pro příležitosti mladých migrantů, 2015)

attend activities with Czech children, which encourages integration of the children.

Among their activities are ‘multicultural activities’, to quote IM2. The goal of these is to introduce various aspects of minorities to the majority. ‘[Our aim is to introduce the foreigners to the majority. Show the majority that members of the minorities are normal people who live here, work and have their own interests. ... They may have a somewhat different lifestyle, but that is something they grew up with.’ To help to reach their goal of integrating immigrant children into society, Most pro offers workshops and seminars in primary and secondary schools. ‘Our aim is to provide a deeper and broader understanding of foreigners to the majority. With last year’s immigration crisis, which did not fully hit the Czech Republic, people have become more interested in the issue of immigrants. However, it is only a shallow interest and their knowledge on this topic is not very much profound. We believe it is important to give the society true facts about minorities.’

10.3. Klub Hanoi / SEA-liasion

Klub Hanoi is a registered association that has been founded by former students of the Department of Vietnamese Studies, Charles University in Prague. On January 16, 2004, the association was registered by the Ministry of Interior. Amongst its members are not only former students of the department but anyone who has an interest in Vietnamese culture, the country, history and the Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic.

The goal of the association is the promotion of Vietnamese culture and the integration of the Vietnamese into the society, but with the minority keeping its cultural identity. Klub Hanoi tries to present the cultural differences between the Czech Republic and Vietnam in a positive light. The organisation attempts to show the Czech society that the Vietnamese, by keeping their traditions, can enrich the Czech culture; thus the association is encouraging a positive view of the minority.

According to the organisation's webpage,⁷⁰ the objectives of the Klub are providing information regarding the landscape, history, society and culture in both countries. Establishing a cultural link between the Czech Republic and Southeast Asia. Assisting with the social integration of people from Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries living in the Czech Republic.

An additional aim of the Klub is ensuring that the Vietnamese have an equal access to information and that the Vietnamese participate more in the events and happenings in the country. *Our aim is to have a positive attitude towards different groups of the society... to have a more open society.*⁷¹

Klub Hanoi has many activities and has published a number works, all of which can be found online on their homepage. They also organize cultural and social events. Anyone can become a member. Other programmes offered by the Klub are: Czech language courses, integration courses, legal and financial consulting and working on projects in the health sector.

10.4. ICP - Integrační centrum Praha

Registered on November 4, 2011, by the Prague City Council, ICP is a public service organisation with the headquarters in Prague. The founder of the ICP is the Magistrate of the City of Prague. ICP started its activities in 2012 and is co-financed by the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals and the City of Prague.

On the website of ICP, one can find information about the organisation and their main goals, amongst others: *elimination of exploitation of the disadvantaged position of foreigners in various aspects of life; minimization of a risk of a creation of excluded immigrant communities; supporting civic society development; reduction of tension between foreigners and Prague's citizens.*⁷²

⁷⁰“About us,” *Klub Hanoi*, last modified September 21, 2015, last accessed April 3, 2017
<http://www.klubhanoi.cz/view.php?cisloclanku=2015091301>

⁷¹ Cílem naší práce je tedy především pozitivně působit na změnu postojů a jednání jednotlivých skupin společnosti – vietnamské komunity v ČR, širší i odborné veřejnosti – a to směrem k otevřenosti a posilování občanské společnosti. - Last modified May 1, 2007, last accessed February 13, 2017,
<http://www.klubhanoi.cz/view.php?cisloclanku=2003080902>

⁷²“ICP History,” *Integrační centrum Praha*, last accessed February 13, 2017,
<http://www.icpraha.com/en/about-us/>

When asked to describe goals of ICP, the IM1 said that the main objective of ICP was social-legal counselling. All services provided by ICP are for free; just like other organisations, ICP offers courses of the Czech language for their clients and they organise intercultural events. Another service they offer is intercultural mediation.

Interestingly, IM1 developed on the topic of intercultural mediation, maintaining that every organisation has its own understanding of what intercultural mediation is. ‘For us, intercultural workers are members of the communities, therefore they are foreigners who have successfully integrated themselves in the society. They can help their fellow members to integrate themselves.’ The workers of ICP are also assistants and accompany their clients to various state institutions. ‘We monitor various communities and support activities coming from the communities. Many migrant associations in Prague have various activities and we try to cooperate with these associations or even with prominent members of the community.’⁷³ The aim of ICP is to ensure that the migrants co-exist peacefully with the Czech majority, to prevent conflicts and to make sure that the minority communities do not become excluded.

According to the organisation, clients of ICP are people from the third-countries who have a legal residency permit in the Czech Republic: ‘third-country nationals who are granted international protection status’.

⁷³ Quoted IM1 from interview

11. Practical Part, Interviews, and Questionnaires

The practical part has been conducted in two ways: one comprises semi-structured interviews, second, questionnaires. With her permission, I adopted the methodology of Vargas-Urpi, who also she sent me the questions which she herself used as the basis for her own interviewees, although she noted that the actual questions used during her research ultimately varied from those which she provided me with.

Taking these questions as a basic model, I used them in the interviews as well, while leaving them open enough so that the respondents could add information or details which they found relevant to the discussed issues. The questions were divided into several parts: first I asked the respondents to present the organisation for which they work; then, moving to their daily work, which is the second section, I asked about the connection of the organisations with the Vietnamese community, how the cooperation began, and whether it has been continuous since; the third part focused on the language, where I asked about the potential difficulties which the respondents may or may not have encountered during interpreting or mediating; the fourth area dealt with the intercultural communication; and, lastly, I asked them about the professional aspects of their work, whether the employees receive any feedback, whether they would like to receive feedback. At the very end, the workers and interpreters could include any additional information or comment.

The questions asked were open so that I could to obtain a better insight into the professional lives of the interviewees.

The interviews were conducted either at the workplace of each organisation or at coffee shops. In order to have as many interviews as possible potential, I contacted several organisations and received positive answers from four organisations. The intercultural mediators (IMs) were most helpful and some even gave me contacts of their interpreters or other co-workers.

Before each of the interviews started, everyone signed an agreement to record the interview under the promise to keep their identity hidden because certain information that was shared with me is sensitive and I was even asked to alter

some details when citing them, because some of the answers given to me were, to a certain degree, classified.

These formal interviews were conducted with IMs from the four organisations mentioned above; then I contacted interpreters who either worked with those organisations or formerly worked for them but became freelance, and, lastly, court interpreters.

Having conducted these interviews with the professionals, I approached several members of the Vietnamese community and asked them for an interview from the point of view of clients. These interviews were conducted in Vietnamese as I knew, either personally or from close friends of the respondents, that their Czech language skills were not up to par. The contents of the questions varied, but mainly I asked about their reasons for coming to the Czech Republic, whether the respondents learnt Czech either in courses provided by the government or they were self-taught, and whether they had made use of the service of an interpreter or mediator (and whether or not they knew the difference between the two). I also asked whether they had visited some of the NGOs mentioned in the previous chapter. The reason why a personal interview with members of the community was conducted is because it allowed for a more in-depth conversation and also created an opportunity for the interviewees to share more details than in the answers of a questionnaire. Another reason was that the Vietnamese tend to trust a member of their community.

Finally, to reach a wider audience, I created an online survey in Vietnamese because it was aimed at the older generation or those who seek out the help of an interpreter. The questionnaire was posted on a social network. The reason for creating a poll in Vietnamese was the assumption that the readers (and potential respondents) would have less problems with Vietnamese than Czech.

When asked whether there was anything to be changed in teaching or learning interpreting for the community, IM2 mentioned during the interview that the fact that many of the younger Vietnamese do not write or read Vietnamese is making it difficult for IM2's organisation to find a translator who would be able to translate pamphlets or any other kind of publishing work or flyers. IM2 appreciates that there are now courses or schools in which the Vietnamese can learn the language

of their parents. The questionnaire consisted of closed and open questions. The online survey automatically created charts which will be commented on in the following chapters.

Most of the NGOs have provided me with leaflets and annual reports on their work and mentioned the courses which they offer. I have concentrated on that in the questionnaire as well to give the NGOs a feedback as to which of the courses have been most heard of. The representatives of the organisation were curious about the outcome and asked me to provide them with the results of the survey and, if possible, of the interviews as well.

11.1. Questionnaires

The present chapter describes the research itself conducted for this MA thesis. The research attempts to determine whether the Vietnamese will, even in the future, seek out the help of interpreters or mediators. The results presented by this study, however, should not be viewed as a definite answer.

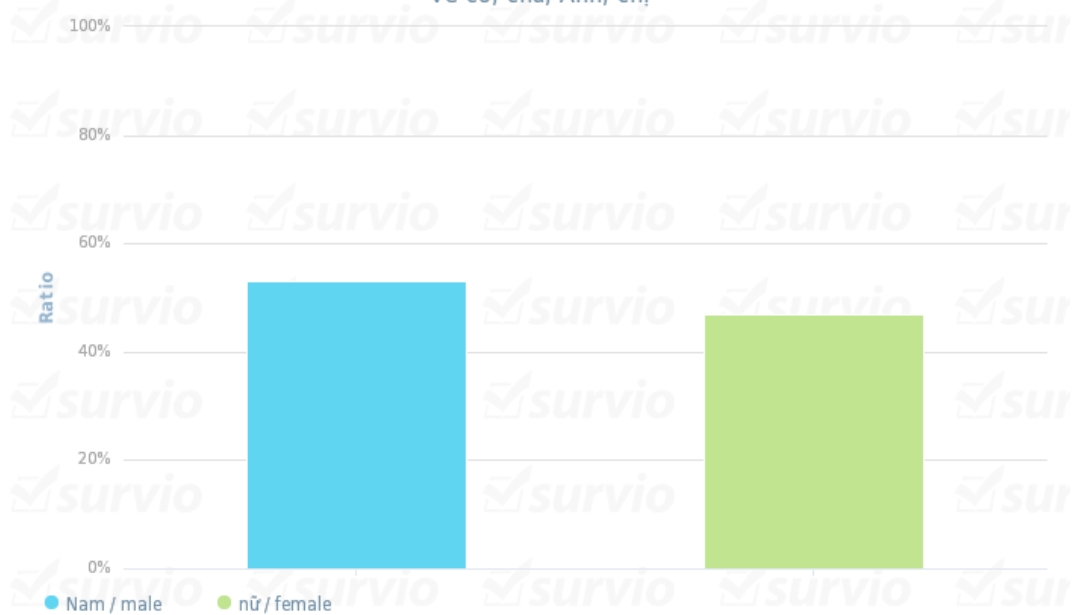
The employment of an online survey was motivated by the idea to reach a widest possible audience. Many households have an Internet connection and, nowadays, a lot of people have social media to keep in touch with their friends and families. Making use of this fact, I created a survey on www.surveymonkey.com, a free website designed for general users to create on-line questionnaires. The survey is written in Vietnamese and consists of 16 questions; 5 of them are open question, where the respondents were asked to specify their answers. For the translation of the questions see Appendix 4. The online platform creates automatic graphs to visualise the submitted responses.

