
FINDING HIDDEN POPULATIONS IN THE FIELD OF TRANSLATING AND INTERPRETING: A METHODOLOGICAL MODEL FOR IMPROVING ACCESS TO NON-PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS WORKING IN PUBLIC SERVICE SETTINGS. / DESCUBRIR POBLACIONES OCULTAS EN EL CAMPO DE LA TRADUCCIÓN Y LA INTERPRETACIÓN: UNA PROPUESTA METODOLÓGICA PARA MEJORAR EL ACCESO A TRADUCTORES E INTÉRPRETES NATIVOS EN LOS SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS.

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Abstract: Translation and interpreting in public services is an activity often performed by practitioners with no background training in translation and interpreting. The challenges in accessing this population of research participants in a previous study (Lomeña Galiano, 2018) led us to label them a *hidden population*. If these groups mostly known as “non-professionals” remain in the shadows, because of social dynamics, there is a risk that the collection and production of data are biased due to the lack of representativeness of the samples, with respect to a part of the population that is in charge of a large number of translation and interpretation assignments, especially in public service settings. There is, however, a methodological gap and a lack of guidance for those researching in the area as to how to negotiate the framework for the participation “non-professional” translators and interpreters in the most efficient way. To address that issue, this paper presents some tools used in social and human sciences to improve relationships with hidden populations. Specifically, this article focuses on the interaction between researcher and participants and the relevance of the notions of reflexivity and rapport (tuning) in this interaction. The aim of this study is to identify key points in the methodology to approach the population in participatory studies in order to facilitate access and the consequent participation of hidden populations in studies on translation and interpretation in public services.

Keywords: Social research; Participant recruitment; Hidden population; Non-professional translators and interpreters; Public services.

Resumen: La traducción e interpretación en los servicios públicos es una actividad desempeñada, con frecuencia, por personas sin estudios en traducción. La dificultad de acceder a dichas personas en un estudio anterior (Lomeña Galiano, 2018) nos llevó a asignarles la categoría de *población oculta*. El riesgo de que estos grupos conocidos especialmente como “no profesionales” permanezcan en la sombra debido a las dinámicas sociales es que se produzcan sesgos en la recogida y producción de datos debido a la no representatividad de las muestras respecto de una parte de la población que se encarga de gran cantidad de los encargos de traducción e interpretación, especialmente en los servicios públicos. Se constata, no obstante, un vacío metodológico que oriente a quienes investigan en el área para negociar el marco de la participación de traductores e intérpretes “nativos” o “no profesionales” del modo más eficiente. Por ello, este artículo expone algunas herramientas empleadas en ciencias sociales y humanas para mejorar la relación con grupos de población oculta. En concreto, la propuesta se centra en la interacción entre el investigador y los participantes y la relevancia que adquieren en esa interacción las nociones de reflexividad y de *rapport* (sintonía). Se pretende identificar puntos clave en la metodología de aproximación a la población en estudios participativos para facilitar el acceso y la consiguiente participación de poblaciones ocultas en estudios de sobre la traducción e interpretación en servicios públicos.

Palabras clave: Investigación social; Captación de participantes; Población oculta; Traductores e intérpretes no profesionales; Servicios públicos.

1. Introduction

Hidden or hard-to-reach populations as research participants are those population segments whose characteristics set them apart from the mainstream and either render them unknown to the community, or subject them to discrimination or aversion (Hatton and Fisher, 2018). Perceiving themselves to be unknown or disliked, some agents expect a deprecating attitude and often adopt social camouflaging strategies. From a research standpoint, the difficulties entailed in identifying this population lead to major biases due to low sample representativity and thus a lack of knowledge surrounding their influence on social dynamics or their own specific dynamics and characteristics (Wiebel, 1990). These groups can be found throughout all socioeconomic sectors and translation and interpretation are no exception. Specifically, “non-professional” practitioners have been marginalized for decades in translation and interpreting studies (TIS) because of the threat they have been considered to pose to professional practitioners (Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva, 2012; Aguilar-Solano, 2015) and because of the potential threat they pose to the quality of translation and interpretation (Berk-Seligson, 2002).

In recent years, we have seen a growing number of publications which study translation and interpretation as a social practice from a participant or agent-based empirical approach (Chesterman, 2009; Saldanha and O’Brien, 2013). This approach is even more relevant in the public service sector (Böser, 2016; Flynn and van Doorslaer, 2016). The shift towards the social aspects of translation has led to a change in data collection and analysis methods and techniques. Furthermore, during the past decade, a growing number of researchers have highlighted the importance of paying attention to non-professional translators and interpreters as a group, in order to fully understand the social practice they carry out (Hale, 2007; Angelelli, 2008; Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva, 2012; Schäffner, Kredens, and Fowler, 2013; Aguilar-Solano, 2015; Antonini et al. 2017), particularly given that non-professional translation and interpreting happens throughout all areas of the translation field, as Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva (2012) mention.

