A Descriptive-Exploratory Approach to Community Interpreting in Turkish Context: Some Insights about Professionalism and Self-perceptions

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Abstract: The present study aims to explore the level of professionalism and the self-perceptions of community interpreters who work in different settings such as hospitals, sports clubs, courts, police stations, churches, and schools in Türkiye. To this end, this study adopted a fieldwork in which 34 students, who enrolled in Community Interpreting course offered at the Department of Translation & Interpreting, administered a survey to 32 community interpreters. The goal of this awareness-raising task was twofold: 1) to provide students with opportunities to interact with market participants in order to improve empathy and observational skills; 2) to provide some insights into the current portrayal of community interpreters, their professional competencies, shortcomings, and, consequently, their self-perception. Findings have revealed that the interpreters are skilled in different interpreting modes such as consecutive and sight interpreting; however, they have difficulties in taking notes while interpreting and lack knowledge of interpreting theories and technological advances. More importantly, they cannot improve those deficiencies through an established self-development program. This research further revealed discrepancies between the expectations from the self-development programs and their contributions in practice. Overall, student feedback demonstrated positive effects of the direct interactions with the interpreters to observe the status quo of the profession.

Keywords: community interpreting, self-awareness, professional development, professional competency, fieldwork

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INTRODUCTION

Community interpreting[1] refers to the interpreting services which are provided in "settings wherever speakers of non-societal languages need to communicate to access services." (ISO 13611, 2014) In other words, these are settings other than international conferences on political or scientific issues. Instead, "it takes place in settings where the most intimate and significant issues of everyday individuals are discussed: a doctor's surgery, a social worker's or a lawyer's office, a gaol, a police station or courtroom" (Hale 2007, 25-26). Community interpreters witness people in what would otherwise be private situations, and thus, need to have additional qualifications than conference interpreters.

However, it was not until the 1990s that community interpreting came into prominence. Community interpreting began to be discussed scholarly in the First International Conference on Interpreting in Legal, Health, and Social Service Settings in 1995 (Pöchhacker 1999, 125). Later, with the increased mobility of immigrants and expats around the world, countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, and the UK established associations for community interpreters such as NAATI, NAJIT, IMIA, and NCIHC. In other words, those countries took an important step toward professionalization. Mette Rudvin (2007, 47) defines professionalism as "a natural and healthy development in the evolution of any discipline from its first tentative steps as an ad hoc profession to a discipline and a profession in its own right; indeed, it might be envisioned as a rite of passage." It provides information to interpreters about codes of ethics, the understanding of their role in community settings, employment and quality factors as well as interpreting strategies to be applied (Ibid.). In settings where the interpreter is in close contact with the participants, it is very important that the interpreter should approach the assignment from an ethical stance, be aware of the parameters affecting his/her role, and cultural challenges in interpreting.

Growing pressure from three million Syrian refugees poses significant financial challenges as well as some compound social problems such as cultural adaptation and integration strategies. Furthermore, rising inflation and the excessive depreciation of the Turkish currency have made Türkiye a very appealing destination for orthopaedics, cardiology, plastic surgery, ophthalmic, and dental

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[1] The term 'community interpreting' is also used as "public service interpreting" in the UK and "cultural interpreting" in Canada (Pöchhacker 2004, 15).

treatments (Tamer Bakar & Akyürek 2020). In these cases, community interpreting services help foreigners and refugees navigate an unfamiliar and complicated bureaucracy as well as social and cultural norms of behaviour. As a result of these changes, community interpreting practices in Türkiye have been experiencing an increase in interculturality, multilingualism, and a greater effort to communicate. However, it is possible to say that Türkiye is still in the mid-way of professional development. Neither a national accreditation system qualifies community interpreters as professional [2] nor does a representative association in Türkiye (Erkazancı Durmuş 2022, 83). Under these circumstances, it is up to the interpreters to control their decision-making process. Interpreters should be equipped with certain competencies in order to provide quality service. Against this social background, it is meaningful and timely to explore what professional competencies and deficiencies the community interpreters have and whether they could remedy those deficiencies through self-development programs.