The questionnaire was created with the help of a Vietnamese speaking colleague, who made sure that the formulation of the questions was polite and grammatical. Since the questionnaire was in Vietnamese the answers were also in Vietnamese. I will translate the answers for the sake of understanding. Then the questionnaire was posted on a social media website, with a request to share it. The survey has been posted online in November. The response in the first month was promising, with over 10 polls filled out. By the end of February of the same year, I received 33 responses.

The analysis of the results proved to be difficult, since the not all questions in the questionnaire were obligatory.

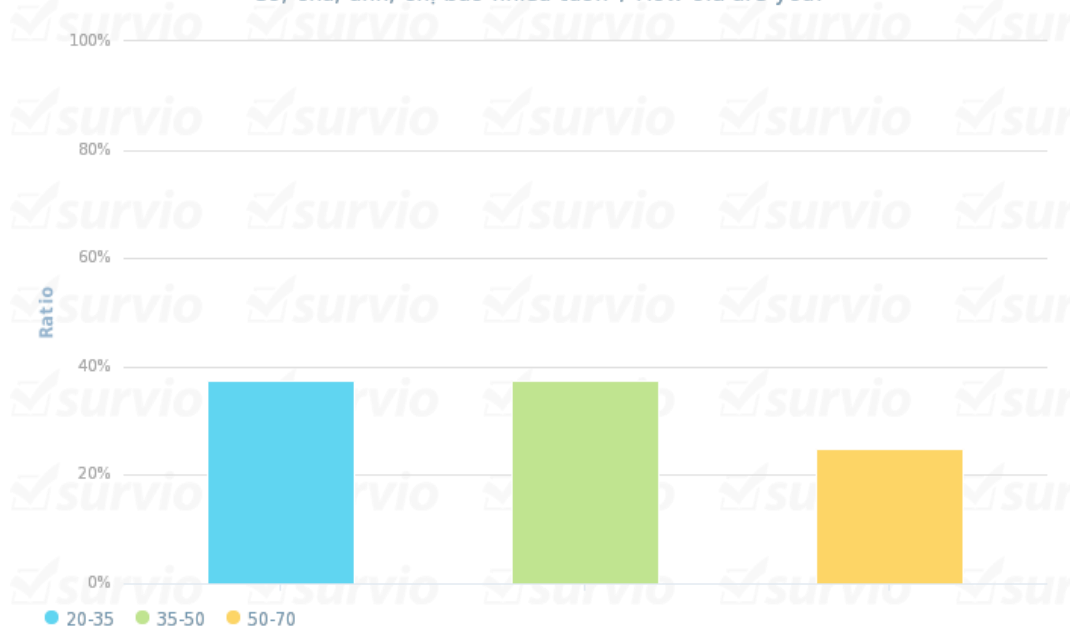
The first four questions were more general questions about personal information. Of the 33 respondents, 17 were male and 15 female.

Về cô, chú, Anh, chị

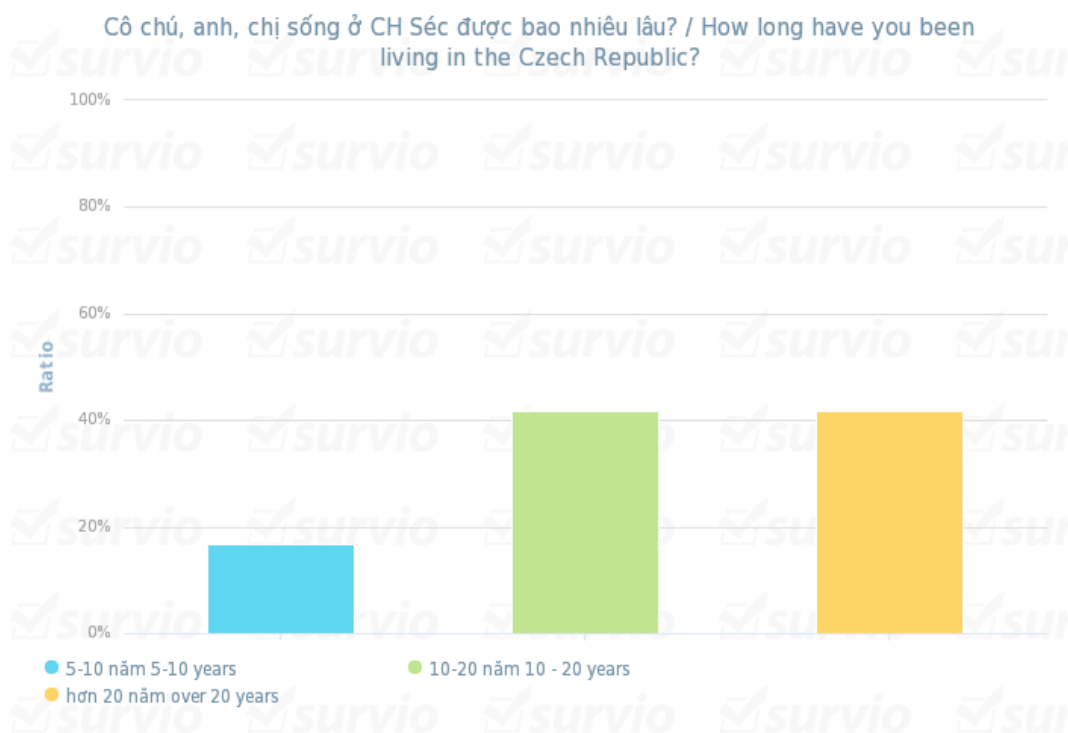


The age ranges were set between 20 and 35 years, 35 and 50 years, and 50 and 70 years. Only 24 respondents stated their age; the reason is that some of the respondents were younger and did not fall into any of the pre-set categories. I was contacted via social media by the respondents themselves, who asked what should be done if they cannot state their age. The reason why the age range has been set from 20 years was that the questionnaire should have originally been filled out only by the first generation Vietnamese.

Cô, chú, anh, chị bao nhiêu tuổi? / How old are you?



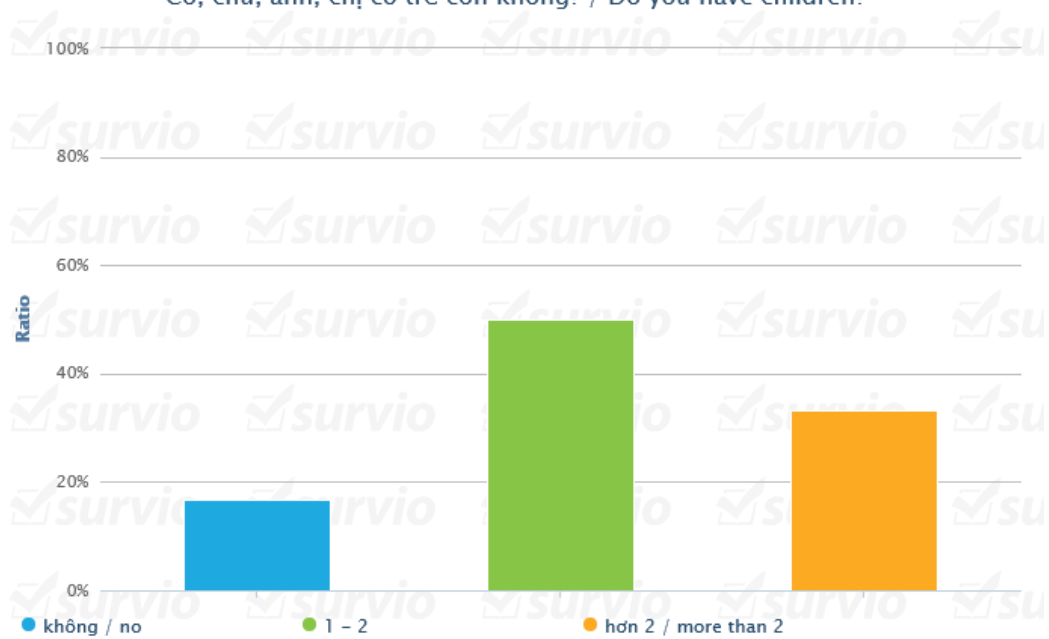
Of the 33 respondents, 24 of them answered the following questions of how long have they been living in the Czech Republic the following way:



The chart shows from left to right whether the respondents have been living in the country for 5 to 10 years, for 10 to 20 years, or for more than 20 years. We can see that the green and yellow bars are of the same size, each bar representing 10 respondents respectively; only 4 respondents (16,7 %), stated they had been living in the country between 5 and 10 years.