This approach requires the cooperation of translators and interpreters, regardless of their educational background. Judging from the experience of some researchers, the participant recruitment phase is a delicate stage with a number of major obstacles. Some authors have mentioned the low-level of participation (Monzó-Nebot, 2005), as well as difficulties accessing the target population (Ortega Herráez and Foulquié Rubio, 2008). Since the 1980s, researchers have generally alluded to a general distance between the professional and scholarly communities which has yet to be resolved (Ladmiral, 1979; Robinson, 1991; Kelly, 2000; Campos Plaza and Ortega Arjonilla, 2005; Monzó-Nebot, 2005; Lavault, 2006; Angelelli, 2008). The study we performed in 2018 as part of a doctoral thesis on professionalism of *native* or *non-professional* and *professional* court translators and interpreters in France and Spain (Lomeña Galiano, 2018) confirmed both of those obstacles. Namely, we faced the greater difficulty in accessing non-professional translators and interpreters, who upon first contact refused our invitation to participate in the study and put forth reasons demeaning their own work as legal translators and interpreters. The fact that we managed to identify (but not interview) them led us to consider them a “hidden population” (Lomeña Galiano, 2018: 316). This is the common term used in social sciences for those sectors of the population that are hard to reach for researchers (and society in general) due to

their possessing traits with a negative social connotation. This makes them vulnerable and sets them apart from the rest of the community. Ellard-Gray et al. (2015) mention ethnic and cultural minorities, sexual minorities, and women, among other segments of the population. In our case, the trait which differentiated non-professional translators and interpreters and relegated them to an unfavorable position was their lacking a specialized diploma. The challenge involved in researching this population, according to the aforementioned authors, is finding sampling techniques to identify and overcome the existing individual barriers to participation such as mistrust or unavailability in terms of time or physical presence. This second challenge, which is more of a relational than technical nature, is what we will attempt to address in our proposal.

Faced with the need for TIS to get closer to hidden populations, this paper will attempt to put forward a few guidelines for the researcher-participant relationship which we hope can be a tool to help researchers successfully navigate the negotiation phase when the researcher approaches participants for the first time and asks them to participate. Firstly, we will critically examine some participant and agent-based public service interpreting and translation (PSIT) studies, and later we will offer a hypothesis about the non professional population 'hiding' which led us to consider them a potential *hidden population*. Later, we will adapt two notions related to interaction in social research to TIS. Our approach is grounded on the subjectivity which is inherent in studies within the so-called social turn in TIS and relies on two tools commonly used in social studies in other disciplines, reflexivity and rapport. The former requires researchers to become aware of both their own and their research frameworks' positioning within the field under examination. The latter claims for an horizontal relationship between subjects, between researchers and participants as an essential trigger for recruitment and retention.

2. PSIT recruitment methodology

Meister (2018) recently stated that the current generation of translation researchers is placing great focus on issues of methodology. At the same time, the author highlights the lack of studies which adapt a general theory and methodology to our discipline. A lot of the current scientific output in PSIT comes from analyzing the opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of agents. If we review scientific output requiring translators and interpreters (hidden or not), we find methodological aspects mentioned and justified in terms of decisions on sampling and data collection tools. There is no data, however, on the researcher-participant relationship or participant involvement in the research. Ortega Herráez and Foulquié Rubio (2008), for example, explain that they used a chain or snowball sampling technique in order to identify interpreters working for the police in Spain, giving them two questionnaires to complete.¹ In an ethnographic study focusing on public service interpreting for the Chinese community in Catalonia, Vargas-Urpi (2012) sought the cooperation of non-professional and professional public service translators and interpreters. The author also describes the chain sampling method which allowed them to interview the target population. Other colleagues relay their successful experiences of recruiting participants through institutions, in other words, through an official registry which offers population data (Hsieh, 2006; Angelelli, 2016) or through sign language interpreter e-groups (Dickinson and Turner, 2008: 236). However, none of

¹ Chain or snowball sampling is a non-probability recruitment technique where each participant in the sample provides names of potential participants.

these studies refers to the interaction/negotiation framework under which interpreters accepted to participate or whether there were interpreters who decided to reject the invitation. These aspects were also not included in the methodology of studies such as Ibrahim (2004) on court interpreters in Malaysia, Rudvin and Tomassini (2008) on mediating in the health care and education fields in Italy, as well as Gustafsson, Norström, and Fioretos' (2013) study on public service interpreters and their role as *cultural brokers*.

Regarding methodological aspects in recruitment attempts explained in previously mentioned studies, we see that emphasis was placed on the identification phase and less, if at all, on the negotiation phase with participants. Nevertheless, this phase is crucial for successful access since it is the first interaction between the researcher and the participant during which the "communication contract" (Demazière and Dubar, 1997) or agreement is reached. This contract can include a presentation of informed consent in which the researcher clarifies the purposes of the research, the participants' role, etc. and, without which, the research with the participants should not continue for ethical reasons (Davies, 2008; Silverman, 2014).

