POSITIONALITY IN PUBLIC SERVICE INTERPRETING RESEARCH. / POSICIONALIDAD EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN DE LA INTERPRETACIÓN EN LOS SERVICIOS PÚBLICOS.

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Abstract: Research on public service interpreting employs a number of methods to examine a range of variables, from specific linguistic and paralinguistic variables to spatial positioning, agency, and ethics. These methods, however, require explicit recognition of the researcher's positionality in order to ensure appropriate data analysis and interpretation of results. This article examines the unique aspects of the interpreting studies research that requires reflection when conducting work in this area. Two specific types of bias, namely social desirability bias and the Hawthorne effect, are discussed in detail to illustrate the type of reflective practice required to ensure valid, reliable, and credible results. The article concludes with a brief reflection on how positionality may be a starting point for discussion surrounding the agency of the researcher.

Keywords: Positionality; Social desirability bias; Ethics; Hawthorne effect.

Resumen: La investigación en interpretación en los servicios públicos utiliza varios métodos para examinar distintas variables, entre las cuales se incluyen elementos lingüísticos y paralingüísticos, el posicionamiento espacial, la agencia y la ética. No obstante, dichos métodos requieren un reconocimiento explícito de la posicionalidad del investigador para asegurar el adecuado análisis de los datos y una interpretación apropiada de los resultados. Este artículo examina los aspectos particulares de la investigación dedicada a los estudios de la interpretación que requieren reflexión al investigar en este campo. En concreto, se tratan dos tipos de sesgos —el sesgo de deseabilidad social y el efecto Hawthorne— para ilustrar la clase de práctica reflexiva que se requiere para posibilitar resultados fiables y válidos. Se concluye con un comentario sobre cómo la posicionalidad puede constituir un punto de partida para discutir la agencia del investigador/a.

Palabras clave: Posicionalidad; Sesgo de deseabilidad social; Ética; Efecto Hawthorne.

1. Introduction

As the scope of public service interpreting research continues to expand, researchers have begun to reflect on the various methods used to investigate the role and influence that interpreters can have on the interpreting event (e.g., Berk-Seligson, 1992[2017]; Wadensjö, 1998; Angelelli, 2004). The influence or agency that interpreters can have on interpreting has led to the development of codes of ethics by professional organizations in an effort to establish guidelines for professionally appropriate behavior in the field (e.g., Angelelli, 2006; Angelelli et al., 2007; Hlavac, 2010). Moreover, the increasing recognition of interpreter agency has inspired research on the interpreter's function in participant interaction (e.g., Krystallidou, 2016) and management of the interpreting event (e.g., Pokorn, 2017).

Despite the growing consensus on interpreter agency, the attention paid to the influence researchers exert during the research process is somewhat uneven in the context of public service interpreting research. In adjacent disciplines —e.g., sociology, anthropology, education, and communication studies— researchers rely on the concept of positionality to

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describe the relationships among the researcher, the research context, and the various participants or actors involved in the study (e.g., Bhavnani, Chua, and Collins, 2014; Bourke, 2014). This unevenness of how positionality is discussed and reported in published studies on public service interpreting is likely due to the varied research methodologies and data collection methods used. For instance, ethnographic approaches to research may report more readily on the positionality of the interpreting studies researcher (e.g., Bahadır, 2004; Hale and Napier, 2013; Bendazzoli, 2016). Regardless of methodology or method, Translation and Interpreting (T&I) studies researchers generally do report any relation they have to their research questions or studies as a means to provide greater transparency and recognize the potential bias or influence they may exert during data collection and analysis (e.g., Koskinen, 2008; Pokorn, 2012; Hokkanen, 2017; Rizzi, Lang, and Pym, 2019).

This type of explicit recognition of positionality emphasizes the importance of power differentials between researchers and participants as well as the political structures within which the various parties operate. These structures may alter the research paradigm, methods, and ultimate effects; nevertheless, extended methodological discussions on this topic in interpreting studies remain limited, particularly in relation to public service interpreting in which the researcher may also be a practicing interpreter and colleague. Research methods volumes generally include at least some mention of the inherent challenges of some types of data collection, including power differentials and relationships that occur in interviews and observational studies, participatory research, or product- and process-oriented studies (e.g., Hale and Napier, 2013; Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014; Angelelli and Baer, 2016; Mellinger and Hanson, 2017). Baraldi and Mellinger (2016) also allude to this issue in the context of interpreting studies more generally, but on the whole, T&I studies have tended to rely on theoretical and methodological contributions from neighboring disciplines (O'Brien, 2013).

