Facing social, emotional and technological challenges in the virtual interpreting classroom / Enfrentarse a retos sociales, emocionales y tecnológicos en el aula virtual de interpretación

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Abstract: During the first waves of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns, there was an observable increase in social and political attention paid to gender-based violence in our national context. This, in turn, has highlighted the important role of the Austrian Violence Protection Centres, also revealing the need to facilitate easier access to these services for non-German-speaking clients through interpreters. To find ways to mirror close-to-life situations in our interpreting classes that reflect current technological developments, acute societal issues, and complex institutional contexts, we developed a research-led semi-structured role-play concept with the goal of preparing students for technical, ethical, and emotional challenges pertaining to remote interpreting in sensitive contexts. To validate the effectiveness of the role-play, we used two simulations of interpreter-mediated online counselling sessions and conducted post-task interviews with involved students acting as interpreters.

Keywords: gender-based violence, remote interpreting, role-plays, dialogue interpreting education

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Resumen: Durante las primeras oleadas de la pandemia del COVID-19 y los consiguientes confinamientos, la violencia de género (VG) ha recibido más atención en Austria. Esto, a su vez, ha acentuado el papel de los Centros de Protección contra la Violencia, subrayando la necesidad de facilitar el acceso a estos servicios, por medio de intérpretes. El desarrollo de la "pandemia en la sombra" en el ámbito de la VG nos ha impulsado a buscar situaciones más realistas que reflejen los actuales desarrollos tecnológicos y los problemas sociales para nuestras clases de interpretación. Por lo tanto, hemos desarrollado un concepto de juego de roles semiestructurado basado en los resultados de la investigación con el objetivo de preparar a los estudiantes para los desafíos técnicos, éticos y emocionales relacionados con la interpretación remota en contextos sensibles. Para validar la eficacia de nuestro concepto hemos recurrido a simulaciones de sesiones de asesoramiento mediadas por intérpretes y hemos realizado entrevistas con los estudiantes para reflexionar sobre los desafíos encontrados en la simulación.

1. Introduction

During the first waves of the COVID-19 pandemic and the several lockdown periods that ensued, there was an observable increase in social and political attention paid to domestic and gender-based violence (GBV) in our national context (APA, 2021). This, in turn, has also highlighted the important role of legally recognised Violence Protection Centres (VPCs), also revealing the need to facilitate easier access to their services for clients with limited German proficiency through interpreters (Flotzinger et al., 2021). As existing research (e.g., Havelka & Stempkowski, 2021), as well as preliminary data of an ongoing Ph.D. project (Pasch, forthcoming) suggest, some VPCs increasingly resort to remote interpreting (RI) technologies in order to find interpreters for languages of limited diffusion (LLDs) and facilitate multilingual access.

As university trainers for dialogue interpreting (MA level), we are tasked with finding ways to mirror close-to-life situations in our classes that reflect current technological developments, acute societal issues, and complex institutional contexts (Bahadir, 2017, p. 126). For this purpose, we developed a research-led semi-structured role-play concept with the goal of preparing students to face technical, ethical, and emotional challenges pertaining to RI in highly sensitive contexts. During 2020 and 2021, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, to continue with class activities, online classes were the only possible alternative. In order to maintain the quality of our teaching, we had to ensure the best use of the online format,

highlighting the challenges of interpreting remotely, while also encouraging lively discussions and simulated dialogue interpreting scenarios mirroring real-life situations. Simultaneously, as our teaching practices were evolving into the virtual sphere, we observed the massive growth of the so-called "shadow pandemic" of violence against women (VAW) (UN, 2020, p. 19) unfolding globally as well as in our national context (Flotzinger et al., 2021).

These circumstances have spurred our interest in designing research-led role-play that we could use in our classes in order to sensitise our students not only to the challenges of RI but also to VAW and to interpreting in GBV contexts. In this paper, we describe our approach to designing and evaluating our role-play concept, using transcripts of video recordings, as well as post-task and retrospective interviews with students acting as interpreters to validate the role-play developed. First, we shall offer an overview of the effects of COVID-19 on VAW globally, then move on to describe our national context regarding violence protection initiatives. Furthermore, we shall review relevant didactic resources for interpreting GBV as well as RI, while also proposing a possible list of competencies for interpreters in GBV contexts. Afterwards, the design and validation of role-plays for an interpreter education based on "authentic, experiential learning" (Kiraly, 2000, p. 42) will be explored. Finally, we shall discuss the results of our analysis and highlight some of the limitations of the research discussed in this paper.