Some authors, however, do point to a reluctance or mistrust among the identified potential participants (Ortega Herráez, 2006). In our own previously referenced 2018 study (Lomeña Galiano, 2018), we also described our difficulties reaching non-professional population working in the legal realm. Neither our study nor Ortega Herráez mention the (failed) methodology used to solicit their participation. Just as in the previously mentioned studies, there was no description of the interaction among participants when the population was identified and the field work was done. Retroactively contextualizing our actions as researchers as well as the outcome in the negotiation phase with a likely hidden population would have greatly contributed to designing a negotiation framework for the participants in future research in the field of PSIT. What strategies were adopted in the first stages of the interaction? Did these strategies encourage people to say yes or did they push people to refuse? Did the participant relationship last throughout the study? The answers to these questions will help us discover the most appropriate means to recruit and foster loyalty among translator and interpreter participants in social studies.

On the other hand, methodology guides aimed at young researchers (Hale and Napier, 2013; Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013; Angelelli and Baer, 2016) are of great help in designing participant-based research, since they reveal the underlying framework and assist in its preparation, implementation, and analysis.² No analysis, however, is made about the relationship among the participants. There is also no reference to hidden populations, and therefore, we still have no methodological advice about how to reach to them. Regarding the negotiating framework of possible collaboration, in the publication *Research Methods in Interpreting. A practical Resource*, by Hale and Napier, a number of aspects which an informed consent should have in order to recruit informants are highlighted (Hale and Napier, 2013: 48-49). However, this does not lay out a path based on the specificities of our field.

In order to offer a tailor-made methodology for TIS to help recruit hidden populations of public service translators and interpreters, we will first show how the translation and interpreting field is structured in order to understand the social dynamics which may lead to deprecating attitude and hiding in previous studies. Secondly, we will show how TIS applies to theoretical-methodological tools in social sciences in order to remedy those dynamics which make non-translation translators and interpreters a hidden or hard-to-reach population.

² See chapter 2 of Saldanha and O'Brien (2013), chapters 2 and 4 of Hale and Napier (2013), as well as part III of Angelelli and Baer (2016).

3. Translation: A challenging field

3.1 Professionals and non-professionals: insiders, outsiders

In PSIT, it is not always necessary to have a translation and interpreting degree to work as a translator or interpreter. Often, being bilingual is enough to enter the market, and any previous training or lack thereof is considered adequate to make a living from one of these two activities. Literature usually defines as *professionals* those who enter the market with a higher education degree in translation or interpreting (Blasco Mayor and Jimenez Ivars, 2011; Baraldi and Gavioli, 2016; Valero Garcés and Lázaro Gutiérrez, 2016). On the other hand, those translators and interpreters who enter the profession on the strength of their bilingualism and no specific training in translation or interpreting are referred to in a number of ways: “natural” (Harris, 2017), “native” (Toury, 1995; Lomeña Galiano, 2018), “unprofessional” (Hale, 2007; Harris, 2017), “untrained” (Pöchhacker and Kadric, 1999; Meyer, 2001), or “lay” (Delisle, 1984; Pöchhacker, 2004; Ticca, 2017). Currently, the most common descriptor is *non-professional* (translator and interpreter). This second group is very present in our society (Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva, 2012; Harris, 2017) in sectors such as audiovisual translation (Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez, 2006), interpretation in conflict areas (Muñoz Martín, 2011), and especially public service settings (Hale, 2007; Bancroft, 2015; Martínez-Gómez, 2015; Palomo Álamo, 2017), where non-professional translation is the norm rather than the exception according to Pérez-González and Susam-Saraeva (2012).

Martínez-Gómez (2015), in the entry “Non-professional Interpreters” in *The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting* defines this population as follows:

Non-professionals interpreters are individuals with a certain degree of bilingual competence who perform interpreting tasks on an ad hoc basis without economic compensation or prior specific training. Their awareness of the skills required to perform their interpreting duties correctly and the ethics constraints thereto [sic] is shaped by their own institutions and subject to the expectations expressed by the parties to the encounters they mediate in. Most often they conduct their tasks individually and in isolation, which translated into little visibility, lack of group solidarity and prestige, and lack of public credibility, even if they may receive immediate social recognition by the monolingual speakers for whom they enable communication. (Martínez-Gómez, 2015: 417)

The author highlights these practitioners’ bilingualism and lack of formal education as their most objective traits. She goes on to mention more negative relational and emotional aspects, such as isolation and low public credibility.

Palomo Álamo (2017), in her study on ideologies and borders in translation and interpreting studies regarding “non-professionals”, mentions that this name reflects “a concept of what academics consider true and legitimate in the field” (17).³ And, even though in many cases one cannot tell if the authors mean to set translators and interpreters with specialized training (professionals) apart from those lacking such training, the outcome is the translator and interpreter professional community being ultimately split into “professionals” and the outsiders, the “non-professionals”, a different group of individuals which are credited with shared characteristics.

Upon reviewing the scholarly literature on professional aspects of legitimacy in the translation world, a previous study allowed us to identify two positions, which we called

³ All quotes in languages other than English were translated by the author.