Therefore, this article examines the concept of researcher positionality in the context of investigating public service interpreting. Particular emphasis is placed on two influences that researchers may need to address when conducting research, namely social desirability bias and the Hawthorne effect. The former refers to a change in participants' responses in an effort to try to supply what they consider the most appropriate answer, and the latter refers to changes in participants' actual behavior. These changes occur in both direct and indirect (e.g., remote) observation and are potentially compounded in the case of interpreting studies research, given the prevalence of 'practisearchers' (Gile, 2018), who are not only trained observers but also colleagues. The article concludes with a reflection on how the concept of positionality can and should spur discussions surrounding the researcher's agency.

2. Positionality in interpreting studies research

Broadly speaking, the term *positionality* refers to the various relationships of an individual with the people and environment, while recognizing the influences and impact of personal background, traits, motivations, ideology, and presence. In the context of research methods, the term is commonly associated with researchers and the relationship that they have with respect to the object(s) of study and the context in which their work is situated. Barker (2004: 154), in describing the use of the term in cultural studies, illustrates its importance when conducting research:

> The concept of positionality is used by cultural studies writers to indicate that knowledge and 'voice' are always located within the vectors of time, space and social power. Thus, the notion

> of positionality expresses epistemological concerns regarding the who, where, when and why of speaking, judgement and comprehension. […] Consequently, knowledge is not to be understood as a neutral or objective phenomenon but as a social and cultural production since the 'position' from which knowledge is enunciated will shape the very character of that knowledge.

As Barker asserts, the production and source of knowledge must be interrogated with respect to various influences exerted by, at times, competing forces. In a similar vein, Tien (2019: 530) discusses how a positional perspective is constructed and "rooted in personal and historical experience", and therefore, positionality "refers to a set of processes, rather than a possessive characteristic of individuals; it describes a power relationship, rather than an identity". Both cited definitions articulate a social constructivist epistemology, in which the researcher's understanding of knowledge is shaped and organized based on the relationships and interactions of researcher(s) and subject(s). Likewise, Tien (2019) differentiates between positionality and identity in light of their theoretical lineages —a distinction that reveals the relational nature of a researcher's positionality as opposed to it being an inherent trait. Recognition of researchers' epistemological approaches to their work is an important aspect of the research process as it ultimately shapes the ways in which they collect, analyze, and discuss their findings. This epistemological discussion, and its relationship to methodologies and methods, will be addressed further in the sections that follow.[1]

This contention that positionality is relational holds true across any discipline, and the positionality and agency of the interpreter has received considerable attention within translation and interpreting studies. Pöchhacker (2006) explicitly tackles the position of the interpreter in relation to ideology, illustrating that interpreters function within various socio-political and institutional settings rather than as a neutral party outside of the system. Likewise, Delgado Luchner and Kherbiche (2018) reflect on the positionality of interpreters working in the humanitarian field to draw out ethical dilemmas faced by humanitarian interpreters as a result of the embedded, situated nature of their work. Moreover, their work demonstrates how interpreter behavior is constrained and shaped by the settings in which they work. An exhaustive review of interpreter agency, positionality, and ethics lies outside the scope of this chapter; however, these two examples show how macro-level influences are exerted on interpreters and ultimately shape their behavior.[2]

These examinations of the positionality of the interpreter can inform a growing body of work on the positionality of the researcher. While this is true across any type of interpreting studies research, the focus of this article will be on public service interpreting research for two reasons. First, public service interpreting is regularly conducted by practisearchers —i.e., interpreters who have become researchers— who may be colleagues or collaborators of many of the parties being studied. While not all interpreting studies scholars are also practicing interpreters, this practice has been discussed in the literature to the point that explicit reflection is required (Gile, 2015, 2018). Second, a growing recognition of the value of participatory research methods and the increased use of the same (Wurm and Napier, 2017) calls for additional inquiry on the positionality of the researcher in these new contexts. Both

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[1] Social constructivist epistemology, however, is not the only approach that can benefit from discussions of positionality. Empiricist or pragmatist epistemologies may also contend with the researchers' positionality vis-à-vis the specific contentions and assumptions of each school of thought. Extended discussions of the various epistemological positions that researchers adopt lies beyond the scope of the present article. For more on epistemological issues in interpreting studies, see Monacelli (2000) and Pöchhacker (2011).

[2] For an overview of research on positionality and interpreting studies, see Boéri and Delgado Luchner (forthcoming).

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of these issues, which are perhaps more prevalent in public service interpreting research than in other interpreting settings, are discussed in the sections that follow.