2. Background

VAW is a systemic, global issue based on a history of subjugation of women to male patriarchal dominance which, for most of western history, has influenced western societies' views and treatment of women. VAW is therefore inseparably intertwined with the development of state societies and has been accepted as a natural expression of male dominance for centuries (Fox, 2002). Current statistics reveal that women are still subject to many forms of violence (FRA, 2014; Flotzinger et al., 2021). Even before the pandemic, every fifth woman over the age of 15 in Austria was affected by physical, psychological, or sexual violence (FRA, 2014). In that respect, COVID-19 has acted as a further catalyst exacerbating GBV and has manifested in the following fundamental, global consequences: (1) an increase in control over and isolation of women; (2) fewer opportunities to escape from violence through separation and reporting; (3) reduced possibility of professional support and assistance; (4) perception of impunity on the part of aggressors (Lorente-Acosta et al., 2020, p. 38).

A survey commissioned by the European Parliament reveals that three out of four women (77%) in the EU think that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in physical and emotional VAW (EP Flash Europabarometer 2712, 2022). Furthermore, UN-Women declared that the impact of COVID-19 on women was, in fact, a "shadow pandemic" (UN, 2020, p. 19), with, globally, 243 million women and girls aged 15-49 having reported being subjected to sexual and physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner in the period of April 2019 to April 2020.

2.1. The Austrian Violence Protection Centres as multilingual spaces of intervention

Ever since the advent of the first Protection Against Violence Bill, which was enshrined into Austrian federal law in 1997, specialised and legally recognised VPCs have enabled

victims and survivors[1] of domestic and GBV access to their right to a life free of violence. The support of victims and survivors was planned and implemented as an integral part of the aforementioned Bill (Logar, 2005, p. 10), so as not to leave victims and survivors of GBV alone with the consequences of legal steps taken against perpetrators. These centres are funded by the Federal Ministry of the Interior as well as the Federal Ministry of Health and Women and serve as an extension to an existing help network comprising women's shelters and other women's NGOs. In 2021, 22,039 victims of GBV were assisted by VPCs all across the country. 81.3% of the clients supported were women and girls and 90.4% of the offenders were male (WIGF, 2021, p. 20).

VPCs support victims and survivors in all matters concerning their protection and the securing of their rights, in civil as well as in criminal lawsuits, while also focusing on violence prevention (Logar, 2005). Specialised violence prevention counsellors offer psychosocial and legal support, which can range from helping with the application for a barring order against the perpetrator to accompanying clients to court proceedings and connecting victims and survivors with other relevant institutions or organisations, helping with issues of accommodation, work, or child safety. As victims and survivors with limited German proficiency constitute a target group which is hard to reach and even more difficult to inform of their rights, VPCs place an increasing focus on possible ways of reaching these target groups and enabling access, e.g., by offering counselling in the required language of the client through a staff member who speaks that language or calling upon interpreters (Schwarz-Schlöglmann, 2017, p. 159; Flotzinger et al., 2021, p. 35). Some VPCs have even signed contracts with service providers specialising in video-remote interpreting in the DACH region, which should again underscore the need to prepare students of dialogue interpreting for not only video-remote interpreting assignments but also for the demands of interpreting GBV.

2.2. Literature on interpreting GBV

The origins of the discussion around interpreting in GBV contexts can be traced back to the work of Maree Pardy (1996). In an article entitled "Interpreting for Women – Time for a Rethink", she outlines the special features of interpreting for women with a migration background in Australia and formulates the following appeal: "The point being made is that for interpreting services to truly reflect the needs of their constituencies, women's needs should be central to their planning and policies" (Pardy, 1996, p. 3). Twenty years after Pardy's call for a feminist interpreting education, Norma and Garcia-Caro (2016, p. 21) noted a continuing lack of attention paid to gender-specific approaches in how interpreters are trained.

