

# **“During the interview, the interpreter will provide a faithful translation.” The potentials and pitfalls of researching interpreting in immigration, asylum, and police settings: methodology and research paradigms**

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*This article presents a bibliometrical survey of an extensive corpus of research on interpreting in immigration, asylum and police settings. The article takes stock of past research and points towards questions for further research. The corpus of relevant literature is grouped according to the authors' disciplinary background, and examined on the basis of a bibliometrical analysis with respect to the authors' affiliation, type(s) of publication, date(s) of publication, methodology, and predominant paradigms and topics. The survey also investigates the different analytical (mainly discourse analytical) approaches that have been used to analyse these kind of interpreter-mediated interviews.*

## **0. Introduction**

The supposedly well-meaning, though simplistic piece of information in the title of this article is taken from an information brochure for asylum-seekers by the Belgian Commissioner General's Office for Refugees and Stateless Persons (Commissioner General's Office 2002: 5) and can be taken to be symptomatic of many (lay) people's naive views of the role of interpreters. A number of researchers from different disciplines have taken such (or similar) crude views of the role of interpreters in immigration, asylum and police (IAP) hearings as an incentive to take a closer look at interpreter-mediated interactions in such settings.

Interpreting in community-based settings ('community interpreting') has been a focus of interest of interpreting research (IR) for more than a decade now. Research on interpreting is no longer mainly predominated by conference interpreting. Research on community interpreting (CI) has gradually become more prominent in the IR 'landscape' and has been recognised as an equally valid and accepted field of research. While in the mid-1990s interpreting studies (IS), in general, was still referred to as a "(sub)-discipline in the making within a discipline in the making" (Shlesinger 1995: 9), today it can safely be claimed that IS has become a discipline in its own right (cf. Pöchhacker 2004), which also – and rightly – includes research on interpreting in non-conference settings. If we take a closer look at the spectrum of research on CI, it turns out, however, that cer-

tain ‘fields’ of CI appear to be widely neglected, such as interpreting in IAP settings.

This article presents a (bibliometrical) survey of the literature on interpreting in IAP hearings, which includes both quantitative and qualitative elements.

## 1. Literature and access

Although there are no fully comprehensive bibliographies in translation studies (TS), let alone in IS, a number of bibliographical databases and resources are available which can be used to search for literature. Interestingly, a first, brief search of relevant databases and resources does not produce a large number of hits (reviews were excluded)<sup>1</sup>. Thus it may be concluded that the literature on interpreting in IAP hearings is both sparse and/or difficult to access.

Table 1: Literature search<sup>2</sup>

<i>Source</i>	<i>No. of relevant hits</i>
Translation Studies Bibliography (John Benjamins, online)	7
Bibliography of Translation Studies (St. Jerome, 1998-2003)	3
Translation Studies Abstracts (St. Jerome, 1998-2003)	6
BITRA, Bibliography of Interpreting and Translation (online, University of Alicante)	16
Reference section of <i>The Interpreting Studies Reader</i> (Pöchhacker/Shlesinger 2002)	1
Reference section of <i>Introducing Interpreting Studies</i> (Pöchhacker 2004)	1
The same search terms/phrases (in English, German, Spanish, and French) and different search strategies (simple search, search with Boolean operators, wildcards) were used in all resources.	

Even though the number of publications on this specific field appears to be quite small compared to other settings (court interpreting, medical interpreting) at first glance, a more extensive search (internet, journals, reference sections of TS/IS monographs, collective volumes, and journal articles, etc.) yields an astonishing total of 71 publications (Feb. 2006<sup>3</sup>), which will be used for this survey.

## 2. Interdisciplinarity: authors’ backgrounds

Interpreting in IAP hearings is not only discussed in TS but is also, albeit very often only briefly, touched upon by various other disciplines. To

demonstrate the different disciplines involved in researching this field, the relevant corpus of 71 publications will be grouped according to the authors' (main) disciplinary affiliation. Due to the scope of this paper, I can only provide examples for some of these groups and refer to 'milestones' in research on that field. The full corpus is available from the author.

Similar to the development of conference IR (cf. Gile 1994: 149), many of the earlier (and also some of the later) publications on interpreting in IAP settings are anecdotal, personalised accounts ('experience reports') of practising interpreters in asylum hearings or of public service providers. They all provide (more or less critical) accounts of the role of interpreters and are not very – or not at all – 'academic'. Most of these publications do not include any references, and some are no longer than one page.