It is important to recognize that different research methodologies —e.g., observational and ethnographic research, participatory research, quasi-experimental and experimental research— have been used to study public service interpreting, and therefore, recognition of positionality may take different forms. For instance, observational and ethnographic research require explicit recognition of the situatedness of the researcher and the subjects as well as the relationships and processes noted above. Acknowledgement of these biases is not necessarily viewed as a negative, but rather highlights the relational, socially constructed nature of research. In contrast, research that is (quasi-)experimental or experimental, which may align more closely with positivist or realist epistemologies, will need to contend with the researcher's positionality with respect to the questions and hypotheses being tested and the means by which data are analyzed and interpreted. In these cases, an understanding of positionality can help with identifying, mitigating, or even eliminating biases by improving the description or measurement of phenomena that are believed to be true, independent of context. For the purposes of the present article, the focus is on participatory and observational research methodologies that are commonly employed in public service interpreting research, and therefore, the socially constructed nature of research and situatedness of the researcher will be the main focus. Where possible, mention will be made to other epistemologies and methodologies.

2.1 Practisearchers, colleagues, and collaborators

As noted previously, interpreting studies research is often conducted by interpreters. These practisearchers have been present since early efforts to understand simultaneous interpreting, and their contributions are linked to the development of the discipline. As Pöchhacker and Shlesinger (2002: 6) attest, the evolution of interpreting studies was marked by initial interest from psychologists on cognitive processes during simultaneous interpreting in conference settings; however, these initial studies were met with skepticism by the professional conference interpreters themselves. In response, a number of interpreters who were unconvinced by published findings began conducting research, which was often reported in academic theses on topics of potential interest to practicing interpreters. An early bibliometric study of interpreting conducted between 1989 and 1994 reveals that this trend continued, with all but two of the most prolific authors in the field at that time being practicing interpreters (Pöchhacker, 1995: 52). While the field has expanded to include voices beyond professional interpreters who follow a 'dual career track', to borrow Pöchhacker's (1995) phrase, there are still any number of researchers who are actively engaged in the discipline.

There are several discernible benefits of practicing interpreters conducting research. First, as Napier (2011) discusses in her review of the merits of publishing interpreting research, the synthesis of professional practice and experience with academic inquiry allows for research to be more readily accessible to all stakeholders. In a similar vein, Shlesinger (2009) discusses the meaningful interface of researchers and practitioners that allows both groups to benefit and share knowledge. Examples of work that bridges both professional and academic divides continue to appear, with studies spanning topics such as interpreters in EU institutions as a professional community (Duflou, 2016), training of dialogue interpreters (Cirillo and Niemants, 2017), and ethics in public service settings (Phelan et al., 2020).

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Another benefit that often goes unstated is a working interpreter's access to participants, data, and interpreting settings. Whereas a third-party researcher who does not have a previous working relationship with a specific research population may not be able to contact or access this group easily, a working interpreter may have a network of colleagues who are more willing to facilitate a research project. From a constructivist epistemology, this type of convenience sampling is not inherently problematic (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014), and participatory research may even require this type of sampling to access the population of interest. This type of collaborative work, however, does require reflection on specific ethical considerations and data management (Mellinger, 2020). For studies involving quantitative research methodologies, sufficiently homogenous groups may be necessary in order to draw conclusions that are reliable and generalizable to a larger population. In contrast, research using qualitative research methodologies may opt for populations that are sufficiently heterogeneous in an effort to ensure data saturation and credibility of the results. Access to data and participants can encourage research projects that are of interest to the professional interpreting community and associated real-world application of findings based on authentic data sources; however, practisearchers must acknowledge the relationships held between the researcher and the subjects and recognize that studies are naturally limited in their ability to generalize to a larger population. Moreover, these tradeoffs point to the need for multiple studies in different populations in order to understand specific phenomena; a single study is unable to prove a hypothesis or dispel commonly-held assumptions.

Similarly, positionality remains an important consideration when reviewing the extant literature, particularly with respect to the objects of inquiry and the research topics. Both benefits noted above —i.e., bridging the professional-academic divide and data access— illustrate the utility of practisearchers conducting work on interpreting studies, yet they also may provide the groundwork for implicit biases in the research, including what is commonly referred to as confirmation bias. As Nickerson (1998: 175) describes it, confirmation bias is "seeking or interpreting of evidence in ways that are partial to existing beliefs, expectations, or a hypothesis at hand". Since practisearchers are intimately familiar with the challenges associated with interpreting, researchers must be mindful to avoid mapping their own professional experiences onto specific research questions or data analysis and interpretation. For instance, anecdotal evidence among interpreters may suggest that a specific linguistic feature of a source text utterance is difficult to render in the target language or that certain speaker configurations lead to communication breakdowns in dialogue settings. While these may be valid or credible observations that are borne out in empirically-based studies, researchers should be mindful not to suggest spurious relationships on the basis of their previous experience. These challenges can occur in many settings. Additionally, as Kassin, Dror, and Kukucka (2013) observe, people's perceptions, judgments and behaviors can be influenced by a range of effects, including primacy, expectancy, and observed effects. Recognition of the potential for confirmation bias is important across all of translation and interpreting studies; however, the unique profile of the interpreting practisearcher calls for redoubled efforts.[3]