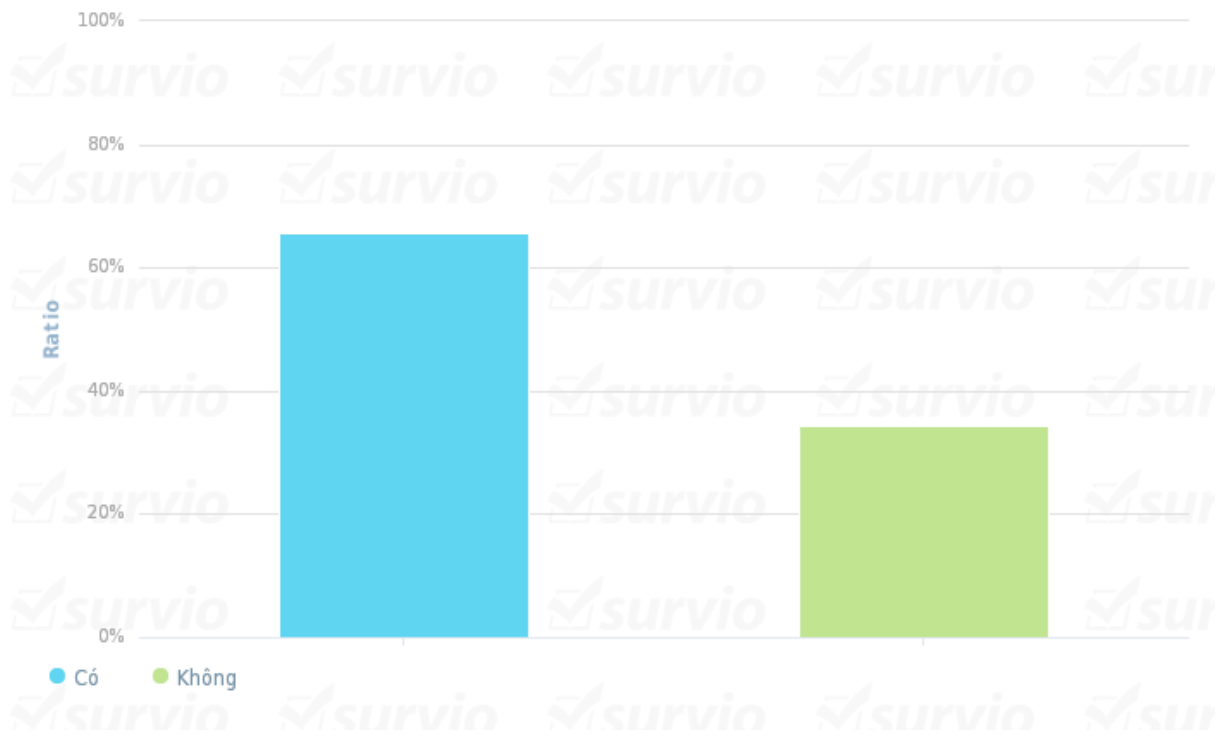
I have mentioned it in previous chapters that the Vietnamese, or foreigners generally, prefer, when they are in a need of an interpreter, to turn to their children. Since the child presumably attended school in the hosting country or learnt the language through other means, she knows the language of the majority population as well as the mother tongue of her parents. My fourth question was thus whether the respondents were parents. Of the 24 submitted answers, half of the respondents had one or two children, 8 had more than two children and 4 had no children.

Cô, chú, anh, chị có trẻ con không? / Do you have children?

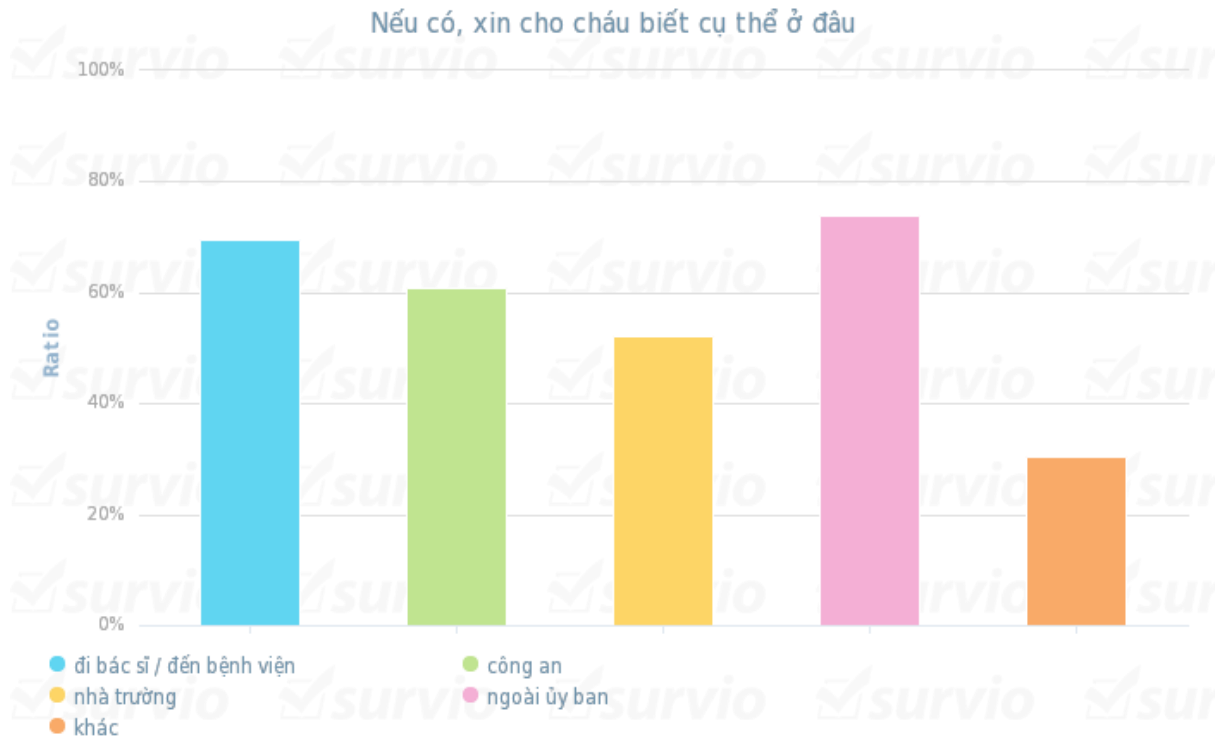


From the fifth question onwards, the enquiries addressed the issues of interpreting and the respondents' language skills. Thirty-two respondents answered the question whether they seek the help of either an interpreter or a mediator, 21 of them positively, with the 11 remaining saying no. The question also gave examples of where most foreigners seek the help of an interpreter or a mediator: at the doctor's office, during hospital visits, at police stations, at schools or generally bureaus.

Cô, chú, hoặc anh chị cần phiên dịch khi đi bác sĩ, đến bệnh viện hay công an, nhà trường hay ra ngoài ủy ban?



In the subsequent open question, I asked those who answered the previous question positively to elaborate on where they needed the help of the interpreter or mediator:



The bars represent various places and occasions, from left to right. They are: at the doctor’s office/hospitals, in police stations, at a school, at bureaus, and others. The respondents were asked, to specify the ‘other’ (if ticked). Two respondents mentioned that they needed assistance at a bank, one in court, two answered with needing assistance at a lawyer’s office, another one mentioned other offices, and three mentioned that they did not need any assistance. Interestingly, one person even mentioned conferences and seminars. Car repair service, car dealers and the work place also appeared among the answers. One respondent mentioned court with the comment: ‘Courts need interpreters, just for peace of mind.’⁷⁴ Some answers repeated the previous chart, with respondents stating most often hospitals (two respondents specified the names of the cities).

The tenth question asked, whether the respondents specifically seek out the help of a mediator or whether they prefer the services of an interpreter. The answers were mixed. Eight people answered that they turned to a mediator; one respondent specified their answer in the following manner: ‘It is faster to contact a mediator and the mediator can finish the job quicker than an interpreter.’ (Translation of the

⁷⁴ Answer taken from the questionnaire

author of the thesis)⁷⁵ The financial aspect has come to the surface in two answers: one answer stated that they seek the help of a mediator, because their services are cheaper than of an interpreter. This contradicts the information which I received from the IMs during the interviews. The second respondent who mentioned the financial aspect specified that the decision between an interpreter or a mediator depends the cost and the situation. One of the respondents was an themselves; therefore, they do not need the help of an interpreter. Another respondent turns to their father because he is an interpreter. Eleven people stated they turned to the interpreter,

The following question was aimed at finding out whether the clients see any difference between a mediator and an interpreter. The reason for this question was based on the assumption that the clients may not be aware of the fact that there is a difference between mediators and interpreters. This question has been answered by 28 people, six stating there was no difference; 17 answered that there was a difference between the two; finally, one person said that there may be some difference. Over a fourth of the respondents gave explicative answers. One answer stated: ‘It depends on the person because some mediators are also interpreters. It all depends on their experience. But an interpreter will translate it more appropriately.’ (Translation of the author of the thesis)⁷⁶ Most answers are of similar nature, stating that the interpreter, when hired, will interpret just what has been said and is certified, whereas the mediator takes on more roles than just that of an interpreter. The mediator takes on the responsibility over the client.

Another aspect I decided to look into was the language, more specifically the dialect. The Vietnamese language has many regional varieties, the main five being: Northern Vietnamese, North-central Vietnamese, Mid-central Vietnamese, South-central Vietnamese, and Southern Vietnamese. The dialects vary not only in terms of pronunciation, but also in vocabulary and grammar.⁷⁷ I was, therefore, wondering whether the clients encountered an interpreter or a mediator whose dialect varied from their own and how they reacted in such situations. I also asked whether the dialect had any impact on the conversation.

⁷⁵ Answer from the questionnaire. Translate by the Author of the thesis.