Another set of publications oscillates between personal reflections and facts based on literature and can best be described as 'compilatory'. Even though they sometimes include personalised accounts, they also provide references to literature (albeit not always TS literature). We find such compilatory contributions (similarly to anecdote-like publications) both in the earlier (late 1980s to mid-1990s) and the more recent literature (though less often since 2000).

A number of publications focus on the role of interpreters from a legal perspective. Apart from one author, who is affiliated with a department of Translation and Interpreting (T/I), all of these authors have a 'legal background' (Law School) or are affiliated with police or criminal investigation departments. Some only refer to the role of interpreters and/or the provision of interpreting services in (very) brief subsections. Remarkably perhaps, since the mid-90s, the number of contributions with a legal perspective on interpreting in IAP has decreased!

Kälin (1986), who is also affiliated with a Law School and provides a very interesting (and much quoted) article (the first in the corpus), does not focus primarily on legal aspects, but also refers to anthropological, sociological and sociolinguistic literature to discuss cross-cultural misunderstandings in asylum hearings in Switzerland (the role of interpreters is discussed in one sub-section). In a similar vein, Monnier (1995) focuses on the structure of asylum interviews in Switzerland and touches upon the role of interpreters. Monnier's contribution is also one of the earlier publications in the corpus (though not quoted that often). His disciplinary background is not strictly legal (Graduate Institute of Development Studies, Geneva) and he also includes in his contribution elements of political science, migration studies, and cultural anthropology.

Only two authors focus on the role of interpreters in IAP settings from a sociological perspective. The first publication was an article by Scheffer in 1997 (later included in his 2001 monograph), the second an article by Sauerwein in 1999 (her PhD thesis was submitted in 2005). Scheffer (2001) discusses the social practice of the asylum adjudication procedure and (in two subchapters) the role of interpreters in asylum interviews from a sociological point of view. Sauerwein [Sami] (2005) also adopts a sociological perspective to discuss the often contradictory expectations made of in-

terpreters and the resulting role conflicts. Sauerwein is affiliated with a Department of Linguistics Translation and Interpreting and could thus also be subsumed under the TS proper section (see below)

Another set of articles by a group of German communication scholars focuses on investigative problems in interpreter-mediated interrogations and the role of interpreters as ‘auxiliary police officers’ or ‘assistants’ from the perspective of communication studies (e.g. Donk 1994). There are several publications by communication scholars between 1990 and 2000 but in recent years, however, one notices again a decrease in such publications.

One of the pioneers of research on interpreting in immigration hearings, Cecilia Wadensjö (1992, 1998)<sup>4</sup> is also affiliated with Communication Studies (Linköping University), but is at the same time a practising interpreter. Although Wadensjö’s original disciplinary background is communication studies, her work has been taken up and quoted extensively in IS and she has become one of the key players of the CI research community (cf. Pöchhacker 2004: 41).

Another pioneering author, who is also sometimes ‘usurped’ by TS, is Barsky (1994 et passim). His main disciplinary background is Comparative Literature although he adopts a very broad discourse analytical approach which also encompasses aspects of literary and language theory, and cultural anthropology. Barsky’s most recent publication on IAP dates back to 2000 but he is still abundantly quoted in recent works on IAP.

A further set of publications can be grouped under the broad heading of Linguistics: forensic linguistics (e.g. Berk-Seligson 2000) and sociolinguistics (e.g. Maryns 2005). While Berk-Seligson focuses primarily on the role of interpreters, Maryns concentrates on (socio)linguistic and narrative aspects of the accounts of asylum-seekers, but she also repeatedly – albeit usually briefly – refers to the role of interpreters.

The last group of authors is predominantly affiliated with Departments of Translation and Interpreting (e.g. Mason & Stewart 2001, Pöllabauer 2005). While all of the above mentioned publications refer (more or less thoroughly) to the role of interpreters in immigration settings but also discuss other relevant aspects (legal, socio-cultural, linguistic), this last set of authors takes a much closer look at the role(s) of interpreters, at the contradictory expectations and resulting role conflicts.

This brief overview clearly indicates that several disciplines have been involved in researching this field. A more detailed scientographic analysis would be necessary to establish to what extent publications of other disciplines have been taken up in IS and vice versa. It can, however, be safely maintained that seminal publications of related disciplines have been taken up in IS and that some IS literature has also been referred to by authors of related disciplines. Even though ‘interdisciplinarity’ has not always been fully accepted in IR (especially not by ‘practisearchers’) (cf. Gile 2000a: 90), it appears that Pöchhacker’s call for an “opening up within and across” (1998: 172) the discipline has been heard (at least) in CI research.