As a result of activities related to the SOS-VICS project in Spain (Toledano, Buendía & del Pozo, Triviño 2015), interpreting for victims and survivors of GBV in diverse institutional settings has, deservedly, been given the limelight by raising awareness of issues pertaining to interpreting GBV, supporting the training of interpreters in terms of a feminist perspective and creating resources for interpreters and service providers alike (Toledano, Buendía & del Pozo, Triviño 2015, p.15; Lázaro, Gutiérrez & Sánchez, Ramos 2015, p. 275).

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[1] We have decided to use both terms as the word *victim* is the legal definition necessary in the criminal justice system, while *survivor* can be used as a word of empowerment to highlight that the person has started the healing process (RAINN, 2022).

In the US, interpreting in victim care has been primarily advanced under the umbrella term of "trauma-informed interpreting". Based on focus group interviews and individual interviews with both counsellors from victim protection agencies and interpreters, Bancroft has published a comprehensive training manual and workbook on interpreting in victim care. These resources include modules on various modes of interpreting, ethical dilemmas, and the risk of secondary traumatisation (Bancroft 2017, p. 203; Bancroft et al., 2016).

Based on this short overview of literature on didactic resources for interpreters working in GBV contexts, it is evident that in recent years, the complex task of interpreting GBV has been receiving increasing scholarly attention on an international scale (Tipton, 2018, p. 163). Within Austria, however, interpreting in GBV contexts has not yet been established as a research avenue, aside from one quantitative survey (Havelka & Stempkowski, 2021) on victim care organisations in general, of which VPCs are a part. This survey brings to the fore the difficulties and experiences of experts in the field of victim care in criminal proceedings (Havelka & Stempkowski, 2021). With the advent of COVID-19, GBV has started to receive increased coverage by Austrian media, resulting in political actions and a budget increase for VPCs, as well as a surge in campaigning to raise awareness for the issue of intimate partner violence (e.g., public service announcements, initiatives in the field of violence protection[2], as well as demonstrations[3]) (Parliamentary correspondence 1295, 2021; Wolf, 2021, p. 23). The increase in GBV and changes and challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have aggravated the situation for victims and survivors with limited German proficiency, which requires victim care services to pay even greater attention to potential language barriers and interpreting provision (Flotzinger et al., 2021, p. 35). This paper aims to build upon the already existing literature on interpreting in GBV settings and apply the developed didactic resources for our research-led role-play concept to our interpreting classes.

3. Remote interpreting in GBV contexts and required competencies

Remote interpreting[4] (RI) has been increasingly used since the beginning of the 20th century (De Cotret et al., 2020; Corpas, Pastor & Gaber, 2020, p. 59; Runcieman, 2020), and it is during the COVID-19 pandemic that it has become the so-called 'new normal'.[5] In addition to preventing contagion, the use of RI in public service institutions enables reduction of costs and quick reaction to requests for interpreters for a specific language. In GBV contexts, some scholars (Fernández Pérez, 2015, p. 104) argue that RI can, among other things, help to maintain the anonymity of victims and has the advantage of reducing the emotional burden for interpreters (Fernández Pérez, 2015, p. 105). Also, experts from the VPCs emphasise that the chances of the client and interpreter belonging to the same community are very low, which decreases the risk of a possible breach of confidentiality (Pasch, forthcoming).

As research has revealed (e.g., Braun & Taylor, 2012; Napier et al., 2018), however, there are also many challenges associated with the use of RI. Some challenges derive from the type of remote communication technology used (i.e., telephone or video conference system)

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[2] Living FREE of violence. A campaign to prevent violence against women and children. http://www.gewaltfreileben.at/en/

[3] Claim the Space - against femi(ni)zides and patriarchal violence. https://claimthespace.blackblogs.org/

[4] In this paper, we use the term *remote interpreting* as an umbrella term for video- and audio-mediated interpreting where the primary participants are together in the same location, while the interpreter is in a remote location (Napier et al., 2018, p. 4). For a deeper terminological discussion on and a review of research on remote interpreting, see Napier et al. (2018).

[5] As it is highlighted by preliminary data of an ongoing Ph.D. project on interpreting in VPCs (Pasch, forthcoming), the VPCs have resorted to different forms of remote counselling long before COVID-19.