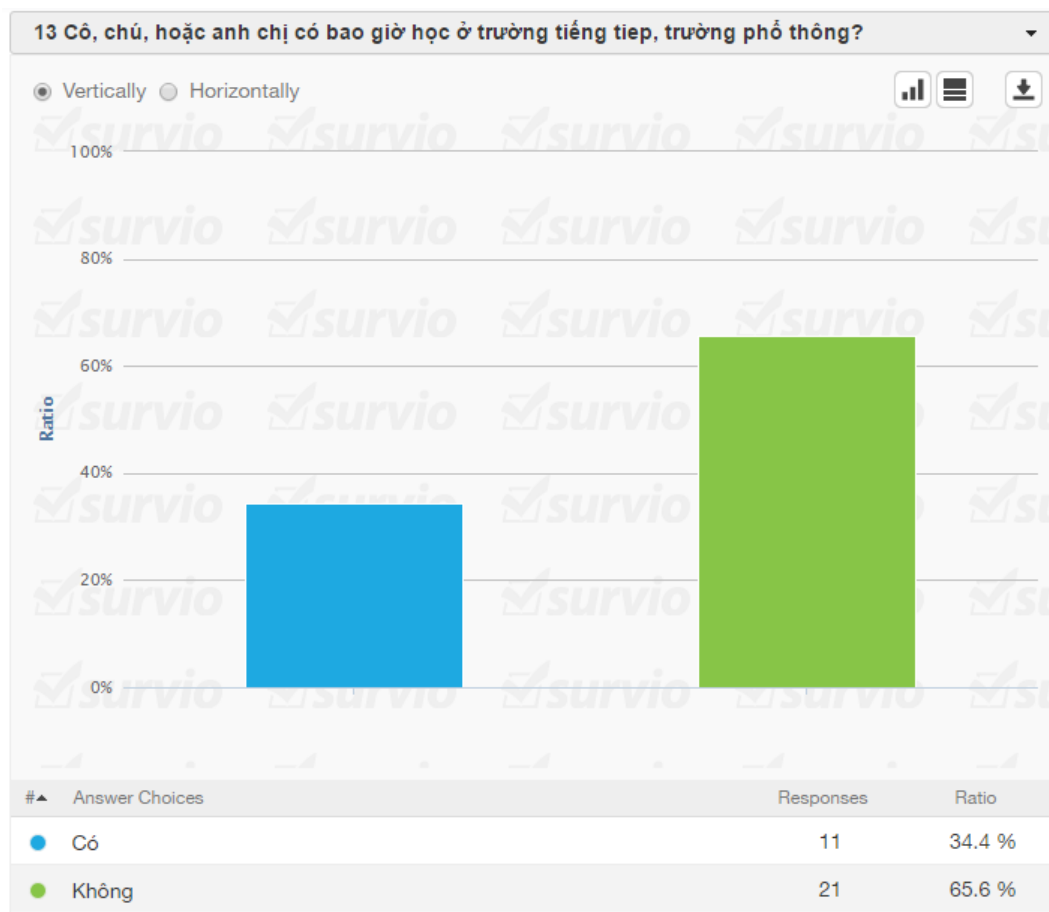
⁷⁶ Answer from the questionnaire. Translate by the Author of the thesis..

⁷⁷ “Vietnamese Language,” *Wikipedia*, last accessed April 18, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnamese_language

In the survey, 13 people answered that they had not met an interpreter with a different dialect. One answered that sometimes they do understand the different dialect, however the respondent did not answer whether they did meet an interpreter of a different dialect. Fourteen respondents answered that they had encountered an interpreter or mediator, who spoke a different dialect than themselves. I received one response from a respondent who lived in central Vietnam so they could understand both the Northern and southern Vietnamese dialects. Of the 13 positive answers, 7 answered they would understand a different dialect; of those seven, five answered that some misunderstandings may appear. One explained that the misunderstandings could influence the whole interpretation, because in interpretation, accuracy is most crucial and, when people with different dialects meet and potential misunderstandings arise, the accuracy of the interpretation is at jeopardy, which may have a negative impact on the outcome of the session.

I asked the same question the interpreters, to gain their perspective. INT2, as well as INT3, said that they have had clients from different regions, therefore a difference in the pronunciation was present. They both admitted to having slight problems with understanding if the client speaks fast, which is why they asked the client to speak slowly; only when the client slowed down, the interpreter was able to understand fully what has been said. INT4 has not encountered this problem because he studied in Central Vietnam, although he admits that if a Southern Vietnamese asked for his help, it might cause some problems. But as many of INT4's clients live in the Czech Republic, their dialect is influenced by the Czech language and the clients speak in formal Vietnamese, without INT4 having to ask them to.

I was further curious whether the clients have ever learnt Czech and, if so, whether it was in schools (as students), or at courses that are offered often for free by many organisations (as adults). The question 13 was concerned whether the users have ever learnt Czech or not was answered by 33 respondents, meaning that all the respondents who participated in the survey answered; over half of the respondents, twenty-one, answered negatively, meaning that 65,6 % of the respondents have not learnt Czech in school or courses.

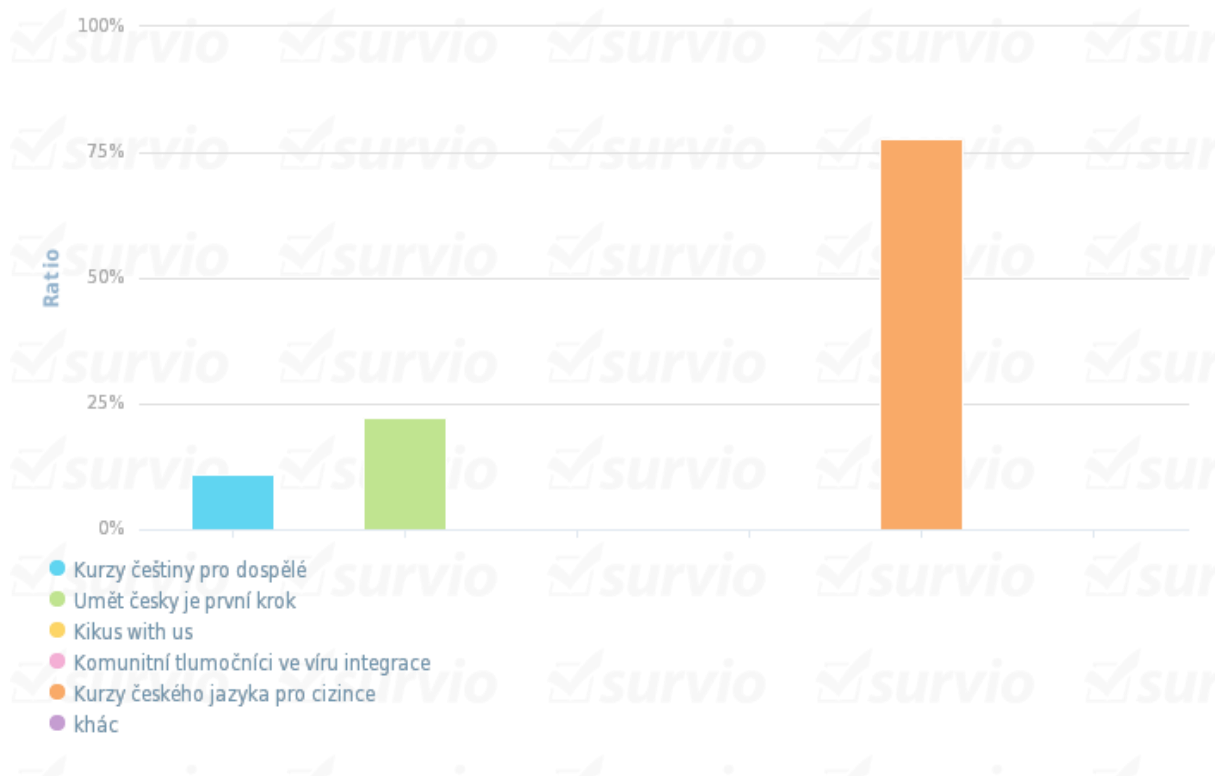


The following question aimed at finding out from those who have answered the previous question positively, where they had learnt the language. All the 11 respondents from the chart above answered in the following manner: three respondents provided the specific names of the schools; six answered gave the names of the towns (therefore suggesting perhaps that they had attended some courses in those cities); one mentioned the nanny ('česká babička') and the specific centres of the city; and the last person with a positive answer stated that they had learnt Czech in 'the place near where I live'.⁷⁸

The penultimate question was a follow-up of the 13th question, where I wanted to know if the respondents ever visited any Czech courses that are offered by some organisations in the Czech Republic.

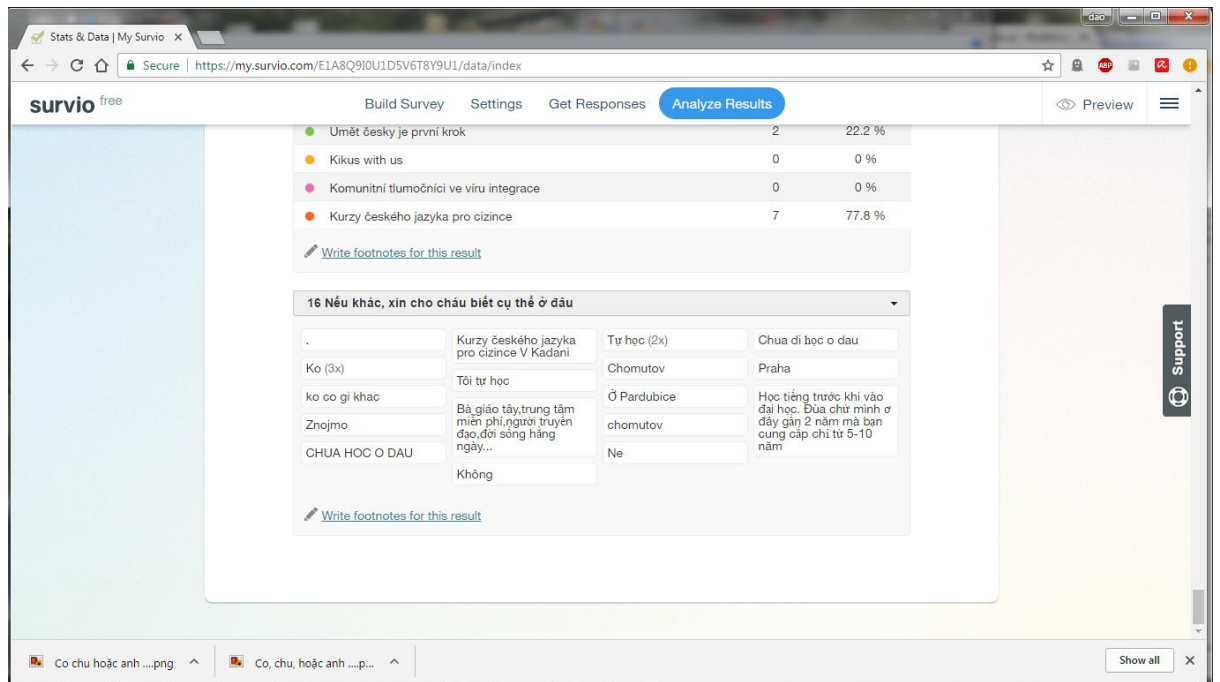
⁷⁸ Ở nơi mình sống

Cô chú hoặc anh chị có tham dự khoá học tiếng Séc nào không? Nếu có, những khoá học này được thiết kế do trung tâm và các tổ chức Séc hay là do phong trào, hoạt động của người Việt Nam?