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[3] The notion of the 'practisearcher' is not exclusive to interpreting and translation studies. Researchers in other disciplines, such as education and medicine, also engage in professional activities in addition to research. The relative size of these professions —i.e., there are fewer interpreters relative to these other professions— may lead to a greater possibility of overlap between professional and research contexts. Moreover, not all public service interpreting research is conducted by practisearchers; however, the social constructivist epistemology regularly adopted in the field would recognize the utility of reflection on positionality regardless of the researcher's role.

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More specifically, reflection on positionality is important given that the configurations in which public service interpreters typically work differ sufficiently from their conference interpreting counterparts. For instance, public service interpreters in many contexts work individually without the aid of a second interpreter or teammate (e.g., Hertog, 2015; Killman, 2020). In contrast, conference interpreters often work in teams and regularly have a colleague who can support or monitor the output of the working interpreter during the interpreting task. Thus, a working conference interpreter is perhaps more accustomed to having a colleague listening to both source input and target output, and as a result, may be less likely to change his or her behavior when being observed by a researcher. In contrast, the addition of an observer or researcher into the public service interpreting paradigm might change the dynamics, not only for the interpreter but the participants as well. That is to say, the additional interpreter in the room who knows both source and target language may impact the communication dynamics more readily in public service interpreting among all the parties involved. This presence of the observer, be it physically or virtually, potentially alters the paradigm within which they work and calls for reflection on how this influence might be mitigated.

The shifting dynamics introduced by the unique profile of many interpreting studies scholars, however, is not the result solely of the addition of an external observer. Instead, the researcher's embeddedness in the observed event should also be recognized, which is akin in many respects to assertions of the 'betweenness' of the interpreter (Pöchhacker, 2006) or the 'belonging' to the community for which they interpret (Cokely, 2005). Researchers working within a social constructivist epistemology would concede that the interpreter-cum-researcher is not an external party who is immune to influence of bias, but rather is situated among the parties involved and within the communicative context. Moreover, public service interpreters are potentially from the community for which they interpret, establishing yet additional ties to the parties involved. Cokely (2005), for instance, describes how sign language interpreters are often from the communities for which they interpret and that the community often played a role in determining which interpreters could serve as interpreters. Of course, interpreters regularly divulge these potential conflicts of interest in certain interpreting settings, such as legal and court settings, but their connections to the language, culture, and population that they work with cannot be summarily ignored. Instead, explicit engagement with observer influence and connectedness opens space in which researchers can discuss the dialectics of research and practice as well as the relationship that he or she has with the work at hand.

2.2 Participatory research methods

While researchers can address this challenge in several ways, one way that has been explored more recently is through the use of participatory research methods (e.g., Pöchhacker, 2010; Wurm and Napier, 2017). This approach to research re-situates the researcher as a co-collaborator with the stakeholders involved in the process rather than as an outside, disinterested third party. Wurm and Napier (2017) draw on sign language interpreting research to illustrate how stakeholders can be brought into the research process from the initial conception and design of a study to the analysis and dissemination of results. The rationale for this type of research lays in its ability to address questions or problems encountered in the community while allowing co-researchers to reflexively engage with practices, interactions, and routines that may have gone unquestioned. Bergold and Thomas (2012) describe this idea as a 'research style' and distinguish participatory research from

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action research (cf. Nicodemus and Swabey, 2016) insofar as it involves joint knowledge production "that leads to new insights on the part of both scientists and practitioners" (n.p.).[4] Nevertheless, both approaches fall within a social constructivist epistemology and recognize the embeddedness of the researcher.