With respect to the authors’ disciplinary backgrounds we can, thus, discern a general trend: many of the earlier publications were mainly anec-

dotal or compilatory (i.e. authors’ backgrounds not evident or relevant), or else written by authors from related disciplines. In the 80s and early 90s several publications focused on IAP from a legal perspective. The two milestones on IAP by Wadensjö and Barsky were published in the early 90s though both authors were originally affiliated with tangentially related disciplines (Communication Studies and Comparative Literature). As of the mid-90s, (German) Communication Studies dominated, followed by an almost equal share of publications on IAP in areas of comparative literature, linguistics or sociology research. More recently, a larger number of researchers who are affiliated with Departments of TI have turned to IAP, though we still find studies (some of them large-scale projects) or theoretical contributions by authors of neighbouring disciplines such as linguistics (e.g. Maryns 2005), or linguistics-ethnographic studies (Inghilleri 2003). It is also possible to detect a shift from more anecdotal, personalised accounts in the beginning, to more ‘serious’ academic writings in recent years, though one still can come across anecdotal contributions in the more recent literature.

### **3. Who, when and where**

A closer look at the overall corpus of 71 publications shows that there are 5 duplicates which were published in an identical or almost identical form in different publications. If these duplicates are excluded, the number of relevant publications is down to 66. I do not exclude publications which are partially redundant because they report on the same empirical data (as suggested, for instance, by Gile (1997:48)).

The corpus of 66 publications includes contributions by 47 different authors<sup>5</sup>. The average number of publications per author would thus be 1.4. The actual ratio is different, however, as the majority of authors accounts for only one publication and only 10 authors published more than one publication, the most productive of them being Donk (6 publ.), Barsky (5), Pöllabauer (5), Blommaert (4), Maryns (4), Berk-Seligson (3), Inghilleri (3). While Donk and Barsky primarily focused on the topic in the 90s, the other authors turned to IAP at the turn of the century or later.

With respect to the authors’ productivity it would be useful to rate the publications according to a system of ‘bibliography-impact points’ to differentiate between different types of works and media of publication as was attempted by Pöchhacker (1995b) and thus provide a qualitative weighting of the publications. Due to the scope of this article, however, no such weighting system will be introduced. (The use of impact points, of course, carries some methodological pitfalls in itself.)

Of the 47 authors of the corpus, 14 were not affiliated with a university or research institution: 7 of these 14 were practising interpreters, 3 members of police or investigation departments, 2 employees of NGOs, and 2 members of language services. Of the remaining 33 authors, some are also practising interpreters, apart from being affiliated with a university de-

partment. For the rest, their status could not be established with certainty though in recent years, one can discern a distinct trend, viz. that the majority of authors are affiliated with universities or research institutions.

The 33 authors mentioned above were affiliated with 24 universities in 11 different countries (9 in Europe, 1 in the USA, and 1 in New Zealand). In Germany, scholars of 5 different universities focus on interpreting in IAP hearings; in Spain, the UK, and the US we see scholars from 3 universities, and in Austria and Switzerland from 2 universities or research institutions.

The majority of the authors (18) are affiliated with Departments of T/I, the rest with Departments of Languages (5), Communication Studies (4), Law (3), Linguistics (2), Comparative Literature (1), and Sociology (1).<sup>6</sup> Particularly in recent years, more authors affiliated with T/I departments have focused on IAP.

Six universities (Essen, Heriott-Watt, Granada, Graz, Ghent, Vanderbilt Univ.) had more than 1 author working on that topic (15 authors in total). With respect to the number of publications and authors, Vanderbilt University ranks top (8 publ. by 2 auth.), followed by Graz University (7 publ. by 3 auth.), University of Essen (7 publ. by 3 auth.), and Ghent University (5 publ. by 3 auth.). Essen University was home to a group of German communication scholars who published extensively on IAP in the 90s. Researchers of the University of Ghent and Graz University have focused on the subject as of 2000. Vanderbilt University is now home to both Barsky and Berk-Seligson and whereas Barsky turned to other subjects, Berk-Seligson has still published on IAP in recent years.

Of the overall number of 66 publications, 32 were written in English (for 9 authors, English was not their mother tongue), 27 in German and 7 in Spanish (the literature search did not produce publications in any other languages). Interestingly, many of the earlier (but also some of the more recent) publications are written in German. The first contribution in the corpus (Kälin 1986) was written in English but focused on (German-speaking) Switzerland.