I wrote down several courses for the respondents to choose from, and the most visited course was *Kurzy českého jazyka pro cizince* (7 respondents), *Umět česky je první krok* ranked second (2 respondents), and *Kurzy češtiny pro dospělé* was selected by one person. The rest of the courses which I mentioned did not have any positive answers. As usual, I also gave the respondents the possibility to check ‘other’ if they had visited a course that I have not named.

Nineteen people answered with ‘other’ (see the table below):



Three respondents were self-taught, 8 have stated they had not learnt Czech, one respondent stated that they learnt Czech through their teachers at centres. As we can see, the answers quite vary.

11.2. Interviews with Interpreters and Intercultural Mediators

As mentioned in the introduction and at the beginning of the practical section of this MA thesis, I have conducted two sets of interviews: one was with the interpreters or intercultural mediators, and with users/clients of interpretive services. The average duration time of an interview was over one hour.

The decision to have two sets of interviews was made because the point of view of the interpreters and mediators is naturally different than of clients. Also, my BA thesis has showed that some interpreters into Vietnamese have not taken any special training to do their job or worked as mediators. From the interviews, which were only half structured, see Appendix 3, I received more than just answers – the interviewees provided me with a broader insight into the work of interpreters and IMs. I asked them to describe their everyday life to see how different their jobs were. INT5 is a freelancer and being an interpreter is just a temporary job for INT5; therefore, her workday differs from INT1 and INT2, who work for an NGO. Moreover, there is a distinction between the workdays of INT1 and INT2, because INT2 does not per se work for the NGO: he is a member of the NGO, but works at the Department for Asylum and Migration Policy two days a week. INT2's work includes giving advice to foreigners who come to OAMP, for instance, explaining to the client what document is needed for his or her business; if needed, INT2 also helps police officers and interprets for them. INT1, on the other hand, is always present in the office of the NGO in case a foreigner comes in and needs advice or counselling. Of course, INT1 also interprets and is an assistant when the situation requires it. INT3 is a court interpreter, whose workday depends on whether or not the court requires INT3's presence. The same applies to INT4.

Four of the five interpreters have an education in the field of translation and interpretation. The court interpreter INT3 has no formal education in interpreting; on the other hand, he is the only one to have his State Czech language Certificate, which he received after successfully passing the Czech language exams. INT4 studied in Vietnam and, therefore, has excellent knowledge of the Vietnamese language. INT1, INT2 and INT5 attended an interpreting course, the pilot project

by META called *Komunitní tlumočníci ve víru integrace* and have a certificate for passing the course. At the course, they learned the basic techniques and methods of interpreting and received practical experience in applying the newly acquired skills. Although INT5 mentions that it is a pity that the interpreting was done into Czech only.

During the interviews, I also asked the interpreters whether they have encountered situations where the clients become attached to the interpreter in the sense of turning to him or her with things that are not always work-related; this was also a question that was given to the IMs. The IMs, just as most of the interpreters, have answered that there have been situations where the client started to call the interpreter late at night, or call him or her outside their business hours. How do they deal with the situation? They unanimously stated that, before their interpreting or counselling session, they present themselves and explain to the client what their role is. The interpreter states before the session that he/she is the interpreter and that their role is to interpret everything that is being said. INT5, for example, told me that clients are given INT5's work phone number and are informed about the working hours; if they call after 10, PM no calls will be answered. I have provided more specific details in the chapter 'Difference between an Interpreter and Intercultural Mediator' (page 38).

I have also been wondering about the professional aspect of their work; whether the interviewees have received any feedback, whether they are in any way evaluated, whether they think their work is appreciated, whether they are happy with their job, and, of course, whether there was anything in the public service interpreting training they would like to change, for example whether they would prefer more focus on terminology, more focus on note taking or focus on the practice.

The interviewees were all happy with their work, even though INT2 mentioned that, in the future, he will less likely continue being an interpreter because he took on this job as an interpreter and consultant for the OAMP out of interest but never considered it his full time job. INT5 also works only part time as an interpreter but likes the work, even though it can be challenging, both physically and mentally. INT3 likes being an interpreter, because there is a sense of purpose of

helping other member of the community. Concerning the feedback, since only two of the interviewees work for an organisation, the question surprised the rest of the interpreters. INT1 and INT2 both work for an organisation, while INT1 has group sessions with other interpreters from the organisation, where all the employees meet and sit down and talk about what difficult cases they have (always disguising the identity of their client) and receive some advice from their colleagues as to how they would have handled or how they would handle the situation. INT2 stated that he wrote down reports of what had been done and sent them to their superior. So there is no direct feedback; INT1, on the other hand, does receive one. INT5 said that the best kind of feedback or reflection of their work is when there is a visible progress, meaning that the client actually is able to do things by themselves. All the interviewees, however, said that the best positive feedback is a return of a satisfied client.

When it comes to changes or improvements in training future interpreters, INT5 and INT4 both would welcome a change in PSI training, as mentioned in previous paragraphs and in the previous chapter. INT5 wishes for a bilateral interpreting training and INT4 wishes for the interpreters to be more specific and keep more to what the client says, especially when it comes to tenses and sequences of events. IM2, as mentioned in previous chapters, stated that it was a pity that many young Vietnamese did not write or read Vietnamese properly, which is why finding a translator had been a real challenge to IM2. INT5 also stated that the situation of young Vietnamese, who are not well versed in Vietnamese, is regrettable and that in a way they lost touch with 'who they are', which is why INT5 is so happy that there are now courses where young Vietnamese can learn Vietnamese again.

11.3. Interviews with Clients of Interpreting or Mediating Services

To reach a better understanding of the work, the potential and the specifics of a community interpreter, I have decided to reach out to users or clients of interpreters to learn their point of view on this matter.

The interviewees were chosen arbitrarily and, just like with everyone who has been interviewed, the interviewer asked for permission to record the answers and assured the interviewees that their identity would not be revealed. The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. The interviewees (clients) will be referred to with the code CLIN and a number. The interview was conducted with four women, one was 26 and the other three women were of the ages between 40 - 50 years.

The answers of CLIN1 have been presented in the previous chapter on mediators. CLIN1 came to the Czech Republic in 1996, meaning that she has been in the country for over 20 years. The motivation to move to the Czech Republic was an economic one, similarly to many other Vietnamese. CLIN1 did not come alone but in a group of her compatriots who came to work in the Czech Republic. I asked CLIN1 whether she ever needed help of an interpreter or mediator; she answered yes. CLIN1 also knew that there was a difference between an interpreter and a mediator, stating that ‘An interpreter is someone who has a certificate, has sworn an oath. And a mediator is someone who knows the Czech language.’ CLIN1 also admitted to not always turning to an interpreter but rather asking their child to interpret. One reason given for asking their children to interpret for them was that children are more often there and reaching an interpreter or mediator may take a longer time. When asked when CLIN1 most needs an interpreter, the answer was very often, because she does not speak Czech very well; her level of Czech allows her to communicate most on everyday basis, which grammatical mistakes, without, however, impairing the message. But when CLIN1 needs to go to the doctor’s office, bureaus or school or attend any bureaucratic meetings, she prefers to have an interpreter or a mediator present, because ‘I feel I don’t understand everything. I feel more secure to have someone with me who understands Czech and who can tell me what to do.’ When asked, whether CLIN1 knows that there are Czech courses and whether she thought of attending them,

she answered in the following manner: 'I know there are courses but I do not attend them because I do not have time. I try to learn at home, I asked my children to create a vocabulary with words for my work, because I need to communicate with my costumers.'

The reason why the recording with CLIN2 is short is because the circumstances of the interview were somewhat complicated; when initially asked whether she needed interpreter or not, CLIN2 answered that no. The interview was, therefore, useless for the purposes of the present research and the recorded portion was deleted on the spot. But then CLIN2 recalled needing the help of interpreters and agreed to record the answer. CLIN2 has been living in the Czech Republic for more than 10 years, and when asked whether she sought the help of an assistant or mediator, the answer was negative. Since CLIN2 attended a Czech course, she is therefore able to deal with everyday situations on his own. The only time when CLIN2 calls an interpreter is only in the cases when special language is needed, e.g., when buying a house. When asked why she needed an interpreter, the explanation was that CLIN2 did not understand fully what was being said. To the question whether the interpreter she contacted in the past was Vietnamese or Czech, the answer was that the interpreter was Vietnamese, because it was easier for the client to communicate with the interpreter.