(Havelka et al., 2022, p. 226), from a poor internet connection and inadequate equipment (e.g., Runcieman, 2020, p. 14; Fernández Pérez, 2015, pp. 103–104) or the limited amount of visual information available to all parties. Interpreters can only see what their webcam shows: if the participants move out of the webcam range, the interpreter loses access to the visual information (Fernández, Pérez, 2015, p. 105). In audio-mediated interpreting, visual clues are always absent, which can increase stress levels (Corpas, Pastor & Gaber, 2020, p. 74) and make interpreting cognitively more demanding. A recurrent strategy used by interpreters to check whether they can be seen or heard by the main participants is the typical question at the beginning – or in the middle – of the communicative event; for example, 'can you hear me?'. The reduced or absent visual information together with the perceived dependency on technology leads to challenges in coordinating turn-taking, which is made difficult by false starts or overlapping speech (Braun & Taylor, 2012). In the virtual space, the interpreter can also experience a sense of alienation, poor concentration, or stress. Eye contact and gaze orientation (Braun & Taylor, 2012) are challenging as well. Eye contact is a powerful tool to build trust in communication since it can express solidarity and understanding, which is of vital importance in sensitive contexts such as GBV (Fernández, Pérez, 2015, p. 105).

In GBV contexts, interpreters are hired on demand (Fernández Pérez, 2015, p. 106-107; Havelka et al., 2022, p. 220), which means that they have limited information on the communicative scenario before the encounter. As far as preparing interpreters in VPCs is concerned, briefing encompasses a short introduction with clarification of the client's name and the purpose of the meeting (e.g., first meeting, applying for a barring order or preparation and legal counsel regarding an upcoming court proceeding). Depending on prior experience of cooperation between counsellor and interpreter, briefing might vary regarding the time needed for clarification of basic principles and roles. In the case of RI, counsellors and interpreters first establish a connection, before the client is called into the room, either physically, by sitting next to the counsellor in the room, or by being connected via phone or video (Pasch, forthcoming).

The skills needed to face the challenges posed by RI in GBV contexts are summarised in Table 1, which adapts the classification of Gerber et al. (2021, pp. 13–14) by also considering the aspects mentioned by Abril Martí et al. (2015, pp. 67–75), Fernández Pérez (2015, pp. 115–120) and Havelka et al. (2022) and which will be used as a basis for our analysis (see section 4.3):

Competencies	Skills
Translational	Performing two-way interpreting Choice of the appropriate interpreting mode and technique based on the RI technology used as well as the communicative situation Performing and handling sight translation (previous sending of the file by e-mail, asking to keep the document close to the webcam) Accuracy
Interactional	Managing the opening and the close ("can you hear me?") Coordinating the turn-taking Handling briefings and debriefings Working professionally in a team Replicating empathy through voice, body language and appropriate wording
Linguistic and intercultural	Proficiency in the working languages (including varieties, registers and styles) Knowledge of countries and cultures
Performance-based	Memory, listening and comprehension skills Protecting one's own physical and psychological health (digital well-being)

Ethical	Knowledge of professional ethics Awareness of one's own role as an interpreter Decision-making according to the communicative situation Protection of anonymity and the private sphere during and after interpreting
Thematic and institutional	Knowledge of the typical subject areas (e.g., law, medicine) and their terminology Knowledge of GBV and its terminology Knowledge of gender equality and inequality and their terminology Knowledge of the text types and discourse types recurring in GBV contexts Knowledge of the institutions involved in GBV contexts
Technical and instrumental	Choice and correct use of the appropriate equipment for RI (incl. setting up the workplace and the equipment) Correct use of RI technology Using computer-assisted interpreting tools Problem-solving of technical issues

Table 1. Competencies and skills for RI in GBV contexts

4. Design and validation of role-play

To design authentic role-plays, trainers should be familiar with the interaction they want to simulate (Falbo, 2020, p. 166). Falbo argues that knowledge of the situation can usually be acquired either in a formal learning process or through experience in the field either as interpreter or as observer. Sometimes, it can derive from both of them, for example, when teachers are also researchers and combine their practical experience with findings of their interpreting research. In this case, the role-plays are not only authentic but can also be considered research-led (Iacono, 2022).