Conducting this type of research relies, in part, on existing personal connections to the community with which researchers work. Much as Cokely (2005) asserts that, since interpreters for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community are from the communities with which they work, so too will researchers conducting participatory research need to establish a relationship and rapport with the community. The researcher's level of involvement may vary, and, depending on whether the distinction between researcher and participant is maintained, may employ participatory research methodologies or action research methodologies. Bergold and Thomas (2012) indicate that mutual trust becomes an important component of participatory research as is the need for creating a 'safe space' within which this type of work can be conducted. This trust is paramount since access to a specific community will ultimately result in the researchers not only knowing the participants but also being part of their professional and/or private communities. Tiselius (2019) identifies the dual role that interpreting researchers occupy in this regard and illustrates how potentially competing ethical systems related to professional and research communities complicate the researcher's ability to navigate their positionality.

More generally, Bergold and Thomas (2012) contend that these relationships require the traditional research paradigm to be re-examined; it is untenable to imagine an impartial, invisible relationship between the researcher and the researched as the paragon toward which researchers must strive (ibid). From a constructivist epistemological approach, participatory research methodologies might bring these relationships to the fore to understand these dynamics. Researchers conducting ethnographic work, however, might approach this from an interpretivist epistemology, wherein the goal remains to interpret subjective meaning and establish credible findings. Other epistemic stances might follow Bergold and Thomas (2012) from a realist ideal in an effort to establish a valid measurement of various phenomena to understand causal relationships or establish differences among groups. These types of studies often strive to generalize beyond the specific study's sample to make claims about the larger population.

Epistemological decisions, though, are not the only type made by researchers; methodological distinctions are also necessary. Within translation and interpreting studies, distinctions between the various research methodologies are at times blurred in light of competing research paradigms and similar linguistic labels. For instance, participatory research methods are sometimes conflated with action research, failing to recognize the framework within which participatory research is conducted (Wurm and Napier, 2017: 107). These questions related to epistemological and methodological decisions, however, are not to suggest that participatory research methods cannot contribute scientifically rigorous findings to the research literature; rather, these methods require recognition of the positionality of the researcher with respect to the object(s) of inquiry as well as the epistemological and methodological stance within which the research is being conducted.

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[4] This reflective practice should not be interpreted as advocating for anecdotal evidence. Rigorous methodology has been developed for community-based participatory research in a number of disciplines, and interpreting studies research can, and should, follow suit.

2.3 Identifying and addressing bias

The previously-described roles that are occupied by the public service interpreting researcher and various research methods that can be used are potential sources for bias or influence to enter the research process. Bias is inherent to the research process by its very nature; researchers regularly make decisions that ultimately influence the overarching research questions, study design, analysis and interpretation of the results, but mindful efforts to mitigate and to disclose potential sources of bias are important. From a social constructivist epistemology, discussions of bias in research studies center on the positionality of the researcher and how it engenders differentials among the various participants. Explicit recognition of these biases aligns with feminist critiques of positionality that argue that biases cannot truly be mitigated (for extended discussions, see England, 1994; Visweswaran, 1994; Coffey, 1999; Davies, 2008). The disclosure of the researcher's positionality and biases ought to be viewed as a strength, lending credibility to the research design and allowing careful examination of the data and their interpretation (Kendall and Thangaraj, 2013). In contrast, positivistic or realist epistemologies view bias as implying a negative valence, insofar as biases skew data analyses and results. Consequently, measures must be taken on the part of the researcher to mitigate for these effects. In both cases, however, researchers must be cognizant of the frameworks and methodologies within which they are working to appropriately address bias that manifests during their work.

The sources of bias are numerous, and as Podsakoff et al. (2003) illustrate, there are at least 25 common biases that influence participants responding to questions alone. The biases identified in Podsakoff et al. (2003) are more specifically related to survey-based research methods, yet when viewed broadly as potential sources of external influences, some remain applicable to observational and participatory research methodologies. While it is impossible to address all of these sources of bias in a single article, here the focus will be on the researcher's positionality in relation to two forms of bias when conducting research on public service interpreting, namely: social desirability bias and the Hawthorne effect. These two biases were chosen as focal points in this article to provide a broad view of potential changes that may be caused by the researcher's presence. In the case of social desirability bias, changes in how a participant responds to specific questions may require greater reflection on the part of researchers conducting interview or survey-based research. In contrast, the Hawthorne effect describes the alteration of participant behavior as the result of being observed, which would be of particular importance to interpreting studies researchers conducting observational and ethnographic studies. While these two biases are not comprehensive, they address several common approaches to conducting research on public service interpreting.