CLIN3 came to the Czech Republic 10 years ago; the motivation to move to a foreign country was a better job. When asked whether she uses the services of an interpreter or mediator or someone else who knows the language, CLIN3 answered that she contacts either a person who speaks Czech or a mediator. The interviewee was further questioned whether the person with the language skills or the mediator was somebody they knew or a stranger. The answer was that it was an acquaintance. CLIN3 also prefers female mediators, mostly at the doctor's office. CLIN3 also states that it is those Vietnamese who do not know Czech that seek out help of acquaintances or mediators to assist them; Vietnamese who have lived in the Czech Republic for a long time or those who visited schools or language courses can speak Czech, these do not seek the help of an interpreter, because they are able to deal with the problems themselves. However as seen with the interview with CLIN2 this is also not always true, having a grasp on a language does not ensure being able to handle everything, again pointing to the

example of buying an estate, where the language abilities may come short. When asked whether CLIN3 ever thought of attending courses to learn Czech, the client said that it occurred to her; however, with an advanced age of 50, it is difficult to learn Czech for her.

Conclusion

This Master's thesis aimed to present the specifics and perspectives of a public service interpreter into the Vietnamese and the Czech languages in the Czech Republic. This thesis continues the previous BA research of the present author, which compared the work of an interpreter into Vietnamese in the Czech Republic and that of an interpreter into English in Vietnam.⁷⁹

The present thesis aimed to replicate an experiment conducted by Mireia Vargas-Urpi, who wrote her doctoral dissertation on the topic of 'Public service interpreting for Chinese immigrants in Catalonia'⁸⁰. A contact with Vargas-Urpi was established about her research and how specifically it was conducted. In the established email communication, Vargas-Urpi informed me that the interview guide is available in Catalan, the questionnaire which she used (and which is only in Chinese). The questionnaire can be found in the Journal *Language and Intercultural Communication*, where her article "Public Service interpreter for Chinese immigrants in Catalonia: a study based on interpreters', coordinators' and user's views" was published, on the page 495. However, in our e-mail correspondence,⁸¹ Vargas-Urpi explained to me specifics of her PhD research and provided me with the questions which she used when interviewing interpreters and mediators (see Appendix 2 of the present thesis). After some modifications, I used the questions to conduct a research amongst PSIs in the Czech Republic.

Community interpreting has been becoming more and more topical theme, not only because in 2013, the Vietnamese gained the status of an officially acknowledged minority in the Czech Republic; as a result, the members of the minority are entitled to receive information in their mother tongue. With the population of over 60 000, the Vietnamese community is the third largest minority in the Czech Republic. Similar to other minorities, the Vietnamese are very closed off and interact little with the majority, except for basic everyday situation. With the current refugee and migration crisis the need for public service interpreters and mediators have been high in demand.

⁷⁹ Ngoc Anh Dao, "Postavení vietnamských tlumočnicků v České republice" (bachelor's thesis, Univerzita Palackého, 2014).

⁸⁰ Mireia Vargas-Urpi, "La interpretació als serveis públics i la mediació intercultural amb el col·lectiu xinès a Catalunya" (dissertation, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2012).

⁸¹ Ngoc Anh Dao, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2016.

However, even within enclosed minority groups, a change is slowly taking place; many members of minorities attend or even organize events, festivities and activities to promote their culture. Non-governmental organisations, language schools and schools generally offer language courses for the members of minorities to learn the Czech language. If members of minorities wish to acquire a permanent residency permit, they have to prove that their language skills are up to par.

Amongst the interviewed interpreters, mediators, and users of interpreting services, there is a consensus of the need of interpreters and that this need will prevail. The initial presumption of that interpreters will not be needed in the future, was dismissed in the course of this research. The reason for the dismissal of the initial theory was the overall agreement among the respondents that even if the older generation were to leave the Czech Republic, there will always be new Vietnamese arriving, who may not speak Czech very well and who will seek the help of an interpreter. The specifics of the work of a public service interpreter of the Vietnamese language do not differ significantly from the work of PSIs of another language. However, there is a trend of the change of the role of the interpreter. The PSI is not seen just as an interpreter, but, sometimes, the interpreter has to assume the role of an intercultural mediator. This again opens the discussion where to draw the line between a public service interpreter and a mediator. Interpreters are, therefore, advised, before the interview/interpreting, to introduce their role to the client and be explicit about that their role is to interpret, that they are (when possible) a neutral party, which enables smooth communication. The public service interpreter has to know what kind of potential cultural conflicts may arise during the sessions and try to prevent them. There are certain benefits if the interpreter belongs to the same ethnic community, because the clients are then more inclined to trust him or her easier, as mentioned in the chapter on 'The Issue of Trust between the Interpreter/Intercultural Mediator and the Client'. Furthermore, being of the same ethnic background in a rather closed off community gives the interpreters the advantage of being able to predict what problems may occur. On the other hand this may also be of a disadvantage because the clients tend to forget they are dealing with a professional and seek the help of either the IM or interpreter outside their working hours. This has been

addressed in the interviews with INTs and IMs. All of the INTs and IMs except one has had an experience where the clients began to trust them more and view the INT or IM as a friend. I was interested in how each interviewee reacted to this situation and the answers can be seen in Appendix 3.

The prospects of working as a public service interpreter in the Czech Republic are positive, since, as mentioned before, interpreters and IMs believe that the demand for interpreting services with the Czech-Vietnamese language combination will not decrease (more likely the opposite). Although there are many Czech courses available, the Vietnamese do not always visit them since attending these may interfere with their work. I wanted to know why Vietnamese do not visit these courses, therefore this question was given to the Clients of Interpreting. In the interviews with the clients of interpreting, two of the four women answered to why do they not visit or have not visited any language course answered that the reason for not visiting these courses is the time issue. They said they were too busy to visit these courses, however they know that it would be beneficial to them. One of the women visited such a language course, therefore she does not seek the help of an interpreter, except when legal terminology is used.

To be able to offer a more in depth understanding of the work of PSIs, semi structured interviews were conducted with the aim to present their views and, on the basis of their answers, reach some conclusions concerning the work specifics and potential. It seems that there is some space for improvement; as INT5 mentioned in the course she visited interpreting practice is being done only into Czech and not Vietnamese. Also, INT4 mentioned that interpreters do not train their memory and the focus on detail is also lacking.

Better education and interpreting training could lead to better interpreters, which may sometimes in the future make mediators obsolete. The high social status of mediators is a problem which mainly the majority is aware of; the minorities view mediators as their helpers who are able to finish the work in a shorter time, as seen in the answers from the respondents.

The interviews offered a view from the point of IMs and interpreters, which is a perspective that is often not discussed. Topics such as cultural differences that may cause conflict during interpreting sessions and professionalism may indicate to potential interpreters what they may expect. Since the Vietnamese minority is a rather closed off community there is a potential of misunderstandings happening. I was interested whether the interpreter or intercultural mediators ever came across situations where cultural differences occurred and how it was dealt with. One of the things was the tendency for Vietnamese not giving straight forwards answers. Beings present in some interpreting sessions I have been a witness to Vietnamese giving long answers with details not directly related to the asked question. The answers were mixed, see Appendix 3.

A slow and steady integration of minorities into the majority society would be beneficial as well. The majority could benefit from a better understanding of minorities, which may lead to better integration and cultural enrichment. Problems could be handled with more ease and maybe even without the presence of an IM or an interpreter. The fact that the role of the interpreter has been slowly changing is a topic that has been long discussed; the interviews and responses proved that the role of a public service interpreter may, in the future, need new definitions.

During the writing of the thesis and interviews conducted with clients, interpreters and IMs the topic that slowly peaked my interest was the topic of mediators. Mediators are connected to the topic of gatekeeping, which is a known phenomena in the interpreting studies. However I do not believe many have looked deeper into the topic of mediators, which is a pity, because from the interviews it is clear that people are aware that there is such a thing as gatekeeping and mediators. However as was implied foreigners and members of minorities tend to accept this as a fact and do not do anything about it. That may have something to do with their high social status in the community and to quote IM1: "They are like the mafia." I believe this is not even so farfetched, it has been a topic and recently in the news where the Czech-Vietnamese society (CVS) published an article on their website on the topic how mediators misuse their position to gain profit. CVS also gave interviews to few online news platform and even gave an interview on TV.

The interpreters, and well as the IMs with whom I collaborated on this research, were interested to find out about the opinions of the clients; and the IMs were interested in what the interpreters had to say about their work. Because in the interview, the respondents were assured of complete anonymity, they were more open about their opinion. Three of the organisations introduced in this thesis (see chapter ‘Organisations Offering Interpreting Services for Minorities’) expressed their interest in this MA thesis. Vargas-Urpi, who was consulted at the beginning of this research, expressed her interest to read this thesis as well.

I believe this thesis may bring new views on the topic of public service interpreting, thanks to the various points of views from almost all possible parties to an interpreting session. This thesis dealt with the issues of trust and mediation – topics about which clients of interpreting do not tend to think too deeply, although they might be crucial for a successful solution of their problems.

However, it should be noted that the results presented in this thesis should not be taken as a guideline or taken as a universal truth. It should be taken into account that the small sample of answers and respondents can give us only tentative results. For more accurate, and, perhaps, more applicable results, a research should be done on a larger scale, over a long time period; only then the real potential of public service interpreters in the Czech Republic will be revealed and a more accurate picture will be presented. Such a research, however, cannot be conducted by a single person within no more than a few months.

Appendices

Appendix 1

List of Interviewees

IM1 female, coordinator of intercultural workers,

INT1 female, Vietnamese, lives in the Czech Republic since she was 10 years old, interpreter for a NGO

IM2 female, Czech, director of a NGO offering interpreting and mediating services for minorities

INT2 male, Vietnamese, student (16 y.o), for two years he has been working as an interpreter of a NGO but is present at OAMP (Department for Asylum and Migration Policy) as a interpreter

IM3 female, worker at NGO in Prague

INT3 male, court interpreter, has been interpreting for 24 years

INT4 male, Czech, appointed court interpreter for Vietnamese in 2010, studied for 6 months at the Vietnam National University

INT5 female, 25 years old, certified interpreter for 3 years, passed a course for community interpreters by the organisation META o.p.s.