“understanding” and “protective” (“compréhensive” and “protectrice” in French, see Lomeña Galiano, 2018). The first position advocates for the professional translation field belonging solely to those having formal qualifications in translation or interpreting (Delisle, 1984; Pujol Puente, 2000; Abril Martí, 2006). Delisle (1984), as well as authors such as Jeannette Oerste (2000: vii) or Pujol Puente (2000), argue for a protective position based on the widespread existence of formal university education. Specifically, Wadensjö (2007) lists a lack of specialized training as a hindrance to professionalization of the group and its activity. At times, instead of addressing remarks towards the system employing them, non-professionals themselves are antagonized, such as in Delisle (1984: 34), who calls them “false bilinguals”, or Pujol Puente (2000: 227) who draws a distinction between those with translation degrees and “intruders” (*intrusos* in Spanish in the sense of outsiders) in a vital area. On another occasion, this time specifically referring to public service interpreting, non-professionals are associated with a disregard for the well-being of those being served. They are also associated with the economic losses that an institution can suffer should the service occur “without qualified community interpreters” (Bancroft, 2015: 222). With this type of discourse, it should not come as a shock that just as Bancroft (2015: 219) points out, the group of interpreters who are trained often adds the adjective *professional* to the definition of *community interpreting*, in order to distance themselves from *the others*, non-professionals.

The second position examines both non-professional and professional practitioners. It is a position that has gained strength in the last ten years and is observed in the international conferences *NPIT-Non-Professional Interpreting and Translation* (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018) as well as in recent collective publications (Evrin and Meyer, 2016; Antonini et al. 2017; Monzó-Nebot and Wallace, 2020). Some studies within this position have highlighted the role played by non-professional interpreters in public service settings. This is for example the case of the study focusing on the role of interpreters in the NGO Voluntary Interpreters for Nurses (*Asociación de Intérpretes Voluntarios para Enfermeros*) (Aguilar-Solano, 2015) or the research on interpreting cooperation in penitentiary settings (Martínez-Gómez, 2016). Other studies, based on its relative importance in the market, advocate for the need to increase our knowledge on how non-professionals translate to improve our insights as a discipline, and the training programs for professional translators and interpreters (Muñoz Martín, 2011).

These two positions give rise to a symbolic struggle in TIS. The sociology of professions offers a perspective on professional systems which gives us the key to understanding this struggle. Claiming legitimacy in the market is what sociology of professions has called a *claim of jurisdiction* (Abbott, 1988). Members of an occupation, such as translation and interpreting today, wage a battle to legitimately remain in a professional territory (*jurisdiction*). The battle usually takes place in the academic area (Abbott, 1988: 55). Therefore, from a sociological point-of-view, in every inter- or intra-professional struggle, distinction and legitimization are two key notions to prospering: the orthodox approach justifies its legitimacy to laypersons with arguments about possessing specialized knowledge as gained through and reflected in a higher education degree (Monzó-Nebot, 2009). This struggle between professional and non-professional in the translation and interpreting field shows up in the academy through some understanding and protective positions regarding non-professional translators and interpreters as a subject of study. This sets up a binary relationship reflected in the use of terms: professionals versus non-professionals. The orthodox approach is represented by the professionals who have a higher degree accrediting their professional competence, and the non-professional (native, natural, untrained) translators and interpreters who are the laypersons.

3.2 Non-professionals as a hidden population

Bearing in mind the characteristics of hidden or hard-to-reach populations as laid out by authors such as Wiebel (1990), Heckathorn (1997), or Marpsat and Razafindratsima (2016), we can define them as a group of people that exist at all socioeconomic levels, although they are more conspicuous from the public's standpoint in more disadvantaged settings. They are associated with illegal or dangerous behavior and thus they are a negatively perceived or stigmatized population segment. Furthermore, this population size is sometimes unknown, since there has been little to no record of them.

Non-professional translators and interpreters can be seen as a hidden population if we bear in mind that, in the existing distinction between qualified and non-qualified population, the non-qualified one is excluded from the realm of legitimacy and their practice is socially perceived as negligent (although not illegal) since they cannot justify acquisition of expert competence. From a position of protection, a part of the scholarly community, it defines non-professionals, consciously or not, as laypeople. This is reflected in the use of terms such as “unprofessional”, “untrained”, “outsiders” or sometimes using the negation adverb “non” before the adjective “professional”. Furthermore, it is a difficult population to define institutionally, since there are few records identifying their participation. Exceptions include some countries such as France, where lists of court translators and interpreters are public and mention their formal qualifications in most cases, not necessarily in translation and interpreting. In this type of case, we could refer to a *semi-hidden population*, or in other words, a hard-to-reach population.

In addition to the intra-professional differentiation, especially affecting non-professional translators and interpreters, we can add another motive for their ‘hiding’. This time we would refer to an interprofessional tension between the academic world and the professional world which can be extrapolated both to non-professional and professional populations. As we mentioned in the introduction, many authors regardless of their ideological standpoint on non-professional populations, have alerted to the lack of dialogue between the scholarly community and professionals. Monzó-Nebot (2005), for example, interprets the low level of participation by professionals in research as a breakdown in “intergroup relationships” and mentions in a recent study (Monzó-Nebot, 2019: 197) specific reasons that may make collaboration non-viable —lack of time, mistrust regarding their true research motives or privacy guarantees, and unfamiliarity with the ethical framework. Responsibility does not then fall only on those people who freely decide not to share experiences and opinions with the scholarly community.⁴ We could question the role of the scholarly community in the relationship it forges with those who practice translation whom they need for scientific purposes.