Though many publications discuss aspects of interpreting in IAP settings which are relevant to the asylum adjudication procedure in general, all of them focus on one specific country in particular. Ten authors focus on Germany (17 publ.), 8 authors focus on Austria (10 publ. in German, 1 in English), 7 authors focus on the UK (8 publ.), 6 authors focus on Spain (6 publ. in Spanish), 4 authors focus on the US (5 publ. in English, 1 in Spanish), 3 authors focus on Belgium (5 publ. in English), 2 authors focus on Switzerland (2 publ. in English), 1 author focuses on Canada (5 publ. in English), 1 author focuses on Sweden (2 publ. in English, several articles not included in survey), and 1 author (and 1 publ.) each focuses on Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Poland (all publ. in English), with one of the more recent publications (2005) as the first to focus on Eastern Europe (Poland).

Especially in recent years, the centres of research on IAP have been located in Europe. The most recent publications on IAP in extra-European countries date back to 2004 (New Zealand) and 2002 (USA). Within

Europe, German scholars dominated the research landscape in the 90s; as of 2000, Austrian, Belgian, and UK scholars have taken their place.

If we take a closer look at the dates of publication of the relevant literature, we find that the first publications date back to the 1980s. Of these, Kälin (1986) may be considered the most influential as his work was later repeatedly referred to by other pioneering authors such as Barky (1994). Between 1991 and 1995, 13 new works were published, including the two most influential publications in this field (Wadensjö 1992, republ. in 1998, and Barsky 1994). Between 1996 and 2000, 18 more publications appeared. The most prolific authors in this period are Donk et al., Scheffer and, again, Wadensjö. The first half of the first decade of the new millennium then saw a sharp increase in publications with 33 contributions, with many ‘new’ one-time authors and some researchers with more than one publication (e.g. Berk-Seligson, Inghilleri, Pöllabauer). This surge in publications seems to prove the assumption that research on interpreting in non-conference settings and in IAP in particular, has been steadily gaining momentum.

The 66 publications of the corpus were also grouped according to type(s) of publication. Twenty-five publications were published in collective volumes. Of these, 16 volumes were publications on T/I (9 of these 16 were conference proceedings). The remaining 9 contributions were published in collective volumes of other disciplines (e.g. Law and Migration Studies, Comparative Literature, Communication Studies, Social Studies, Sociolinguistics).

Twenty-five publications were published in journals. Six of these journals are journals on T/I (*Interpreting, Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction (TTR), The Translator, MDÜ, Target*). Three of these articles were published in *The Translator*, a peer-reviewed journal with a wide distribution. Two articles appeared in *MDÜ*, a non-mainstream, non-refereed journal of the German Translators’ and Interpreters’ Association. Only 1 article each was published in the other journals mentioned. Of these, only *Interpreting, TTR* and *Target* are peer-reviewed. The other 18 articles were published in journals of other disciplines (e.g. *Forensic Linguistics, Discourse & Society, Kriminalistik, International Migration Review, Journal of Refugee Studies, Language International, Zeitschrift für Türkeistudien*). Some of these are refereed and have a wide distribution, whereas others are non-mainstream publications and difficult to access. Four publications can be found on the internet.

Only 12 publications of the corpus are monographs. Four of these are university publications: 3 MA theses (Univ. of Graz, Univ. of Vienna), 3 PhD theses, two of which were approved by departments of T/I, one by a department of Communication Studies. Of the other 6 monographs, 5 are the published (and expanded) versions of PhD theses. Only 1 monograph is an original publication (Barsky 2000) with a sub-section on interpreting. Four of these monographs were published by publishers with a special focus on T/I and in special series on T/I (St. Jerome, John Benjamins, Gunter Narr, Longman). The other 2 publications appeared in a series on qualitative sociology and on migration studies.

Of the overall corpus, 11 publications do not refer to any literature at all, 20 do not use any IS/TS literature, while 35 cite T/I publications in their reference sections.

#### 4. How – Methodology

With respect to research, a fundamental distinction is usually made between theoretical research, i.e. the development of a theoretical framework based on literature, and empirical research, which can be both quantitative (e.g. questionnaire surveys, large-scale structured interviews), or qualitative (e.g. participant observation, in-depth open interviews). Empirical research can be based on primary data (observation, interviews, surveys) or on secondary data (analyses of pre-existing statistics, review of records, documents, etc.) (cf. e.g. Dunsmuir & Williams 1990: 7). Very often a combination of different methods (triangulation of methods) is used.