Appendix 2 - Questions by Mireia Vargas-Urpi

Part 1: personal background. Questions regarding origin, migratory experience, how they had learned Catalan/Spanish or Chinese, education, and questions about specific training in public service interpreting and intercultural mediation, and any other courses they could have taken. If they had taken part in this kind of specialised training, I asked about the contents (subjects) of such training, length, opinion, whether they thought that training lacked important issues, etc.

Part 2: daily work. I asked them to describe a typical day working as public service interpreters, whether they worked part-time or full-time, whether they had other jobs, whether they had an office or desk (i.e. physical space for themselves), contact with colleagues, previous information about assignments, whether they worked in different contexts (e.g. court interpreting, healthcare interpreting, schools, social services, etc.) and whether they had preferences among them. I also asked about the roles and functions they took on, about interpreting techniques (note-taking, first or third person), and I asked them to describe an easy assignment and then a difficult assignment. Finally, I asked them if they received some kind of emotional support from their employer institution and if they kept in touch with the Chinese users.

Part 3: linguistic aspects. These are the questions I used:

- In terms of language, what is most difficult for you when interpreting between Chinese users and Catalan service providers? (e.g. terminology, dialects, cultural references, etc.)
- What do you do when you don't know a word/a specialised term?
- What kind of cultural references are the most difficult to transfer? What do you do to convey them in the other language?
- What sources of reference do you use?

- What do you do if you don't understand a Chinese dialect/geolect?

Part 4: intercultural communication. The questions in this part were based in previous literature review on intercultural communication with the Chinese.

- What are the main difficulties that the Chinese encounter when they arrive in Catalonia?

- What are the most common situations that require your service as interpreter/mediator?

- How do the Chinese usually react to good and bad news from the Administration? (this question was related to some theories about Chinese lack of expressiveness I had read)

- How would you describe the Chinese in Catalonia? (this question sought to detect stereotypes and opinions)

- Do you think that the Chinese are very indirect when answering questions? What do you do in these cases?

- Have you ever detected lies from the user? What kind of lies? How did you know they were lying? What did you do?

- How do you get the Chinese users to trust in you?

- Have you noticed the so-called in-group harmony among the Chinese users you've worked with?

- And according to non-verbal language (gestures, facial expressions, eye-contact, smile, touching, etc.), how does it influence communication with the Chinese? Is there any kind of gesture that is particularly recurring? Are there gestures that could be misunderstood? What do you do in those cases?

Part 5: professional aspects (+ “control questions”). These questions sought to conclude the interview and confirm (or put in context) previous answers by the interviewee.

- Are you evaluated in your job as interpreter? By whom?
- Do you feel your work is valued/recognised? By whom?
- Do you like your job? Why? Which are the aspects you don't like and, therefore, would change?
- What is your relationship with your employers?
- Do you know other interpreters/mediators working in the same field? where/how have you met them? what is your relationship with them?
- What would you change/improve in your profession? (organisation?/working conditions/salary/etc.)
- What should be included in the ideal PSI training from your point of view?

Appendix 3

My questions to the interviewees

The thesis of Vargas-Urpi on public service interpreter was concerned with the Chinese community in Catalonia. I had to apply the questions to the Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic. Most of Vargas-Urpi's questions were general enough to be applicable to any minority, therefore I took them as a base and used them in my own interviews.

General questions and questions addressed to both interpreters and intercultural mediators

Ask the respondent to introduce themselves, what their work is: whether they are an interpreter or intercultural mediator or what other position they have in the organisation. Whether the respondent is a member of an organisation or not.

Have you noticed any difference in non-verbal communication between the minority and majority?

Do you like your job?

Do you receive any feedback?

Did a client ever cross the line of professionalism? For example the clients starts calling you at odd hours, asking for help outside your scope of work?

IM1	'We have also the problem that people tend to turn to us too much.'
INT1	'At the beginning I really had this problem. But I was not the only one, my Arabic colleague had the same problem. But we have our tricks how to make sure the professionalism is not overstepped. For example we stay behind and let the client leave before us. It is the responsibility of the worker to state boundaries.'

INT2	‘Sometimes they do call me but I refuse them. Because I am very busy.’
INT5	‘Yes it did happen. I then try to politely tell them: “I am sorry I cannot talk now.” Or I will refer them to a colleague. But you have to be polite.’
IM2	‘If they contact me outside working hours I ask them whether it is a matter of life and death. If the answer is no I tell them to come back when we are open.’

How do you get your clients to trust you?

INT1	‘I think that as an IM we have an advantage, because in a counselling session, the IM is often from the same community as the client and speaks the language of the client. The client tends to trust people quicker, because they are from the same background.’
IM1	‘I never had to try to get them to trust me. If they see that I am open to them and that I want to help them... they begin to trust me. ... If they see that the NGO helps people then they will turn to us. With the Vietnamese, they have to see it for themselves that we do help them.’
INT5	‘At the beginning, they do not trust you, but ultimately they will begin trusting you. I always tell my clients that everything said will be kept confidential.’

Do you receive / give any feedback?

IM1	‘We have meetings where we sit and talk about problems we have encountered and the others give advice on how they would have had handled the situation. But we never mention names.’
INT2	‘We have to write keep a log of what I did that day and at the end of the month I send it to the organisation.’

The other 5 respondents answered in similar fashion that the best feedback for them is that the client is happy with their service. For the interpreters it meant that the client sought their help again and for the intercultural mediators it was that the clients were able to do things on their own.

Addressing interpreters

Why did you decide to become an interpreter?

What motivated you to become an interpreter?

How did you learn Czech/Vietnamese?

How long have you been living in the Czech Republic?

Did you attend any courses to become an interpreter? Where did you hear about these courses? Do you have any certificate?

What did you learn in these courses?

If the interpreter/ IM works for a NGO, I asked how they got their job in the NGO.

Have you noticed where interpreting services are most needed?

Are there things in the courses of becoming a PSI that you think need to be changed?

Did it ever happen to you that you forgot a term, word? If yes, what did you do in such a situation? Do you carry vocabularies with you?

INT1	'I do not carry dictionaries on me, because it does not look professional. But if there is a term, a word I do not know, I ask the speaker to explain the word to me.'
INT2	'I tried explaining it in other words or describing it.'
INT3	'Of course it happened, but usually in court hearings this does

	not happen.’
INT4	‘If I did not know the word, for examples concrete names of test tubes, I described it. But I had to mention, that “The interpreter does not know the term.”’
INT5	‘It happens. You know the words but at the moment you cannot recall it. When it is consecutive interpreting that is still okay. But at the moment I try to describe it but I make sure that the meaning is the same. During breaks I look up the term/ word.’

Did your client ever not directly answer the question? What do you do in these situations?

INT1	‘That is the difference between a PSI and a court interpreter. If I think the client is not talking about the subject anymore, I repeat the question and ask them to answer directly. Or if the answer is not too long or too deviant from the question, I interpret the, in my opinion, important things in regards to the question asked.’
INT2	‘I have not experienced this. They always answer directly because they want to finish their business as quick as possible.’
INT3	‘That happens a lot. ... I ask them to give direct answers to the question.’
INT4	‘In this case it is important to note the situation. Did the migrant not give a direct answer because he did not understand the question or is he so nervous that he cannot give a straight answer or tries to hide something? But this is a normal survival strategy in, for example, rural Vietnam.’
INT5	‘They do not answer directly. If you ask them for one short answer, they give you ten. They give this additional information to make sure the other party, or you, understand them.’

Have you noticed any cultural differences between Vietnamese and Czech? If yes, how do you interpret these?

Question 12 was open for the respondents to answer what they wished. Some gave concrete examples of differences between the Vietnamese and Czech, some gave a general answer of yes or no. I asked them elaborate in case of a positive response.

Addressing IM/workers of an NGO

Could you introduce the organisation which do you work for, what the goals of the organisation are and what your experience is with working with minorities?

How do minorities get to know about your organisation? How do you spread information about the organisation? Do you also have new clients? How do you get new clients, if you do?

How do you choose the interpreters?

Is there any long cooperation between the organisation and a migrant?

Do you need any evidence, such as a certificate, from the potential interpreter to prove their language skills?

Have you noticed where interpreting services are most needed?

Addressing clients

When did you come to the Czech Republic?

Did you learn Czech? If not, why?

Do you need an interpreter? Do you seek an interpreter or a mediator? When do you most need an interpreter, for example, if you go to the doctor's office or municipality or other bureaus?

Do you know if there is any difference between an interpreter and a mediator?

Appendix 4

Question in the online poll. In Vietnamese with English translation.