3. Social desirability bias

In the context of interpreting studies, researchers are often interested in obtaining information about perspectives, values, and beliefs of either interpreters themselves or the parties for whom they interpret. As noted above, researchers may rely on a range of epistemological and methodological stances to obtain this type of data. Their subsequent use of specific data collection methods, such as interviews, surveys, or questionnaires to elicit responses on a range of topics, will ultimately be informed by the researcher's perspective. Yet despite

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guarantees of confidentiality and/or anonymity in the findings, respondents may be hesitant to provide complete or fully honest responses as a result of what is commonly-referred to as social desirability bias. In the words of Biemer and Lyberg (2003: 104):

> Social desirability bias is the survey error resulting from a reluctance of sample units to reveal that they possess socially undesirable traits. Instead, they report in a more socially desirable fashion or not at all.

What constitutes a socially undesirable trait will vary depending on the questions being asked of respondents; however, the simple fact that responses to questions cannot be taken at face value requires greater reflection on the part of interpreting studies researchers. This recognition is not necessarily new to the field; for instance, Gile has raised questions of social desirability as it relates to interpreting studies (Gile, 2018, see also CIRIN Bulletin, 2017). However, the source of this potential influence may lie in the positionality of the researcher and the relationship(s) that he or she may have with the study population.

Consider, for instance, the case raised by Tiselius (2019) in that interpreting studies researchers may belong to the same professional community as the participants or respondents in a study.[5] In this situation, both parties may ascribe to a specific code of ethics of professional code of conduct that aims to regulate certain behaviors or practices. If the research project in question is investigating aspects of the interpreting profession that are subsumed under these regulatory documents, the practicing interpreter (and in this instance, the research participant) may not fully divulge behavior or beliefs that contradict or deviate from the prescribed disciplinary practices. That is to say, the research participant may alter his or her answers in an effort to respond in a way consistent with the manner in which it is believed that a colleague (in this instance, the researcher) might expect. This problem might seem to arise primarily in data collection methods that occur face-to-face, as in the case of interviews or paper surveys that are administered in-person; however, bias can occur even in an online survey, particularly if the researcher's identity is known (see, for instance, Dodou and de Winter, 2014).

The rationale for this reluctance may stem from a number of sources, and Paulhus's (1984) model to describe factors that influence social desirability may be useful to draw out how the researcher's positionality influences responses. This model partitions social desirability into two categories: self-deception and impression management (Paulhus, 1984: 599). In the case of self-deception, the respondent may, in fact, believe the self-reports despite the responses not aligning with observed behavior or actual practice, while in the case of impression management, the respondent consciously alters his or her response as a means to potentially saving face. Differentiating between these two sources of bias can be traced to the 1930s and 1940s in the extant literature (Frenkel-Brunswik, 1939; Meehl and Hathaway, 1946) and allows researchers to discuss social desirability in a more nuanced manner.[6] In

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[5] Here, a distinction needs to be made regarding the focus of this situation. Whereas Tiselius (2019) is focused largely on the position of the researcher being a member of two communities, thereby leading the researcher needing to make decisions vis-à-vis discretionary power, the present focus is on that of the observed participant or respondent to questions.

[6] A full review of this body of scholarship lies outside the scope of the present article; and impression management is but one line of scholarship grounds the current discussion of differentiated sources of bias. For an overview of additional factors that can influence these data and a historical overview of this scholarship, see Blasius and Thiessen (2012). For an example of how researcher positionality can influence co-constructive narratives of participants, see Elliot and Bonsall (2018).

testing whether one of these factors influences social desirability bias responses, Paulhus (1984) concludes that impression management is more likely a factor than self-deception. Nevertheless, attending to both of these potential sources of bias is important.

In the case of interpreting studies, impression management appears to be a viable source of bias for many of the reasons described above. Others, such as personality, ethnic and cultural differences, and substantive and non-response considerations, have been outlined in the literature (Blasius and Thiessen, 2012); however, these often focus on the respondent's perspective rather than the researcher's positionality. What remains pertinent here is the relative position and relationship of the researcher with that of the respondent, along with shared understanding of what constitutes an appropriate response to specific questions surrounding ethics, behavior, and practice. If the interpreting studies researcher does belong to the same professional group or identifies with a particular school of thought, this situation may undermine the researcher's ability to get a clear view of the data in question. Even efforts to dissociate the researcher from the questions being asked by means of technological solutions (i.e., computer-administered or web-based surveys or questionnaires) cannot fully mitigate for these challenges. As Richman et al. (1999) outline in a meta-analytic evaluation of face-to-face interviews, computer-based and traditional questionnaires, responses are often distorted with respect to the mode in which the studies are conducted. Consequently, issues surrounding social desirability must be taken into account when collecting and analyzing data from interpreter respondents.