Drawing upon Setton and Dawrant's statement (2016, 10) "a key pedagogical principle in interpreter training is incremental realism", a fieldwork was designed to prepare the 34 students for possible real life situations in order to raise the awareness of the emerging need for community interpreting in Turkish context and to discover professional requirements. Thus, this study embraces a fieldwork to provide third and fourth-year T&I students to create a network with 32 community interpreters, to take the pulse of the market dynamics, and construct their knowledge about the profession. Direct interactions with the interpreters give the students insights into the knowledge and skills of being a professional interpreter. In this respect, encapsulating numerous interpreters working in different community interpreting sub-fields such as hospitals, courtrooms, sports clubs, churches, police stations, and schools becomes an asset in terms of providing a deeper understanding of the profession and an in-depth perspective of the interpreters.

In line with the foregoing considerations, this study has been designed as a descriptive/explorative survey-based research, and seeks answers to the following research questions:

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[2] In this paper the term 'professional interpreter' refers to professionally trained or accredited interpreters.

1. What are the repercussions of (non)professionalism in community interpreting in Türkiye?

This question will be backed by two sub-questions, which are:

2. What are the competencies and deficiencies of community interpreters?

3. What level of self-awareness about professional self-development exists among the interpreters in Turkish context?

In order to arrive at answers to the above questions, we first begin by describing the interpreters' demographics and profile, including their age, gender, education level, the languages they speak, as well as their work experience, their work settings, and training in the field. We then describe the methodology and data collection process, regarding how the fieldwork was conducted. The data analysis part focuses on interpreters' self-perception regarding their professional competency and professional development, as well as performance influencing factors. As a result, we suggest that this research contributed to the effectiveness of both students and the interpreters working in the field. The findings also have potential implications that can be integrated into community interpreter training curricula.

COMMUNITY INTERPRETING STUDIES IN TÜRKIYE

The 1990s was a landmark in the history of Interpreting Studies, shifting the focus from prescriptive approaches towards "interactionist approaches" (Pöchhacker 2004, 78-79). The intense migration flows between the countries resulted in the increased need for interpreters who could enable communication between service providers and clients in a variety of settings, such as courtrooms and healthcare facilities, which, in turn, led to the emergence of community interpreting (Pöchhacker 2004, 78; Snell-Hornby 2010, 368). In this sense, community interpreters have become important agents mediating between different cultures and languages. In the 2010s, on the other hand, a wave of anti-government uprisings in the Arab world, known as the Arab Spring, caused a civil war in Syria. Hence, almost 7 million Syrians were forced to leave their country and 5 million were granted refugee status in the neighbouring countries[3]. At this point, Türkiye has become a country that hosts the world's largest refugee population (UNHCR 2022). According to a recent UNHCR report, there are 3.7 million Syrians living in Türkiye (UNHCR 2022), which

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[3] See https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/#When%20did%20the%20Syrian%20refugee%20crisis%20begin?

dramatically increased the visibility of community interpreting in the country. The increased numbers also paved the way for the increased scholarly works on community interpreting, particularly in the refugee context. Refugee interpreting services have been scrutinized both from the perspectives of the refugees (Doğan 2017; Koçlu 2019) and the interpreters (Kahraman Duru 2010; Koçlu 2019; Erdoğan 2021; Polat Ulaş 2021). The fieldwork has revealed that most of the interpreters providing services for refugees also have migration backgrounds themselves (Erdoğan 2021, 142; Polat Ulaş 2021, 150). This might be the reason that most refugee interpreters lack training in the field of translation and interpreting (Kahraman Duru 2010, 109; Koçlu 2019, 125; Polat Ulaş 2021, 150). Hence, it is hardly surprising that community interpreting delivered within the scope of the refugee context has not become fully institutionalized in Türkiye, which emphasizes the need for training (Kahraman Duru 2010, 114; Koçlu 2019, 127; Polat Ulaş 2021, 3).