	Vietnamese	English
	Về cô, chú, Anh, chị	Male, female
	Cô, chú, anh, chị bao nhiêu tuổi?	Please state your age
	Cô chú, anh, chị sống ở CH Séc được bao nhiêu lâu?	How long have you been living in the Czech Republic?
	Cô, chú, anh, chị có trẻ con không?	Do you have children?
	Cô, chú, hoặc anh chị cần phiên dịch khi đi bác sĩ, đến bệnh viện hay công an, nhà trường hay ra ngoài ủy ban?	Do you need an interpreter when going to for example: the doctor, hospital, police stations or to the council?
	Nếu có, xin cho cháu biết cụ thể ở đâu	If yes, could you please tell me where to?
	Nếu khác, xin cho cháu biết cụ thể ở đâu	If you need an interpreter to other places, please state them here.
	Cô, chú, hoặc anh chị đã bao giờ nhờ sự giúp đỡ người phiên dịch hay là cho con cái đi cùng để dịch không?	If you need an interpreter, do you seek an interpreter or do you ask your children to interpret for you?
	Nếu có, xin cho cháu biết ở đâu.	If yes, could you please state where?
	Khi cô, chú, hoặc anh chị cần người để phiên dịch thì cô chú, anh chị sẽ ưu tiên thuê dịch vụ hay người phiên dịch?	If you need someone to interpret for you, do you seek the help of an interpreter or of a mediator?
	Cô, chú, anh, chị có nghĩ người phiên dịch và người dịch vụ khác nhau không?	Do you think there is a difference between an interpreter and mediator?
	Cô chú hoặc anh chị đã bao giờ gặp người phiên dịch sử	Have you ever met an

	dụng tiếng Việt khác phương ngữ của cô chú và anh chị hay không? Điều này có gây ảnh hưởng gì đến chất lượng dịch vụ hay không và như thế nào?	interpreter who spoke with a different accent? If yes, did the accent influence the conversation in any way?
	Cô, chú, hoặc anh chị có bao giờ học ở trường tiếng tiếp, trường phổ thông?	Have you learnt Czech?
	Nếu có, xin cho cháu biết ở đâu	If yes, could you please state where?
	Cô chú hoặc anh chị có tham dự khoá học tiếng Séc nào không? Nếu có, những khoá học này được thiết kế do trung tâm và các tổ chức Séc hay là do phong trào, hoạt động của người Việt Nam?	Have you attended any Czech courses in the Czech Republic? If yes, was it organised by Czech or by Vietnamese?
	Nếu khác, xin cho cháu biết cụ thể ở đâu	Other courses

Resumé

Diplomová práce “Specifika a perspektiva práce česko-vietnamského tlumočnicka” navazuje na předchozí bakalářskou práci, která se zabývala postavením česko-vietnamského a vietnamsko-anglického tlumočnicka.⁸² Práce ukázala, že tlumočníci do vietnamského jazyka mají v České republice v rámci své komunity vysoké sociální postavení. Tato diplomová práce se snaží představit bližší informace o komunitním tlumočení pro vietnamskou komunitu v České republice. Práce se duplikuje již existující studii Mireiy Vargas-Urpi, která v rámci své dizertační práce⁸³ zjišťovala, jaké problémy se mohou vyskytnout při komunitním tlumočení pro čínskou minoritu v Katalánsku. Jelikož toto téma je obdobné tématu této diplomové práce, před započítím výzkumu jsem kontaktovala přímo Vargas-Urpi. V jejím článku “Public Service Interpreter for Chinese Immigrants in Catalonia: A Study Based on Interpreters’, Coordinators’ and Users’ views” byl k dispozici i dotazník, jež autorka poslala klientům tlumočnických služeb. Dotazník byl dostupný pouze v čínšském jazyce a dizertační práce byla dostupná pouze v jazyce španělském, proto jsem v e-mailové konverzaci požádala Vargas-Urpi, zda by mi nemohla pospat otázky, které položila tlumočnickům a mediátorům tlumočnických služeb. Vargas-Urpi byla ochotná a poslala mi popis otázek, které jsem v rámci své diplomové práce upravila, abych je mohla aplikovat na svůj výzkum v České republice.

Práce sestává z teoretická a praktická částí. V teoretická části, je v první kapitole představena prvotní teze týkající se otázky, zda v budoucnosti budou mít tlumočníci vietnamského jazyka pracovní perspektivu. První tezí bylo, že většina Vietnamců první a druhé generace, kteří neovládají český jazyk na vysoké úrovni, se v budoucnu odstěhují, takže jediní Vietnamci, kteří zůstanou v České republice, budou umět mluvit česky i vietnamsky. Toto se ukázalo jako mylná domněnka, která byla vyvrácena všemi dotazovanými tlumočnickými a interkulturními pracovníky.

Druhá kapitola je historickým exkursem do migrace cizinců, především Vietnamců, do České republiky, a vyslovuje tradiční domněnku o uzavřenosti

⁸² Ngoc Anh Dao, “Postavení vietnamských tlumočnicků v České republice” (Bachelor’s thesis, Univerzita Palackého, 2014).

⁸³ Mireia Vargas-Urpi, “La interpretació als serveis públics i la mediació intercultural amb el col·lectiu xinès a Catalunya” (dissertation, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2012).

vietnamské komunity v zemi. Avšak v průběhu vypracovávání práce se ukázalo, že vietnamská menšina již není natolik uzavřená, jak se většina lidí domnívá. V současnosti se mnoho menšin, včetně vietnamské, účastní mnoha festivalů (či je přímo organizuje), které představují jejich kulturu. Některé nevládní organizace, které takové festivaly pořádají (spolu s nabídkou tlumočnických služeb), jsou představeny v desáté kapitole. Třetí kapitola představuje komunitní tlumočení a jeho specifika. Následují kapitoly o kodifikaci komunitního tlumočení, amatérských tlumočnicích a překladatelích a problematice neverbální komunikace při tlumočení. Osmá kapitola se zabývá tlumočnickými, interkulturními pracovníky (mediátory) a zprostředkovateli. V deváté kapitole je představeno téma důvěry v kontextu tlumočení a mezikulturního zprostředkovávání, jež v případě práce s minoritami představuje zásadní a někdy neprávem opomíjenou problematiku.

Praktická část duplikovala práci Vargas-Urpi, bylo použito dvou metod: polostrukturovaný rozhovor s tlumočnickými, mediátory a klienty tlumočnických služeb a online dotazník, který byl publikován na sociální síti s žádostí o šíření.

Polostrukturovaný rozhovor byl inspirován otázkami Vargas-Urpi, viz Přílohu 2. Rozhovor se skládá z uzavřených i otevřených otázek, které se snažily představit organizaci, pro kterou tlumočníci či mediátoři pracují, a blíže popsat náplň a specifika jejich práce. Odpovědi respondentů jsou v práci citovány v rámci přílohy. Rozhovory s tlumočnickými a interkulturními mediátory byly vedeny v češtině, rozhovory s klienty byly vedeny ve vietnamštině. Důvodem pro rozhovory ve vietnamštině byl ten, že tři respondentky neovládaly češtinu na takové úrovni, že by byly schopné vést rozhovor v českém jazyce. V rozhovoru s tlumočnickými a mediátory byli respondenti požádáni, aby popsali svůj pracovní den, zda při práci s vietnamskou komunitou se vyskytly nějaké problémy způsobené kulturními rozdíly mezi českou majoritou a vietnamskou minoritou. Dále pak byli dotázáni, zda se při jejich práci vyskytují i problémy s jazykem, konkrétně zda někdy měli klienta, jenž hovořil odlišným dialektem a tato skutečnost nějak ovlivnila jejich práci. (Stejná otázka byla posléze položena i klientům tlumočnických služeb ve vztahu k tlumočnickům a zprostředkovatelům, viz dále). Také jsem se ptala, jak se tlumočníci vypořádali se situací, kdy si při tlumočení neznali nebo si nevybavili nějaký termín.

Zajímavým tématem byl z mého pohledu i stereotyp Vietnamců, kteří ne vždy přímo odpovědí na položenou otázku. Sama jsem byla přítomna při tlumočení, kdy klient ne vždy odpověděl na to, na co byl dotazován, ale spíše odpovídal dlouze a udával detaily, které ne vždy souvisely s otázkou. Tato otázka byla položena tlumočnickům a jejich odpovědi jsou v Příloze 3.

Z hlediska komunitního tlumočení jsem chtěla od tlumočnicků vědět, zda existuje prostor pro nějaké zlepšení. INT5 odpověděla, že v kurzu, který navštívila, aby mohla získat certifikát komunitního tlumočnicka, se tlumočilo pouze do češtiny. Zmínila, že by bylo vhodné, kdyby se tlumočilo do obou jazyků. INT4 kritizoval tlumočnický, kteří netrénují svoji paměť a nesoustředí se na detaily. Předpokládám, že lepší vzdělání a trénink tlumočnicků by mohlo vést k tomu, že by se Vietnamci mohli obracet na tlumočnický a ne na zprostředkovatele.

Integrace minority do většinové společnosti by přinesla výhody pro obě strany. Potenciální konflikty, které vznikají na základě nedorozumění, by se mohly snáze vyřešit i bez přítomnosti mediátora či tlumočnicka.

Během zpracovávání diplomové práce jsem si také všimla, že role komunitního tlumočnicka se pomalu mění. Toto téma je zmíněno v deváté kapitole. Mnoho teoretiků tvrdí, že interkulturní mediátor je také tlumočnickem. V rozhovorech s tlumočnickými a pracovníky nevládních organizací je také vidět, že každý má vlastní definici, co je tlumočnick a co je interkulturní mediátor.

Online dotazník (viz Příloha 4) byl zaměřen na klienty tlumočnických služeb. Dotazník se soustředil na oblasti, ve kterých je dle názoru 33 respondentů nejvíce vyhledávána pomoc tlumočnicka, případně zprostředkovatele. Zde jsem se ptala, zda se klienti někdy setkali s tlumočnickem či zprostředkovatelem, jehož dialekt byl jiný než jejich a zda tento fakt ovlivnil tlumočení. Také jsem se ptala, zda respondenti navštívili jazykové kurzy; pokud odpověděli ano, chtěla jsem vědět které.

Doufám, že tato práce přinese nový pohled na komunitní tlumočení a také nabídne pohled na toto téma z nového hlediska – z hlediska tlumočnicka, interkulturního pracovníka a klienta tlumočnických služeb. Oslovení tlumočnicki, interkulturní pracovníci a také Vargas-Urpi vyjádřili o mou práci zájem.

Je však nutné podotknout, že výsledky této práce by neměly být vnímány jako všeobecně aplikovatelná pravidla. Tato práce může nabídnout pouze prozatímní výsledky, což je dáno rozsahem výzkumu. Pro přesnější a možná i aplikovatelnější data by bylo nutno provést širší výzkum v delším časovém rozpětí. Pouze hlubší a delší výzkum může ukázat skutečnou perspektivu komunitních tlumočnicků v České republice. Takový výzkum by však jen obtížně mohl provést jediný člověk.

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