4. Hawthorne effect

Whereas the previous section focuses primarily on studies relying on surveys, interviews, and questionnaires, this section focuses on observational research, in which the researcher directly observes study participants or indirectly observes or records their behavior. As in the previous section, the researcher's profile may influence participants, and in the case of observational research, may lead to observer effects. It may seem obvious that people change their behavior based on whether or not they are being observed, yet there is debate regarding the veracity of this claim. Scholarship on research methods regularly point to the potential for observer effects in a number of contexts (e.g., Adair, 2004; Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014), and research has questioned the ability of true objectivity on the part of the observer and instead recognizes the researcher's influence (see Baraldi and Mellinger, 2016, for more on this epistemological distinction). Some researchers argue that these types of effects obviate any findings of studies in which these effects might be observed; however, these claims have been challenged (e.g., Monahan and Fisher, 2010). The active scholarly discussion surrounding the influence of the researcher on the act of observation illustrates its sustained importance in the research methodology literature, and merits additional attention within the various contexts of interpreting.

An observer effect in which people change their behavior based on being observed is commonly referred to as the Hawthorne effect. The name is drawn from workplace studies conducted in the early twentieth century that showed increased productivity regardless of the conditions that were changed, thereby leading to the suggestion that the primary influence was the act of observation itself (for an overview, see Letrud and Hernes, 2019). However, before continuing to discuss this type of observer effect, it should be noted that the linguistic label of "the Hawthorne effect" has received heavy criticism and has been argued to be a

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research myth rather than an observed fact. The initial studies to which this term refers have been subject to extensive scrutiny in the literature, and scholars have argued that its persistence is the result of an affirmative citation bias rather than the results of the original study bearing out these findings (Letrud and Hernes, 2019). Nevertheless, the term serves as a convenient way to refer to a potential observer effect, in which the act of observing might change behavior.

In the case of interpreting studies, and particularly in the context of community or public service interpreting, the simple presence of an observer may exert an influence on the observational event. The awareness of being observed can alter behavior of the participants. When the observer is a practisearcher, the problem can be compounded by a preference to behave in socially desirable ways; however, the Hawthorne effect also refers more broadly to any alteration in behavior, whether or not it could be classified as desirable. The presence of a researcher during an interpreting event could alter behavior in a number of ways, but this section will briefly examine three aspects: (1) interpreting behavior governed by codes of ethics or professional conduct; (2) linguistic and/or performance-based data; and (3) the communicative paradigm in which the interpreting occurs. Each of these will be addressed in turn.

First, researchers who belong to the same professional community may abide by specific codes of professional conduct or codes of ethics that aim to govern behavior. In an ideal setting, these normative guidelines help ensure that interpreters work within the guidelines established by the organization or entity that created the code of ethics or code of professional conduct. The provenance of the guidelines contained in these documents are varied, with some being research-based guidelines while others may codify best practices derived from experienced colleagues.[7] Nevertheless, deontological approaches to ethics may not account for every instance or situation that could be encountered, such that interpreters may find themselves deviating or adapting as needed to address situations that occur. If the goal of a research project is to investigate interpreter behavior that occurs *in situ*, a commonly-shared set of guidelines might limit the observed interpreter's willingness to deviate from these codes or alter the way in which he or she typically performs in light of an expectancy bias on the part of the researcher. Therefore, the simple presence of the observer could change the participant's behavior, and that change could be the expression of socially desirable behaviors, repression of typical actions, or any other observable deviation from typical practice.

Second, practisearchers may alter the way in which an interpreter performs during the interpreting act, particularly in the case of community or public service interpreting since they have access to linguistic and performance data that may otherwise go unobserved. As noted at the outset, interpreters working in community and conference settings differ insofar as community and public service interpreters are perhaps less accustomed to having another interpreter working with them and hearing their performance or renditions into another language. When interpreters are observed through the lens of an interpreter-cum-researcher, these study participants may alter their output our attend to specific linguistic details in a way that is inconsistent with their regular practice. Kredens (2017) has documented how

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[7] A more critical reading of codes of ethics is provided by Lambert (2018: 269), who argues that codes of ethics can function as "client-facing documents that indirectly help translation agencies and associations to sell translations and memberships". In the present article, the rationale for their creation is immaterial, but researchers ought to consider Lambert's discussion in reviewing interpreting codes of ethics as well and their relationship to guiding the practice of interpreting.

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interpreters listening to the performance of working interpreters may lead to a decrease in performance, and this observed effect may carry over to research. In the case described by Kredens, the focus is on an adversarial relationship between the listening and performing interpreters; however, the perceived increase in scrutiny may well mirror that of a research context as well. While additional research is needed to determine whether this influence exists, the possibility is not unfounded. Byrne (2006), for example, describes how translators may perform better in an exam context knowing that their work is going to be closely evaluated.