Healthcare interpreting services are also provided, not only for refugees, but also for foreign residents, as well as tourists, including those arriving in Türkiye for medical reasons such as hair transplantation, dental care, aesthetic surgeries, etc. For this reason, the studies conducted on healthcare interpreting have increased in recent years. Different aspects of the profession have been analysed by a variety of scholars (Ross and Dereboy 2009; Öztürk 2015; Turan 2016; Şener 2017; Duman 2018; Katar 2019; Toker 2019; Özsöz 2019; Erkmen 2020, Şener Erkırtay 2021; Creeze et al. 2022). Critical evaluation has been directed towards the issues of power relations between the participants and the role of interpreters (Öztürk 2015; Şener 2017; Duman 2018; Özsöz 2019; Şener Erkırtay, 2021), as well as market dynamics of healthcare interpreting (Öztürk 2015; Erkmen 2020). Thus, it can be asserted that the social and communicative nature of the profession has been a major source of interest in healthcare interpreting in Türkiye. The studies suggest that healthcare interpreters take on roles as active participants (Özsöz 2019; Şener Erkırtay 2021), which leads them to assume diverse roles in addition to that of interpreter (Öztürk 2015; Şener 2017), possibly leading to unethical decisions (Şener 2017).

When compared to other community interpreting settings, the studies conducted on court interpreting in Türkiye are limited, perhaps due to the inability to access authentic data in the courtrooms and the reluctance of court interpreters to explain their own opinions and

experience regarding the profession. Yet, there are invaluable studies (Doğan 2004; Eryılmaz 2020; Aral Duvan 2021) that paint a picture of the court interpreting services and their working conditions. One of the conspicuous findings is that anyone claiming to speak a language can legally be employed as a court interpreter (Eryılmaz 2020, 104), which might result in inaccurate interpretations, and hence, the convictions of innocent people. This could result from a lack of professionalization and institutionalization, as well as awareness of the sensitive nature of the job.

In recent years, there have also been more studies conducted on other community interpreting settings, i.e., emergency and disaster interpreting (Bulut and Kurultay 2001; Kahraman 2003; Doğan and Kahraman 2011; Kurultay and Bulut 2012; Doğan 2016), sign language interpreting (Conker 2017; Gökçe 2018; Oral and Okyayuz 2020; Doğan 2021; Şen Bartan et al. 2022), sports interpreting (Uyanık 2015; Bulut 2016, 2018; Katar 2019), and church interpreting (Balcı Tison 2016; Tekgül 2020). Within this context, Ebru Diriker's (2022, 196) findings also revealed that sign language interpreters and football interpreters have become more visible in the media. Thus, a detailed scrutiny of the studies reveals that (non)professionalism is a common topic of debate in most community interpreting settings. Moreover, regardless of their work settings, interpreters seem to be active participants undertaking additional responsibilities extending beyond their role as 'interpreters', in stark contrast to the perceptions of interpreters as simply 'conduits' or 'non-persons'. In such a working environment, it is deemed urgent to create awareness regarding the profession itself. In what follows, an attempt will be made to answer the question of how a project-based interpreting class can help promote awareness among both the students and interpreters.

METHODOLOGY
Case Study
Case studies are commonly applied in Interpreting Studies, and can be defined simply as "an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units" (Gustafson 2017). Since this study has been undertaken principally in order to focus attention on community interpreters in Türkiye, a case study based on a fieldwork approach in the form of explorative didactics of endeavour is appropriate. With the intent of exploring the case under this study, a survey-based approach was adopted as a data collection

method. In the following section, the fieldwork process and data collection method will be discussed more in detail.