In this vein, Koskinen and Dam (2016: 256) recall that “as scholars we may often be oblivious of the roles we play in professional boundary work”. Accepting our influence in building boundaries helps us recognize the researcher's subjectivity, and thus, the influence of our ideology on our project research. If we understand ideology as a way of seeing the world that materializes through discourse, then, this discourse creates unequal categories of translators and interpreters. For example, when it comes to the reasons why non-professional translators and interpreters ‘hide’, we can imagine that using labels such as *intruders*, *false*

⁴ The lack of dialogue manifests itself to a lesser extent in the field of interpretation. As Gile (2009) points out, professionals from the world of interpretation were already involved in both the training of interpreters and research in the 1970s.

bilinguals, or *lay people* (in the sense of outsiders) shows an ideology that is built discursively and structurally perpetuates the division between both groups and the resulting marginal position of one of them.

Regarding the two positions in the field, we consider that an “understanding” position is more inclusive since it can erase borders. If we look at recent studies on socio-professional aspects of translation and interpretation, we can see that it is an increasingly present position, as we have pointed out previously.

4. Research tools for a challenging field

With a view to accepting the responsibility entailed in bringing down boundaries and developing a positive relationship with participants, we propose a methodology that includes working on reflexivity and rapport creation between participants. After a brief theoretical description, we propose some guidelines for designing the negotiation phase. As previously stated, this is the phase where the first interaction between researchers, translators and interpreters potentially participating in the study takes place. The negotiation can be materialized in the presentation of informed consent. In this generally written document, the participants agree to participate voluntarily in a study, after being made aware of the nature of the research, the involvement of the participants, the benefits or consequences that may arise during its development, etc. Informed consent is best seen as a process of negotiation, rather than a formality (Silverman, 2014: 149).

4.1 Reflexivity of the researcher

A number of authors in social sciences accept and promote subjectivity in scientific knowledge. Many authors such as Mella (1998), Russell and Kelly (2002), Breuer (2003), Berthier (2006), Davies (2008), Paillé and Mucchielli (2008), Broitman (2015), Meziani and Rieu Plichon (2015), and Torres López (2017), consider the subjectivity of a qualitative researcher to be not a risk of a lack of rigor but rather an opportunity. Torres López (2017: 131) portrays the researcher as a subject which is “marked by history, beliefs, representations, values and all of those aspects through which their subjective constitution is revealed.”

Recognition of subjectivity and projection of qualitative research leads us to address the notion of reflexivity. Russell and Kelly (2002) describe it as the process through which a person acknowledges themselves and everyone else through growing awareness of the relational nature of all research components. De la Cuesta-Benjumea (2011) defines reflexivity as taking a position and being present at every stage of the research process: from its theoretical grounding to the selection of the bibliography and presenting the outcomes.

By reflexivity we understand the researcher’s self-awareness process regarding their decisions. This is when all of the effects of the personal and professional background of everyone involved come into play. In our opinion, reflexivity is a tool that helps to minimize possible biases in the research process. Indeed, Serrano Pascual and Gordo López (2008: 37) argue that “the researcher who initiates the task of getting into the head of the participant is also facing a situation of getting into their head in order to extract any ‘predisposition’ or ‘prejudice’ they may have”.

In TIS, some researchers refer explicitly to tools. Authors such as Koskinen (2008) and myself (Lomeña Galiano, 2018) describe reflexivity as an internal dialogue whose objective is for researchers to become aware of their subjectivity and their role in research involving

work with translators and interpreters in the field that they knew, and how they had participated not as researchers but rather as professionals. Saldanha and O'Brien (2013: 170) also attest to the importance of exercising reflexivity in cases where there is interaction with participants.

If we take into account Wiebel's advice for accessing hidden populations, reflexivity is essential for a theoretical-methodological proposal. According to the author:

For a successful research relationship to evolve, ethnographers must establish legitimacy both for their presence and for their intentions [...]. [T]o establish more direct rapport with the target population, it is important to have some general sense of the status attributed to the individuals they have begun to recognize (Wiebel, 1990: 8)

When it comes to translation, in addition to the legitimacy of the presence and intentions of the researcher as Wiebel suggests, it would be useful to legitimize practice by non-professional translators (recognize its status). Let us recall that we started from the hypothesis that these groups are hidden as a result of discourses that are critical of their presence in the translation and interpreting field for not having a translation or interpreting formal training.