Effective role-plays need a didactic goal (Falbo, 2020, p. 167) that can be related to the management of turn-taking and emotional, ethical and professional challenges in addition to more classic interpreting challenges like terminological density, speed of delivery and linguistic or cultural aspects. Literature on role-play (e.g., Wadensjö, 2014; Cirillo & Radicioni, 2017; Kadrić, 2017a and 2017b; Ozolins, 2017) also points out the necessity of complementing role-plays with further activities such as evaluations through peer feedback and teacher's feedback, discussions, and reflection on specific aspects of the simulation, challenges or interpreter's decisions and analysis of particular sequences of the interaction. These activities also make it possible to involve all students assigned to the role of observers.

In what follows, we will describe how we designed our role-play, its didactic goal and how we carried out its validation through additional post-task and retrospective interviews with the two students who acted as interpreters. In the last section, we will provide some examples from the simulations and discuss them based on the statements made by the interpreters during the post-task and retrospective interviews.

4.1. Setting the scene

The idea to set up a role-play on RI in a GBV context was triggered by the request of one of our students who wanted to write her master's thesis on this topic and needed a video recording of an 'authentic' interpreter-mediated interaction, which would then be used as data for a discourse analysis focusing on challenges students face, as well as self-perception[6].

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[6] The student was not supervised by us, and we were involved neither in the design nor in the evaluation of her master's thesis. She approached us since she had taken part in our interpreting classes in the past and knew about our experience in interpreting in these contexts.

Her concrete request was to set up a simulation of a prototypical video-mediated interaction between an Italian-speaking client and a counsellor from a VPC. Based on this request, we designed a simulation which could also be used in future virtual classes as well as in face-to-face classes, and for different language combinations, as video-recorded material to discuss with our students different aspects of interpreting in GBV contexts.

During an initial briefing with her, we agreed on the following aspects framing the simulated interaction:

- We chose the RI constellation where the interpreter is located at a remote site and the main participants are together in the office of the institution.
- We decided to play the main participants – Maria Rossi (MR in the following transcripts), an Italian woman living in Austria who has been experiencing psychological and physical violence by her partner, and the German-speaking counsellor (C in the following transcripts) of the Styrian Violence Protection Centre[7].
- The interaction was simulated twice so that it could be interpreted by two different interpreters (I1 and I2 in the following transcripts). The interpreters – one male (I1) and one female (I2) – were recruited by the student among advanced interpreting students and should have two different specialisations[8] but the same mother tongue (German): I1 studied conference interpreting, while I2 studied dialogue interpreting.
- The simulation lasted approximately 30 minutes.
- The student was also present in the online room whilst the simulation was conducted, but the screen and microphone were turned off, so as not to distract the interpreter with additional sensory input.
- Before the simulation, the interpreters were informed that they would interpret an interaction between an Italian woman seeking counselling and a counsellor at the Styrian VPC. The counsellor and the client would be in the same place and the interpreter would join them through the Zoom platform. The complete counselling session would be recorded via video. The interpreters knew that the roles of the main participants would be played by us and that we would not evaluate their performance. Furthermore, they were provided with a list of topics addressed during such counselling sessions and a link to a guideline on interpreting in GBV contexts in German (Bodenez, 2021).
- The interpreters were interviewed by the student after the simulation. A post-task interview was conducted immediately after the simulation; a week after the simulation a retrospective interview was conducted.
- Both our student and the two interpreters gave us written consent to use the video materials (simulation, post-task, and retrospective interviews) for our research.

After agreeing on these points, we moved on to design the role-play. To make it as authentic as possible, we opted for a role-play with a scenario. Based on our professional experience, we drafted a script, where the client is experiencing verbal and psychological violence and physical abuse by a partner. The structure of the simulated encounter follows that of a first meeting between a client with limited German proficiency and a counsellor

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[7] We chose a Styrian and not the Viennese institution since not all Austrian VPCs employ male counsellors and our goal was to simulate an authentic interaction. The VPC in Styria employs male and female counsellors and depending on the case at hand decides whether to deploy male social workers in cases of intimate partner violence (IPV) while in cases of sexual violence, only female case workers and interpreters are deployed.