Data Collection Method

This study is based on a project conducted in an elective course entitled 'Community Interpreting' in the spring semester of 2021-2022. The course had an enrolment of a total of 34 third and fourth-year T&I students. The authors prepared a questionnaire in Turkish, which after being approved by the ethics committee, was submitted to the students. The target population was limited to community interpreters. The students' task was to find a community interpreter, whose suitability for the study was then approved by the authors. Upon obtaining the interpreters' written informed consent, the students conducted fieldwork by giving them the questionnaires to complete between May and June 2022. The questionnaire comprised 21 questions and covered the following major topics:

- Education, experience, languages, and the settings they work in
- Professional development
- Self-perception about their professional competency
- Self-perception about their role
- Performance influencing factors

The questionnaires were administered either in Google Forms or printed format. In total, 32 interpreters were contacted and all participated in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographics of Interpreters

As stated above, 32 interpreters completed the questionnaires, first, giving information about their age, gender, residency, education level, and languages.

Data analysis reveals that there is not a significant gender disparity among interpreters and there is a fairly equitable distribution of men and women, with 17 male and 15 female interpreters. Ages range from 22 to 64, the average age is 43. The interpreters reside in different cities from across Türkiye. Most (n=21) are from Izmir, 4 are from Istanbul, and 3 are from Adana. The rest reside in Antalya, London, Mardin, or Yalova. The variety in the cities might also indicate the diverse profile of end-users; end-users are mostly comprised of refugees in cities such as Mardin and Adana, while other cities, such as Istanbul and Izmir, have a reputation for providing health tourism

services. In terms of their education levels, most of the interpreters (n=19) have undergraduate degrees. However, 6 have graduate degrees (5 of them have master's degrees and 1, a Ph.D. degree), while 3 are high-school graduates and 4 have associate's degrees. At the other end of the spectrum, interpreters provide interpretation services in various languages such as English, German, Arabic, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, and Chinese, even encapsulating rarely spoken languages such as Turkoman, Bulgarian, and Syriac.

Profile of Interpreters

This section deals with the questions posed regarding the professional profile of interpreters, namely their experience in the field, their community interpreting setting(s), training in translation and interpreting, and their certificate(s).

More than half of the interpreters (59.4%, n=19) were found to have more than five years of experience working as community interpreters. The group of interpreters with 3 to 5 years of experience came in second with a proportion of 22% (n=7). Just 6.3% (n=2) of interpreters have been working as interpreters for less than a year, compared to 13% (n=4) of interpreters with 1-3 years of experience. The findings show that the majority are experienced interpreters.

The manner of the interpreters' work was the subject of another query. Over half of the interpreters (43.8%, n=14) are employed as in-house staff interpreters, although others also work as freelancers (31.3%, n=10), volunteers (21.9%, n=7), or on a part-time basis (15.6%, n=5).

As for the settings they work in, the majority of the interpreters work in healthcare settings including hospitals (71.9%, n=23) and dental clinics (3.1%, n=1). Among the others, 31 interpreters asserted that they work in legal settings such as courtrooms (46.9%, n=15), police stations (40.6%, n=13), immigration offices (3,1%, n=1), consulates and ministries (3,1%, n=1), and notaries (3,1%, n=1). The remaining interpreters confirmed that they work in sports clubs (18.8%, n=6), in schools (15.6%, n=5), and in a church (3.1%, n=1). According to the statistics, legal and medical settings are the most common ones. However, this study also attempted to include those with experiences in a wide range of settings, such as sports clubs, churches, schools, etc. Thus, it is hoped to draw as broad as possible picture of the market dynamics, which will, in turn, enrich the discussions. This study is an attempt to paint a generalised picture of

community interpreting, but we are aware that a detailed focus on each community setting would yield useful results.

The training was another issue raised in the questionnaire. This issue is of great importance in the field of translation and interpreting because it is directly linked to the interpreters' self-awareness as to their role. Satisfactorily, 53.1% (n=17) of the interpreters indicated that they received some training. For the interpreters who answered 'YES', a further question elicited the translation program they graduated from. The distribution of their educational background could be listed as follows: 61.1% (n=11) have undergraduate degrees in the field of translation and interpreting. 22.2% (n=4) have associate's degrees, while 16.7% (n=3) have master's degrees. Despite the lack of a Ph.D. degree, the numbers seem quite satisfactory in terms of training.