If we analyze recruitment from the participant perspective, Morgan and Heather (2008) posit that the person asked to participate in a research project needs to know what position the researcher will take in developing it as well as understanding their expectations as an informant. The authors stress the importance of offering information on the topic and on the status of participants. This is furthermore key to building rapport, especially if social barriers come into play in the interaction (or individual barriers if we think of the challenge involved in working with hidden populations according to Ellard-Gray et al. 2015 as mentioned above). When talking of social or individual borders, all of the authors bring up gender or race. We would also include the distance imposed by the lack of a higher degree that we mentioned previously. Just as was suggested by Morgan and Heather (2008), being self-critical implies practicing reflexivity, which helps create rapport among participants. This is why we propose reflexivity or taking a position prior to developing a negotiation framework (presenting aims and objectives, the topic and the involvement of the researcher and participant).

We will now lay out a series of questions researchers can ask themselves based on four areas (1) the field, (2) the purpose for the study, (3) the field researcher position, (4) the position of the participants in the field. This is a conversation the researcher conducts with oneself, the research subject, the purpose of the study, with *public service*⁵ translators and interpreters as participants, and with the specific field to which they belong.⁶

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|-----------|--|
| The field | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there inter-professional territorial conflicts? (among translators and interpreters, and judges, lawyers, doctors, etc.) - Are there intra-professional territorial conflicts? (among translator and interpreter groups) - What sources are giving this information? (previous fieldwork, scientific literature) |
|-----------|--|

⁵ In a previous study, we chose to speak of *public service* translation and interpreting ("*de service public*" in French) instead of *public service settings* to refer to "l'assistance linguistique des personnes allophones dans des institutions administratives, sociales, médicales ou judiciaires" (Lomeña Galiano, 2018: 19, 23) along the same lines as Gile (2005: 241) and Pointurier (2016). We use this label to raise the profile of the type of service translators and interpreters provide to society and the context in which it takes place.

⁶ This submission is only an illustrative guide. Depending on the identity of the researcher, the population concerned, the specific field within public services (legal, medical, etc.), as well as the object of study further more relevant questions would be asked.

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| The purpose of the study | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the topic related to stereotypes defining the hidden population? Is it likely to be a sensitive subject? - How is my personal biography involved in topic selection? - What does the research project contribute to the group? What does it contribute to the development of public services in general or PSIT studies in particular? |
| The researcher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do I have any personal prejudice regarding non-professional practitioners? If so, are they based on field experiences as a researcher or professional experiences? Are they based on a review of the scientific literature? - Why am I seeking to give a voice to non-professional public service translators and interpreters? - What is my stance? An understanding position to the non-professional population ? Am I critical of them? Or am I protective of the professional population? - What am I offering to non-professional field? |
| The native population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do I know about the demographics of the population I wish to study? (number, sex, origin) - In a professional sense, how are they described? What does this definition refer to? - How are they recognized? Are they recognized differently than other areas outside of public services? - What do I think that they contribute to translation and interpreting studies? What do I think they contribute to the public service they work for? |

Table 1. Questions to guide reflexivity when researching non-professional translators and interpreters

Responses to these types of questions prepare the ground for establishing the rapport in an area that, as we have seen before, presents intergroup struggles. Firstly, asking questions about the field sheds light on possible imbalances in the relationship between professional and non-professional translators and interpreters, researchers and participants, professionals from other areas, and public service providers in contact with translators and interpreters. We could take for instance the frequent criticisms about non-professional interpreters in court interpreting regarding a lack of quality service (Valero Garcés et al. 2015) which could affect recruitment in this area. Furthermore, some of these questions lay bare the status of the public service activity itself. Secondly, reflection on these four areas reveals the subjectivity of research. Koskinen and Dam (2016) state that “researchers studying a particular field of practice contribute to the boundary work involved in defining that same practice”. Stating our own reasons, prejudices or even aims when deciding to work with a population, a subject and an area related to public services helps us to acknowledge the human tendency to create boundaries and biases or eliminate them.

Due to the subjective nature of conducting research, boundaries show up right from the first stages of research, such as when defining the object, the theoretical framework, and the population, and not only the results analysis and submission phase. The questions arise, why am I, a translation professional, researching non-professional translation in public institutions? What position am I taking and why? Is my intention descriptive or prescriptive? Does the result of reflexivity erase a boundary, or does it set one? Answering questions make us aware of sensitive subjects which might have an influence in the negotiation phase following identification of the subjects, or in other words, when the research project, purposes, consequences of their participation, dissemination of results, etc. are presented, either in written form, or verbally taking the form of, e.g., informed consent (Silverman, 2014).

4.2 Building rapport

The notion of ‘rapport’ is understood in this paper as the degree of comfort in researcher-participant interactions. Although it is a basic notion widely addressed in qualitative research methodology, it has not been explicitly applied in TIS. Building rapport refers to an emotional climate favoring positive interactions (Crow, 2008; Orozco Giralda and Mosquera Vargas, 2017). This goes along with a notion of empathy and affinity between participants. Judeira and Moraima (2007) translate rapport as “*sintonía*” in Spanish (tuning), and suggest that it means:

seeking harmony and never confrontation, because the immediate effect of this action is improved communication with the other person in the interaction, as well as better mutual understanding and a fully-developed form of empathy between them both (Judeira and Moraima, 2007: 25)

“Tuning” is an adequate translation into English since it conveys the idea of a horizontal, frictionless mutual relationship. In this instance, our objective is to eliminate any imbalance between the researcher and possible translator and interpreter participants as well as avoid any hierarchy between professional and non-professional translators.