Similarly, researchers who are part of the professional interpreting community are also gaining access to data that is otherwise inaccessible to other practicing interpreters during their studies. More specifically, these researchers are able to hear colleagues perform and observe the ways in which they work as interpreters. Unlike conference interpreters whose work may be recorded or heard by a larger number of people at any given time, community and public service interpreters have a more limited audience of the few people involved in the interpreting event. Consequently, study participants are likely to be aware of the greater level of scrutiny to which their work is being submitted outside of their regular work environment. The way in which their performance may change is likely to vary depending on any number of factors, yet the potential for an observer effect remains.

A third way in which an observing interpreter may influence the interpreter's behavior is by altering the very nature of the communicative paradigm in which the interpreting is taking place. Community and public service interpreting typically include two interlocutors with an interpreter facilitating communication between both parties. The addition of a researcher or recording device into the communicative setting can physically alter the space or arrangement in order to ensure that the researcher can hear or see everything in play. As a result, the mere presence of a researcher must be recognized as a potential paradigm-altering variable during the research process. By the same token, a researcher who is also an interpreter may find it difficult to disentangle their role as a researcher and as interpreter, which may introduce confusion among the various parties. And while explicit recognition of this dual role at the outset of a communicative event may help establish the assumed roles during that particular encounter, there still may be instances in which one of the parties forgets or engages with the researcher in a way inconsistent with the initially agreed-upon roles.

The three noted ways in which an interpreting researcher may create an observer effect are by no means exhaustive, yet they are illustrative of the types of influences that could occur when investigating public service interpreting. This type of reflective practice on the methods used is paramount when conducting research and, should any occur, these observer effects ought to be reported. A study that resulted in observer effects could still be worthy of dissemination, but research methods involving multiple data sources that can be triangulated are likely to provide a more complete picture of the setting or scenario under investigation.

5. Positionality and the agency of the researcher

Social desirability bias and observer effects are only two of many biases that may occur in any type of research, and the specific profile of practisearchers in interpreting studies likely increases the potential for these to occur during observational or participatory research. How these biases manifest vary based on the methods used to examine specific variables or

research questions; however, they are worth additional reflection in the interpreting studies literature. Understanding the role that social desirability plays in the analysis of participant self-report data would provide greater nuance to questions asked of interpreters. Additionally, recognition of the potential for observer effects may help limit overgeneralizations and provide clues on what interpreter behavior may be beyond what is readily observed. The role of the quantitative researcher, then, is one of striving to mitigate these biases through explicit recognition of their positionality to the research event and investigating the ways in which these biases might be overcome. Meanwhile, a constructivist researcher might probe positionality as a source of understanding the relationships among the various parties in the communicative event while recognizing the inherent nature of existing biases. The ways in which researchers can address these biases ultimately require reflection on their epistemological stance and the research methodologies being used.

That said, these biases that result from the researcher's positionality might not necessarily be viewed as being solely a negative artefact of the research endeavor. Rather, there may be situations in which the researcher can harness his or her influence on the research task to serve as a positive link between the academy, the profession, and consumers of interpreting services. The scenarios are many in which this positive influence could occur, but as a thought experiment, consider a scenario in which a researcher is investigating the provision of interpreting services in a legal or medical setting. The researcher's positionality as an expert, who is also able to evaluate interpreting services, can raise awareness of attorneys, healthcare providers, or other parties in need of interpreting services. In addition, researchers who observe practicing interpreters might inspire more reflective, conscientious practice of study participants, be it in relation to codes of ethics or professional practice or specific linguistic decisions. Of course, interpreting studies scholars should not be actively biasing studies, but within the discussions of participatory research methods, there may be room to discuss the agency of the researcher in specific instances. Additional methodological work is required to determine if this type of influence is appropriate, and if so, when and how it might be exerted.

Finally, questions remain about whether observational or participatory research by interpreters helps to advance directives of codes of ethics for interpreting or whether research is somewhat hampered by the ability to collect data reflective of specific interpreting situations to shape and refine current professional codes of practice. Potential changes on the part of study participants may ultimately obfuscate current practices in the field, thereby making it difficult to determine if codes of ethics need to be altered to account for these practices or if their behavior is truly reflective of the communicative event. The relationship that research has to codes of ethics is important to consider, and while this issue is complex, positionality is a starting point for some of these important discussions. An initial step toward enhancing the dialectic between research and practice would be explicit recognition of the interpreting studies researchers' positionality when presenting and discussing research findings. In doing so, the potential exists to better situate their findings in relation to other work in the field and, by extension, the profession.

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