Interpreters' Self-Perceptions of Professional Competency

The aim of this section is to provide insight into the interpreters' self-perceptions of professional competency. Sternberg (2005, 15) defines developing competencies as "the ongoing process of the acquisition and consolidation of a set of skills needed for performance in one or more life domains at the journeyman-level or above". Sternberg (2005, 17) presents a model to show "how abilities can develop into competencies, and competencies into expertise". According to this model, individuals can become experts with focused practice, learning, motivation, thinking, knowledge, and metacognition (Ibid.). Hence, exploring interpreters' professional competencies and determining their deficiencies is a valid way to create self-awareness and help them become fully-fledged interpreters.

In this regard, the survey also included a specific question answered with a 5-point- Likert scale. This question aimed to uncover the interpreters' self-awareness in community interpreting settings regarding their interpreting skills, role definitions and boundaries, ethical principles, and knowledge of theoretical and technological advances.

As for interpreting skills, a number of interpreters reported being capable of interpreting in different modes. In terms of directionality, 22 interpreters rated 5, i.e., "totally agree", regarding their ability to interpret in both directions consecutively, for English and Turkish. Evaluating their own performances, 23 interpreters asserted that they could perform sight interpreting during an assignment when needed. Despite their competency in different interpreting modes, however, the

results revealed a lack of competency in note-taking techniques. Assessing their note-taking skills during their interpreting performances, there was a fairly even balance between points 1 (totally disagree) and 5 (totally agree); 7 interpreters indicated that they were not able to take notes, rating themselves 1, while 10 interpreters said the opposite, rating 5. This result for note-taking is a significant finding, pointing to the need for integrating strategies for these skills into interpreter training programs and curriculums.

Another topic raised in the survey was role. 20 interpreters rated 5, indicating clear awareness of their role definition and role boundaries as community interpreters. In the same way, 19 interpreters reported knowing the ethical principles required to work as professional community interpreters. However, the results differ for the topic "knowledge of theoretical and technological advances in community interpreting settings". Only 11 indicated that they follow theoretical and technological advances, which is quite problematic. Experience is, of course, important for the profession; however, a professional interpreter should also have theoretical information, especially when dealing with ethical dilemmas. That is why theoretical knowledge is crucial in the decision-making process.

Apart from these two problematic issues, note-taking skills and theoretical and technological knowledge, the respondents' answers clearly showed that, in general terms, there is self-awareness among the interpreters. More than half (56.3%, n=18) consider that being fluent in a foreign language alone is not sufficient to become a qualified translator/interpreter. This view is supported by the fact that most (n=17) of the interpreters have received training in the translation and interpreting department. In addition to the training in the field, 20 interpreters, the majority, also have a certificate in the field of community interpreting. Out of those 20 interpreters, 14 work in healthcare settings. Surprisingly, most of the interpreters (10 out of 12 interpreters) who do not have certificates in the field also work in healthcare settings.

At this point, community interpreting services are known to be more professionalized in the countries hosting the highest numbers of refugees, such as the USA, UK, Australia, and Canada, to name just a few. There are numerous associations established for community

interpreters[4] in those countries and certificate is required to work in community interpreting settings. In Türkiye, on the other hand, Anadolu University provides a certificate program in which translator and interpreter candidates are informed about professional and sectoral developments. Despite this attempt towards professionalization, the participants' answers showed that, in Türkiye, a certificate is not a prerequisite for working in the field of community interpreting in contrast to the practices in developed countries. The interpreters were asked whether they were required to have any certificates related to community interpreting before starting to work as community interpreter. A large number of interpreters (65.6%, n=21) replied "NO", while only 34.4% (n= 11) replied "YES" to this question. This finding is confirmed by the practice in healthcare settings and legal settings in Türkiye, where language competency overrides any other professional competencies (Şener 2017; Eryılmaz 2020), which clearly shows a lack of professionalization (Eryılmaz & Demez 2021, 133). In this regard, the self-awareness and self-development of the interpreters become even more crucial, because each one needs to have their own quality control mechanisms. In the following section, interpreters' opinions about their professional development will be analysed.