In IS, another distinction has also been widely used. Gile (e.g. 1998) divided empirical research into observational research, i.e. using ‘naturally’ occurring data, and experimental research, i.e. creating an artificial situation to study a specific phenomenon. What is missing in this distinction, however, is the eliciting of data through, for instance, interviews or questionnaires. In my analysis I will therefore first differentiate between theoretical and empirical approaches. With respect to empirical methods, I will then differentiate between primary and secondary data. With respect to primary data, I will make a distinction between the following three categories (following Pöchlhacker 2004: 63): Field studies or case studies, i.e. collecting data in real-life situations (e.g. participant observation, qualitative informal interviews, use of research diaries, notes, etc.); survey research (e.g. questionnaire surveys, formal interviews), and experimental research, i.e. collecting data on a specific phenomenon in an artificially created situation.

If we group the corpus according to research methods, it can be roughly divided into three groups: compilatory or anecdotal contributions (21), mainly theoretical contributions (5) and publications based on empirical data (40). Anecdotal and/or compilatory publications do not develop a comprehensive theoretical framework and are not based on empirical data and will, thus, be excluded from the further analysis. The corpus will be limited to publications with a comprehensive theoretical and/or empirical approach to arrive at a more accurate picture of relevant publications and methodologies.

Five contributions in this limited corpus of 45 publications are mainly theoretical. They do not report on new empirical data, but are based on a fairly extensive literature search and thorough reading of the relevant literature and strive to develop a framework for further research and/or analysis (e.g. Inghilleri 2003).

Of the 40 publications based on empirical data, the large majority are based on primary empirical data, 7 publications used secondary data only,

and several publications use both primary and secondary data (e.g. Scheffer 2001, Donk 1994). The 7 authors who refer to secondary data used either records of appeal cases (e.g. Berk-Seligson 2000, Pöllabauer 2005), or official tapes and transcripts of police or asylum interviews (e.g. Berk-Seligson 2000), and in 1 case a segment of a TV-documentary on immigration interviews (Mason & Stewart 2001). Only 1 study (Fowler 2003) can be subsumed under the category of experimental research (small-scale experiment on record-taking of interpreted police statements).

Of the studies based on primary data, almost all were qualitative studies. Only 4 authors presented surveys based on questionnaires. Of these, only 1 can safely be categorized as quantitative (Fenton 2004); 2 of the other questionnaire-surveys were qualitative open interviews on the basis of questionnaires with a rather small sample, and 1 other author used a self-administered structured questionnaire, which was later complemented with interviews if the answers in the questionnaires were unclear.

The majority of empirical studies in this corpus used a triangulation of methods: participant observation with or without note-taking or keeping of a research diary (e.g. Scheffer 2001, Donk 1994, Maryns 2005), recording of interviews (audio or video recordings), transcription of these recordings and analysis of the transcripts (e.g. Wadensjö 1992/1998, Donk 1994, Pöllabauer 2005, Sauerwein 2005), open interviews with asylum-seekers (e.g. Barsky 2000), with interpreters (e.g. Maryns 2005), or IAP officers (e.g. Donk 1994), analysis of off-record comments by service providers or other participants (e.g. Scheffer 2001, Maryns 2005).

With respect to the analysis of interview transcripts, we find several different analytical approaches, generally depending on the authors' disciplinary backgrounds. All of these methods can broadly be subsumed under the general term 'discourse analysis'. Discourse analysis, however, does not offer one single clear-cut method for analysing discourse or texts, but rather comprises a wealth of different methods, models and theories which can be subsumed under this umbrella term (cf. van Dijk 1997a, b). This wealth of approaches can also be found in this corpus. Some of the authors specify in detail which discourse-analytical approach they adopt, whereas others do not explicitly explain their approach (in these cases, the overall analytical approach can be more or less determined from the literature used). Some authors also use a combination of different methods and theories (e.g. Barsky 1994).

Due to the scope of this paper I have had to limit this description of discourse analytical approaches to a brief overview of the different methods used in this corpus (for the sake of brevity I cannot provide full references for the authors or models on which the different discourse analytical methods are based, but further references can be found in the literature cited). Current methods and theories used in IAP research are: sociological or social-anthropological approaches (e.g. framework analysis and analysis of footing based on Goffman, cf. Wadensjö 1992/1998), systemic-functional linguistics approaches (e.g. Mason & Stewart 2001), critical discourse analysis based on Fairclough (e.g. Pöllabauer 2005), anthropological ap-

proaches such as ethnography of communication following Hymes and the ‘natural histories of discourse’ approach of Baumann and Briggs (e.g. Maryns & Blommaert 2001), ethnographical approaches (ethnomethodology, micro-sociology), Foucault’s theory of discourse (e.g. Scheffer 2001), social discourse theory based on Angenot and Bourdieu, and interactional pragmatics following Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism (e.g. Barsky 1994), conversation analysis based on Sacks and Schegloff (e.g. Russell 2002), sociological hermeneutics (e.g. Donk 1994) are current methods and theories used in IAP research.