The previously mentioned authors describe rapport as a communication skill. This stance is taken by Hale and Napier (2013: 98) in TIS when referencing semi-structured or open-ended interviews for data collection. We argue that this skill is necessary when designing a negotiation framework: to effectively introduce the research project, the researcher and the desired role for the participant —a non-professional public service translator and interpreter in this specific instance.

Building rapport is based on subject-to-subject relationships (and not a subject-object relationship). Regarding the process for creating rapport, Pitts and Miller-Day (2007) conclude that in a first interaction phase, what matters most is adopting an approach they call the “Other-Oriented”, which means prioritizing the needs of the participant whom we wish to interview. They go on to say: “One way by which researchers can gain rapport with their participants is to simply redefine the relationship giving the participants more respect, power, and control” (2007: 181). When it comes to hidden populations, legitimacy goes hand in hand with respect, power, and control and must also be addressed so that their position as laypersons can be challenged. From a similar horizontal approach, Silverman (2014: 24) evokes the importance of empathy and shared understandings in building rapport. This author proposes that before preparing the informed consent or the information sheet, the researcher put himself or herself in the shoes of the possible participant, alien to the academic world. Silverman encourages researchers to imagine what questions may arise from participation in a research project (2014: 150).

Based on the reviewed contributions, our proposal to establish rapport in the negotiation phase is based on three closely linked values: trust, reciprocity, and legitimacy. We will now comment on a few aspects that are applicable to presentation of the translation research project in the negotiation phase with non-professional translator and interpreter participants.

- Trust. To establish a trustful rapport between the researcher and the participant, the participant should be informed of all relevant aspects and also be empowered to have a say in how the interview is conducted. For example, trust can be established by giving details about ethical aspects in research projects (or saying whether it receives public or private funding); access and dissemination of data offered by participants (who will be

able to access data, what context it will be published in); confidentiality and anonymity guarantees (such as not publishing identifying information), as well as the scope of action for the participating subject (the possibility of not answering certain questions or withdrawing at any moment deemed necessary without being judged for it).

- Reciprocity. Reciprocity is about striking a balance between what we give and receive. This is the key to the subject-subject relationship. Although this relationship is never totally symmetrical (ultimately it is the researcher who takes the initiative of delving into a subject with a specific participant population and who will analyze the data produced in the participant interactions), an active subject status can be afforded to the participant. This acknowledges the value of their participation, and thus presence, in the study. In our view, one way to do this is to present their role as collaborating or co-producing knowledge as opposed to as a source of information. In this example, we refer to the importance of their participation in producing scientific data more than data collection. We would refer to cooperation and co-production of knowledge.

- Legitimacy. This is the most important value in building rapport with hidden populations in the translation and interpreting field. As we stated previously, lacking a higher degree considered essential by a group to practice in a recognized way is a cause of judgment that makes non-professional practitioners a hard-to-reach population. To avoid falling into an protective stance (Lomeña Galiano, 2018), this introduction should be very cautious with the *professional/non-professional* binary, as well as any other issues calling attention to their reasons for hiding. Bearing in mind the characteristics of PSIT, it would also be useful to take note of the value of the public service being offered.

The drawing up of the introductory document or informed consent becomes essential as it is the perfect moment to implement those skills as the basis of a relationship with participants. The informed consent form put forward by Hale and Napier (2013: 48-49) in translation and interpreting studies is based on the needs of the Other, taking up the same terms of Pitts and Miller-Day (2007), and its systematic use can create networks of trust, reciprocity, and legitimacy. Their set-up is rigorous and organized around 12 items which pay more attention to the participant than the researcher and the results. Hale and Napier suggest including the following aspects in the presentation of the project: project title; participant selection; description of the project in lay terms; description of yourself as researcher; participant's involvement; risk to participant; benefits; dissemination of results; confidentiality; withdrawing consent; further information; complaints (2013: 48-49). We submit an example of informed consent (Appendix 1) which can be adapted to the participants, sampling technique, research topic and objectives, etc.

The motto of the proposal can be summarized in a sentence: *If there is hierarchy among participants, there is no rapport*. In summary, building rapport to ease access to non-professional populations depends on breaking down the potential participants' reluctance in the field that stems from perceived discrimination and results in avoidance of contact ('hiding'). This requires an awareness of the separation between the academic and the professional world and of the struggles for territory that use university-based education as an argument to include some and exclude others.

5. Conclusion

The professional/non-professional distinction based on the possession of certified expert competences establishes a hierarchy among two groups of translators and interpreters. This division is typical of occupations where the professional territory is contested among groups, where one is represented as the *outsider* that needs to go back home. In this instance, it is non-professionals that are attributed an outsider position. This, however, is not the only required distinction when analyzing why a significant part of the translation and interpreting population remains 'hidden.' Researchers have given ample testimony of frustrated attempts to reach out to professional translators, even when being or having been themselves part of that group. The interprofessional divide between practitioners on the one side and researchers on the other seems particularly active in the realm of translation and interpreting. Such a dynamic may have contributed to the distancing of the non-professional population from academic interests. The initial hypothesis in this article is that inter- and intra-group relationships could be responsible for the non-professional population being hidden. And yet, reaching the non-professional population for scholarly purposes is crucial if we want to understand PSTI through the eyes of those who practice it.