Interpreters' Self-Perceptions of Professional Development
The lack of a credentialing system for community interpreters' professional competencies in Türkiye underlined the importance of self-awareness regarding the interpreters' own professional self-development. To explore this issue further, 4 related questions were added. First of all, 20 interpreters confirmed that they participate in professional self-development programs such as seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. and they consider these programs are potentially valuable in many ways. Among these, the highest ranking is "field terminology knowledge" (65.6%, n=21) such as medical or legal terminology, and "knowledge of ethical principles" (65.6%, n=21). Following the terminology and ethical principles, the interpreters underscored the importance of "stress management" (59.4%, n=19), "interpreting technologies" (53.1%, n=17)," consecutive interpreting skills" (50%, n=16), and "note-taking

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[4] Some of them could be named as follows: NAJIT- National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators; CHIA- California Healthcare Interpreting Association; NAATI- A National Accreditation of Authority for Translators and Interpreters.

techniques" (43.8%, n=14), respectively. Considering the emotional dimension, among the most controversial topics in community interpreting settings (Şener 2017; Polat- Ulaş 2021), it is interesting to see the knowledge of terminology and ethical principles take precedence over stress management in community settings.

The interpreters were posed an extra question about the contributions of self-development programs. According to their responses, the contributions are numerous, but also seem to be contradictory. With respect to the contributions of self-development programs, 50% (n=10) of the interpreters indicated that they have been informed about professional "ethical principles", and 45% (n=9) confirmed those programs helped them expand their knowledge about "technological advances". Only 35% (n=7) underscored the "working conditions of community interpreters in the field". Even though these are of great importance in providing knowledge about ethical principles and terminology, their greatest contribution to the interpreters is not in these areas, but relates to the role issue. 80% (n=16) of the interpreters stated that they have gained more information about their professional role, even though they underlined the importance of ethical principles and terminology in the previous question. This implies that the professional development programs are inadequate in raising interpreters' awareness regarding ethical principles and national standards, which should be taken into consideration and integrated into the programs and curriculum.

Factors Influencing Performance
The last section of the survey deals with the performance-influencing factors. When asked whether any negative factors affected their interpreting performances, half of the interpreters (n=16) answered "YES". Hence, it was detected that there are many factors affecting their performances such as "excessive working hours" (6.3%, n=1), "payment problems" (6.3%, n=1), "psychological challenges" (6.3%, n=1), "establishing an emotional bond with patients" (6.3%, n=1), and "additional irrelevant tasks" (6.3%, n=1).

Hale (2007, 145), on the other hand, asserted that the performances and strategy preferences of interpreters can be affected by other participants involved in the interaction. Seating positions, eye contact, turn-taking, as well as expectations and requests of other participants from the interpreter might have an impact on the strategies applied. Since community interpreters function in a participatory framework, to

face with a number of performance-influencing factors which would affect the interpreting activity is inevitable. 4 out of 16 interpreters indicated "age" as an external factor influencing interpreting output, and seems logical that the client's age may affect the interpreter's strategies. For instance, if the client is a child, the language should be modified accordingly. The other two factors are "gender" (18.8%, n=3) and "marital status" (18.8%, n=3). It is a fact that the gender of both interpreters and clients might affect the strategies applied. Female interpreters might need to leave young children to attend an interpreting assignment (Şan and Kahraman Duru 2020, 17). On the other hand, the gender of the client might also hinder the interpreting process. Female patients might be reluctant to be in the same room with male interpreters in healthcare settings, and male patients might be reluctant to be interviewed by female interpreters. It was also confirmed that gender differences might be related to patients' satisfaction in doctor-patient consultations (Bischoff et al. 2008, 1). A group of studies has found that physicians make fewer statements to female patients and answer fewer of their questions, implying that they tend to prefer male patients (Ibid.). These results may also apply in other community settings.