All of the empirical studies mentioned adopt a deductive approach and base their collection and analysis of data on a theoretical framework and a research hypothesis (although the hypothesis is not always explicitly stated).

On a spectrum between ‘descriptive’ on the one hand and ‘prescriptive’ on the other, only 7 publications of the overall corpus (66) can be related with the ‘prescriptive’ as opposed to 59 with the ‘descriptive’ end of the spectrum, which supports the assumption that there has been a shift from prescriptive studies to a more descriptive approach in TS in general, and CI research in particular (cf. Mason 2000: 220).

With respect to methodology we thus find a chronological trend towards more qualitative empirical studies (as opposed to merely compilatory contributions). There are hardly any quantitative and no large-scale quantitative studies on the topic. Concerning qualitative methods no distinct chronological development can be discerned as we find different methods throughout the entire time period covered by the corpus, though discourse analytical studies based on corpora of (authentic) data seem to prevail. A plethora of different methods has been used since the 1990s and some of the early pioneering works have certainly influenced the design of later projects. Though a wealth of different analytical methods is applied, it appears that sociological and anthropological methods have been prevailing lately. Another trend is an increase in high-quality theoretical papers on the topic since 2003, which has to be attributed mainly to the contributions by Inghilleri (e.g. 2003).

## **5. Pitfalls of methodology**

An important aspect which needs to be considered in (overt) field research is the ‘naturalness’ of the data and the potential influence of observers: participant observation after all makes the researchers highly ‘visible’, and whenever researchers want to observe or record ‘natural’ data, they have to be aware of the fact that the presence of an observer and/or the recording of the situation may influence the participants’ behaviour and that they, thus, may act in an unnatural way. Even though it has been suggested (cf. e.g. Turner & Harrington 2000: 257) that interactants usually ‘forget’ after some time that an observer is present and/or the interaction recorded, this aspect still has to be considered when it comes to interpreting the data.

Wadensjö (1998: 95), for instance, points out that “subjects probably find it difficult from time to time not to pay attention to the fact that they are under surveillance”, and provides an example from a post-interview conversation where the interpreter remarked: “‘The doctor was a much better interpreter-user today than he usually is, but, well, he was being researched.’” (ibid.)

With respect to the researchers’ close involvement in some studies, one also has to take into consideration some potential for bias in their interpretation of the data (cf. e.g. Gile 1998: 75).

Another aspect which needs to be taken into account with respect to observation and recording of interpreted interactions is the validity and authenticity of the data: it is often difficult to obtain permission to record ‘real-life’ interpreting situations due to the sensitivity and privacy of such interactions. For that reason some research projects in community IR use ‘artificial’ data (e.g. simulated role plays) instead of ‘authentic’ data.

Surprisingly, almost all of the authors in this corpus managed to obtain permission to record ‘real’ IAP interviews (e.g. Wadensjö 1992/1998, Donk 1994, Pöllabauer 2003, Sauerwein 2005) or were able to at least use transcripts of real interviews (e.g. Barsky 1994, Berk-Seligson 2002).

Interpreted situations are highly ‘evanescent’. In order to be able to analyse verbal data, they have to be recorded and transcribed. The recording and transcription process, however, also carries some methodological problems. Whenever real-life situations are recorded (audio or video), the presence of a recording device may also have an influence on the naturalness of the situation. Video cameras, for instance, may be even more ‘disturbing’ to some subjects than audio recording equipment, as cameras may pose a stronger threat to the participants’ privacy and may, thus, influence their behaviour. Video recordings, on the other hand, may be used more profitably to analyse nonverbal data.