[8] At the Centre for Translation Studies (ZTW) of the University of Vienna, the Master's curriculum has two different interpreting specialisations: dialogue interpreting and conference interpreting. Dialogue-interpreting classes are mandatory only for dialogue-interpreting students. It is possible for conference-interpreting students to attend dialogue interpreting courses as individual depth studies (ZTW, 2018).

and includes general phases which are, in practice, tailored and adapted accordingly, as the VPCs follow a person-centred approach in counselling.[9]

- • Briefing the interpreter
- • Introduction
- • Eliciting the problem
- • Exposition of the story
- • Starting the resolution
- • Deciding on further actions
- • Conclusion of counselling session
- • De-briefing of interpreter

Due to time constraints, we focused on the first part of the encounter, since the first thirty minutes are mostly dedicated to eliciting the problem and exposing the story, while the resolution can only be initiated in such a short time.

4.2. Didactic goal and role-play validation

The didactic goal of the role-play design was to confront students with different challenges to foster the development of translational, interactional, thematic, and institutional as well as technical and instrumental competencies (see Table 1). To achieve this goal, we identified some aspects in the literature on RI in GBV contexts (see section 2.2.) which can be challenging for interpreters who are not familiar with interpreting settings involving descriptions of violent events and RI in dialogic situations. Interpreting a story involving violence in a detailed way and in the right temporal sequence requires translational competence. From an interactional point of view, we focused on the management of the entire communication (turn-takings and overlapping utterances) and the replication of professional empathy despite the distance deriving from the RI situation. In order to foster thematic and institutional competencies we followed the text and discourse types and their structures explained in 4.1. as well as legal and GBV terminology used in the VPCs. From the point of view of technical competence, we focused on the ability to use RI technology and solve technical issues.

To validate the role-play, we used the post-task and retrospective interviews planned and conducted by our student as part of her master's thesis. The post-task interviews took place immediately after the simulation with the aim of detecting the satisfaction of the interpreters with their performances, their impression of the simulation, the challenges experienced and the strategies used. The retrospective interviews were conducted a week later with the intention of discovering the potential emotional burdens of the interpreters and whether they had changed their minds regarding their interpreting performance during the last week. All the interviews were conceived, carried out and recorded by our student since they were instrumental to her master's thesis. In order to use the interviews to validate our role-plays we asked her to include some questions related to the emotional and technical challenges but left it up to her to formulate the questions.

4.3. Analysis

In this paper, we focus, as an example, on four skills listed in Table 1, namely replicating empathy, coordinating turn-taking, accuracy and problem-solving of technical issues. For

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[9] Based on e-mail correspondence with an expert of the Styrian VPC.

each section, we will present an excerpt for each simulation and the respective results from the interviews.

4.3.1. Interactional competence – replicating empathy

(1) I1_1

[36][10]

MR [v]	· · · Hm˙ ((takes an audible breath)) ((3s)) Sssi. • Ehmm, non soo,
MR [en]	Yes, I don't know,
MR [nv]	o -------------------------------------- Eyes down ----------------------------------- o

[37]

MR [v]	da dove devo cominciaaree? ‿Mmm si trattaa/ c'è, praticamente il mio compagnoo,
MR [en]	where should I start? It is about/ it's my boyfriend
MR [nv]	o---stares into the distance-- o o --------------------------------Eyes closed, shakes head---------------

[38]

MR [v]	chee è austriacoo, èèè • è violento.‿Devo cominciaree aa raccontaree la storia
MR [en]	who is Austrian and he is violent. Shall I start telling the story
MR [nv]	-------------------------------------- o o ------------------------------------ stares into the distance, then shakes

[39]

MR [v]	dall'inizioo o, non so che coss? • • — Sscusi eh, sono molto confusa.	
MR [en]	from the beginning? Or I don't know what. I'm sorry, I am very confused.	
MR [nv]	Head, then right hand before eyes--- o	
I1 [v]		((1,2s)) Sì, sì, non
I1 [en]		Yes, yes, no worries

[40]

I1 [v]	c'è problema.‿Capiscoo • molto bene. •‿Ehmm. •Also. D, die Frage war: Wo soll
I1 [en]	I understand. The question was: Where

[41]

I1 [v]	ich anfangen? Ähmm, mein Freund kommt aus • Österreich • • uund er ist
I1 [en]	should I start? My friend comes from Austria, and he is

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[10] The transcription was made in EXMARaLDA, following the HIAT conventions (https://www.exmaralda.org/pdf/HIAT_EN.pdf).