"Marital status" was another unexpected factor playing a role in interpreting strategies. Indeed, it was confirmed that the marital status of the interpreters affects their job satisfaction, for example, in South Korea, married interpreters were found statistically to have greater satisfaction than the unmarried (Lee 2017, 438). By extension, it is possible that the marital status of the interpreters plays a decisive role in community interpreting in Türkiye.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Struggling with the challenges in managing the socioeconomic and intercultural dimensions of displacement, Türkiye has hosted the largest refugee population (nearly 3.5 million Syrians) of the world in the last nine years. Along with this refugee issue, Türkiye has begun to attract great attention from Western and Middle Eastern tourists seeking discounted health care, as a result of the economic crisis and the excessive depreciation of the Turkish lira. These circumstances force Türkiye to increase dialogic interactivity between the parties in the form of community interpreting in order to meet the various needs in intercultural communication. Concerning these rapid developments in the field, this study explored the self-perception of interpreters in a

variety of community interpreting settings, such as healthcare, courtroom, sports clubs, police stations, churches, and schools regarding their professional competency and development through a questionnaire-based survey.

The data analysis manifests clear evidence of the professional competencies as well as the deficiencies of community interpreters. To summarize the results, the interpreters were confirmed to be skilled in different interpreting modes, i.e., consecutive and sight interpreting. However, interpreters acknowledged difficulties in applying certain note-taking techniques while interpreting. This result cannot be ignored, as it is likely to affect the quality of service provided. The other important problematic issues raised were the knowledge of interpreting theories and technological advances. Upon closer examination, it was observed that the interpreters are unable to overcome these professional deficiencies purely through self-development programs.

Another finding of this research highlights the existence of self-awareness among the interpreters. Most interpreters (56.3%) are aware that fluency in a foreign language alone is not sufficient to be fully-fledged interpreters, and majority (20 interpreters) have been awarded a certificate in the field of community interpreting. They also asserted that they participate in self-development programs such as seminars, conferences, or workshops. Interpreters attempt to improve themselves professionally, but there remains a lack of awareness among employers, who do not necessarily deem it important for interpreters to acquire a professional certificate. This result may have repercussions in community interpreting in Türkiye regarding level of professionalism.

Despite the interpreters' self-awareness, there exist factors negatively influencing their strategies. In addition to "excessive working hours", "payment problems", "psychological challenges", "establishing an emotional bond with patients", and "additional irrelevant tasks", the interpreters underlined other key factors, namely, "age", "gender", and "marital status". These factors shed light on the need to prepare students for the particular working conditions encountered in this profession. Last but not least, there occurred discrepancies between the expectations and reality. Professional self-development programs are found to be crucial in terms of informing interpreters about field terminology and ethical principles. Yet, interpreters revealed that those programs focus more on role issues

than other equally important areas. This might be considered one of the results of the discrepancy between theory and practice. There seems to be a mismatch between what the self-development programs should provide, and what they provide in practice.

As Olohan (2007, 60) states, to be successful in business life, it is of great importance that students develop their knowledge and skills, and become informed about the "realistic understanding of employment prospects" (Ibid.). Thus, it is necessary to turn attention to sector-specific surveys to gain a clear picture of the profession. In that sense, the results of this research provide a deeper understanding of the current state of the profession, and to provide contributions that are multifaceted. The project was generally well received by both the students and interpreters. The data gathered from this research on the interpreting market dynamics provided useful feedback that served as a springboard to make tangible suggestions about how the interpreting curriculum could be revised. The shortcomings identified in this study could be rectified in the curricula of the undergraduates, which is planned as a next step. Bearing in mind the significance of professionalization as a process rooted in university training, the following issues would be suitable for incorporation into the curricula: note-taking techniques, interpreting theories, technological advances, and specific working conditions such as stress management and emotion control. What is more, in such a working environment where the principles are not clear, professional solidarity can be achieved with the establishment of professional associations.

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