For both audio and video recordings it may be difficult to obtain permission to record: “The stories [asylum interviews] themselves as well as the ways in which they are received by officials (notes, summaries, transcripts, etc.) are effectively ‘blackboxed’ and they are impossible to get first-hand.” (Blommaert & Slembrouck 2000: 5)

Transcripts of the recordings are essential for discourse analysis and could be seen as the “distillate of complex interactions” (Edwards 1993: 3). Transcripts, however, are not an authentic representation of verbal data, as they are the result of a hermeneutical process of decision: the transcribers have to decide how to convert their data into a written text (cf. ibid.). Transcripts always reflect the subjective decisions of the individual transcribers. Researchers have to decide on adequate transcription conventions and the degree of detail (phonological transcription, paralinguistic phenomena, non-verbal behaviour) they want to include in the transcript.

As already mentioned, some authors use pre-existing transcripts, which had been prepared by police or asylum officials (e.g. Barsky 1994). In these cases, they have no choice with respect to transcription (conventions). If pre-recorded tapes are used or the authors obtain permission to re-

cord interviews, the transcripts have to be prepared by the authors themselves (e.g. Mason & Stewart 2001). Some publications, however, lack detailed information on methodological issues and it remains unclear under which conditions the transcripts used were prepared.

Another methodological issue with respect to the analysis of (authentic) verbal data is the size of the (transcribed) corpus and the representativeness of the data, which has also frequently been discussed in IR research (cf. e.g. Gile 1998: 80). Samples in IR are very often quite small, which means that the data are not necessarily representative of the behaviour of all interpreters in certain settings and cannot be generalised (cf. *ibid.*: 80f.). Also samples are not always randomly taken which always implies that there may be some bias in the selection of the sample (cf. *ibid.*). In CI research, the size of samples may differ largely. While some authors use a quite large corpus of recordings of interpreter-mediated situations for qualitative analyses, others use only one recording of half an hour (e.g. Roy 2000). In this corpus we find both publications which use only one or several (brief) interview(s) (or segments thereof) (e.g. Mason & Stewart 2001, Russell 2002), as well as studies with a large-scale corpus of transcripts (e.g. Wadensjö 1992/1998, Scheffer 2001, Pöllabauer 2005, Sauerwein 2005).

As not all of the publications in this corpus provide detailed information on the length and number of the hearings used for analysis, it is therefore not possible to provide an overview of the average size of the corpus used for such research designs. Wadensjö (2001: 190f.), however, maintains that even a corpus of 20 transcribed interviews can already be considered quite large and that one single recording would already be sufficient for a qualitative descriptive analysis of the data.<sup>7</sup>

## **6. What – Paradigm(s) and topics**

As it turns out, most of the relevant research on interpreting in IAP settings is based on field studies and focuses on the interaction dynamics in such settings. With reference to Kuhn (1962/1996), who referred to prevailing research traditions as ‘paradigms’, Pöchhacker (2004: 79) subsumes discourse-analytical studies on interpreting in non-conference settings under the ‘dialogic discourse-based interaction paradigm’ (DI paradigm). Studies under this paradigmatic approach focus on the interaction dynamics in face-to-face situations, on aspects of power, face and identity and are often influenced by methods of neighbouring disciplines. It can, thus, be safely concluded that the majority of the empirical studies in this corpus can be subsumed under the DI paradigm.

Three of the theoretical publications (Inghilleri 2003 *et passim*), which take up ideas by Bourdieu and Bernstein, but also draw heavily on the concept of translational norms of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), may also be subsumed under the Target-text-oriented Translation-theoretical approach (TT paradigm) (cf. Pöchhacker 2004: 77).

In this last section I will take a closer look at the content of the relevant (empirical and theoretical) publications to investigate which (sub)topics are tackled within these paradigms. All 44 empirical and theoretical publications were assigned (one or several) keywords, depending on the overall focus of the publications and the main topics tackled.

Issues of role and role conflict(s) (34 publ.), the power differential and asymmetrical constellation in IAP settings (30 publ.), and discursive narratives strategies and issues of discursive control (18 publ.) are most prominent among the analysed publications. Cultural aspects (11 publ.), aspects of register and style (9 publ.), face and politeness (8 publ.), investigative strategies (8 publ.), participation framework and footing (7 publ.), use of unqualified interpreters (7 publ.), turn-taking (7 publ.), and translational norms (6 publ.) are also tackled quite often and range in the middle field. Issues of training (1 publ.), record-taking (2 publ.) and service provision or language policy (4 publ.) are less prevalent. Issues of role, face, footing and politeness were very much present in the earlier pioneering works (e.g. Barsky, Wadensjö) but are still tackled today (e.g. Pöllabauer, Sauerwein). However, what is quite new (in IS in general, and studies on IAP in particular) is the topic of translational norms (e.g. Inghilleri 2003).