This contribution has critically approached participatory research in PSIT, problematizing the researchers' and TIS ideologies and focusing on the relations created in the recruitment phase—with a view to creating lasting relationships that can engage and retain research participants. More specifically, this paper has tackled the negotiation stage, focusing on informed consent, that is, the first contact with prospective participants where researchers present their aims to the person whose participation they are seeking in order to recruit them as part of a participatory research project. The need for an ad hoc reflection became evident after the hidden population in PSIT was identified and labelled as such, whereby the risk of biased approaches and due to the lack of representativeness was made visible.

We have focused on researcher reflexivity, understood as a tool for brokering the researcher's subjectivity, and on the notion of rapport applied to translation and interpreting studies, as a horizontal relationship attuned to the participants. Both elements are particularly relevant in a field that has made every effort to distinguish itself and establish a hierarchical relation between professional and non-professional translators and interpreters.

The guidelines for reflexivity practice that we put forward consist of a series of questions meant for a researcher to ask themselves prior to any field work. These questions are divided into four clusters: the field; the purpose for the study; the field researcher position and the position of the participants in the field. Through this review process, the researcher positions themselves vis-à-vis non-professional translation before initiating contact with participants. This allows the researcher to detect any possible positive or negative prejudices they may have regarding non-professional translation and interpreting which could lead to biases in the research. The second tool, establishing rapport, is presented in tandem with informed consent which would act as a bond between the participants in the negotiation process. This notion encourages the understanding of the researcher-participant relationship as a subject-to-subject relationship. Based on the definition of rapport, we have recognized three values which should be reflected in negotiation so as to encourage recruitment. The negotiation can be designed to develop rapport grounded on trust, reciprocity, and a legitimization of "outsiders".

We believe that an *understanding* position, as we have called it, and the path devised can encourage hidden populations to come out into the open and afford their voices to the

academic community. This contribution, however, is a first approach that should be continued. Empirical studies will allow for the identification of efficient or otherwise harmful behaviors for researchers approaching hidden populations. Studies based on interviews with researchers may be a first step in discovering fruitful and damaging practices. Further studies in PSIT should be encouraged to openly share their approaching trajectories in order to facilitate the creation of a methodology for the field of PSIT.

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Appendix 1

Dear colleague:

My name is [XXXXXX]. I am a [profession or research position] in [institution] and am part of [name of research team]. [Explain how you received their contact details: through a colleague if it is chain or snowball sampling technique, a public registry if applicable, a forum, etc.). I am contacting you to ask for your collaboration in a research project.

This information sheet will briefly introduce my study and the conditions for participating. That way, you can freely decide whether you want to participate or not.

My research is focused on [two] main axes. The first one has to do with [XXXXXX]. The second one has to do with [XXXXXX]. If you have worked as a translator or interpreter in [public sector and geographic area], whether on an ongoing basis or occasionally, and your working languages are [XXXXXX], you can participate in this study.

If you would like to accept my invitation to participate, your contribution will consist of answering a number of questions [individually, in a focus group].⁷ The interview will last approximately 30 minutes and will take place on a suitable date and time [by telephone, videoconference or in person]. For analysis purposes, this interview will be recorded and transcribed.

The information I have provided will be used for scientific purposes. The benefit you may derive from participating comes from co-creating knowledge about translation and interpretation in the [XXXXXX] sector that you work in.

There are no negative consequences involved in participating in the study. This is a non-for-profit, scientific project. It is not funded by any (public or private) institution. The identity of participants will remain anonymous in order to preserve confidentiality. In the written results, no information will be included that could identify you. Only I, the one researcher in charge of the study, will have access to the data.

During the interview, you are free to refuse to answer any question or request for recording to be interrupted. If you change your mind about participating, you can take back and cancel the informed consent form that you signed before the interview. You do not have to give a reason for this decision. Regardless, any change over the course of the interview will not be held against you.

Once the research is finished, it will be published. If you would like, I will send you a copy of the publication so that you can see the outcome.

Before, during or after the interview, you can request further information about the characteristics or development of the study. For this purpose, you can contact me by e-mail or telephone.

Name of the researcher

Telephone number

E-mail address

⁷ Explain who will set up the group.

Informed Consent

I confirm that I have read the introduction to the study for which [First and Last Name of the Researcher] is requesting my participation. I am aware that there is no consequence for my participation, which consists of answering questions [individually, in a focus group]. I have been made aware of my freedom to not answer any question or to ultimately end the interview without any further explanation. Furthermore, the researcher carrying out the study guarantees that the data we co-produce will be kept anonymous.

I, (First Name and Last) _____
accept to participate in this study voluntarily and I authorize the use of the interview data for research purposes.

Place and Date:

Participant Signature

Researcher Signature

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