Though we have to exercise some caution with respect to these data, as the assigning of keywords always includes a subjective element, we nevertheless get a general picture of dominant topics in research on interpreting in IAP settings. This analysis of topics also clearly proves that the DI and, to a lesser degree, the TT paradigm(s) can be said to be prevailing in this kind of research.

## **7. Conclusion**

The literature survey, which was presented in this article, shows that research on interpreting in IAP settings has been in the focus of interest in different disciplines, including IS, since the 1980s, with a steady rise in output in the 1990s and a sharp increase after 2000. Some of these publications turned out to be ‘milestones’ which were taken as an incentive for other similar studies, while others provide a more anecdotal, non-academic view of the role of interpreters in IAP settings. On a general timeline, we can also distinguish a trend from “writings to research” (Pöchhacker 1995b: 30), with a marked increase in publications by authors affiliated with IS/TS in recent years. Although a great number of these publications appeared in I/T media, IS evidently has to catch up with respect to publication in refereed mainstream journals on interpreting. Also, IS literature still has to find its way into extra-disciplinary works to a greater degree. With regard to authors or ‘centres’ of research, we find a very diverse (and geographically dispersed) group of researchers, but on the whole still more isolation than cooperation. As many researchers (or groups of researchers) work in isolation there is only a small degree of cross-fertilisation (particularly as a result of some pioneering works which are widely quoted).

With respect to methodology, the majority of the publications is based on empirical data and adopts a deductive qualitative approach. The data (mostly records or transcripts of hearings) are analysed with a wealth of different discourse analytical methods (generally taken from related disciplines). Here, an even stronger focus on methodological aspects and a more detailed description of the chosen methodological design and approaches might prove worthwhile. Also, the collecting of more quantitative data besides qualitative, should prove interesting.

With respect to subject matters, we find a plethora of topics, the most prominent of them being issues of role and role conflict, power, discursive strategies, cultural aspects, register, face and politeness. Most of these publications can be subsumed under the DI paradigm.

For future research, a number of these empirical studies could be taken as an incentive and stimulating source for new ideas. More studies on aspects of role (conflicts) and power (and related aspects) in interpreted IAP hearings could contribute to shedding new (more) light on the situation in different countries and thus allow for stronger cooperation and a more solidly founded base of analysis and comparison of the situation in different countries.

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<sup>1</sup> Literature on court interpreting proper (i.e. interpreting in courtrooms) was not included in the corpus, whereas literature on police interpreting was included. The term court interpreting is often used as a synonym for judiciary (sometimes also judicial) interpreting and legal interpreting. In some countries and jurisdictions the term court interpreting is restricted to interpreting in courtrooms (i.e. judiciary or judicial interpreting); in others court interpreting also refers to interpreting in other legal and quasi-judicial (administrative) settings and hearings and the certified translation of documents (cf. Berk-Seligson 2000: 214 and Pöchhacker 2004: 14). Legal interpreting can be used as an umbrella term which also includes courtroom interpreting proper. Interpreting in IAP hearings takes place in "quasi-judicial" (administrative) settings but not in courts per se; it is, thus, legal interpreting, but not court interpreting.

<sup>2</sup> The IRN (Interpretation Research Network) Bulletin was not included in the survey as it mainly provides literature on conference IR. The bibliographical updates in *The Interpreters' Newsletter* were not referred to either.

<sup>3</sup> The half-life of knowledge is very brief, however. Even if the body of literature used for this survey is representative at the time of writing, there may already be new articles at the time of publication.

<sup>4</sup> A large number of articles based on Wadensjö's pioneering monograph is often quoted in the IS literature and can easily be accessed through the relevant TS resources. For the sake of brevity, I will only refer to her PhD thesis and 1998 monograph in this survey.

<sup>5</sup> A similar bibliographic analysis with a far larger corpus was presented by Pöchhacker (1995a, b, 2000), and Gile (2000b) for research on (conference) interpreting.

<sup>6</sup> With respect to affiliation, the authors' most current affiliation was researched and used for this survey, as some authors had previously worked (and published) at other universities. Authors' affiliation – and, thus, centres of research in this field – may change rapidly.

<sup>7</sup> Another (methodological) aspect which is sometimes discussed with respect to field research, is the ethical dimension of researching certain groups of subjects. Especially with studies involving underprivileged groups such as asylum-seekers, it may be disputed whether it is ethically acceptable to "invade" in situations which may be extremely troublesome for these groups. For a discussion of such ethical considerations cf. for instance Turner & Harrington (2000) or Blommaert & Slembrouck (2000).