[42]

I1 [v]	gewalttätig. Ich weiß nicht, wo ich die Geschichte beginnen soll. Ich bin etwas ⋅
I1 [en]	violent. I don't know where to begin the story. I am a bit

[43]

I1 [v]	durcheinander.‿ Es tut mir sehr leid.
I1 [en]	confused. I am very sorry.

In this sequence, the client appears on the edge of the screen and is clearly upset. In his previous turn, the counsellor had asked her to explain the reason for her request for help. She is now confused and does not know how detailed her narration has to be. She looks at the floor and runs her hand over her forehead, which shows her hopelessness. I1 tries to replicate empathy with a very compassionate gaze and voice and adds a sentence before interpreting which aims at reassuring the client. By acting this way, I1 proves to have interactional competences. During the post-task and the retrospective interview, he reflected on this sequence and said that he had felt very sorry for MR, but that he had also felt very distant because of the RI situation ("what could I have done to make her feel better?" (I1)). Furthermore, he was not sure whether he could ask her to get closer to the counsellor to make her more centrally positioned on the screen. He did not yet know whether he would behave differently in face-to-face communication, but during the interaction, he had decided to fade this aspect out. It was a sensitive situation, and it was hard for him from an emotional perspective.

(2) I2_1

[42]

MR [v]	⋅ ⋅ ⋅ Hm˙ ((takes a breath)) ⋅ ⋅ ⋅ Eehmm beh! Miiooo, il mio compagnooo èèè, è un
MR [en]	Well, my friend is violent

[43]

MR [v]	violentooo eee ⋅ ehmmm sì, non so, devo cominciare a raccontare dall'inizioo? ⋅ ⋅ ((takes a
MR [en]	and yes, I don't know if I have to start telling, from the beginning?
I2 [v]	Hm˙

[44]

I2 [v]	breath)) ⋅ Ähmm mein Partneerr ist gewalttätiigg uunndd ich weiß jetzt nicht,
I2 [en]	my partner is violent and now I don't know

[45]

I2 [v]	soll anfan/ also, soll ich ⋅ ganz bei Anfang, mit dem Erzählennn anfangen?‿ Also,
I2 [en]	If I have to start to tell the story from the beginning?

FITISPos

[46]

C [v]	• • Jjaa! Jaa! Also, woos, wos für Sie am besten ist.
C [en]	Yes, yes! Well, where it is best for you.
I2 [v]	bei Begiinnn, odeerr?
I2 [en]	From the beginning?......

In the second simulation, the situation is very similar to the simulation previously described. The client acts in a similar way, too. I2 also tries to replicate empathy but uses a different strategy: instead of a compassionate gaze, she smiles at the client. In the post-task and retrospective interview, I2 reflected on her interactional competences and told us that she was almost frightened by how realistic the situation seemed. During her interpretation she had tried to give her words a "shocked touch" in order to replicate the source emotions but had not succeeded because she claims not to be a good actress and it seemed strange for her to replicate an emotion. In such situations, she preferred to pause, use a particular intonation, adjust the volume of her voice or make it clear that the interlocutor struggles to find the right words; however, she believed that she had not been able to replicate MR's hesitations. Like I1, I2 also believes that she had felt more distant through the RI situation, but she assessed the distance as something positive. Nevertheless, she was not sure if her struggle with empathy derived more from this distance or from the fact that the subject had emotionally impacted her.

4.3.2. Interactional competence – coordinating the turn-taking

(3) I1_2

[69]

C [v]		Entschuldigung! • Können • • Können Sie kurz
C [en]		Excuse me! Could you interpret?
C [nv]	-- o	% hand > I, SW > I

[70]

C [v]	dolmetschen? Nicht, dass daa • vieles	runtergeht, jaa? Es ist gleich/ recht viel
C [en]	Not that many things go lost, ok?	This was quite a lot
I1 [v]	S • Sìì.	
I1 [en]	Yes.	
I1 [k]	nodding, smiling	

[71]

C [v]	hab ich gehört jetzt, jaa?
C [en]	what I have heard
I1 [v]	• Alles klar. • • • ((takes a breath)) • Jaa! • • • Ähmm gut ähmm
I1 [en]	Sure. Yes. Well..............................

In this sequence, I1 struggles with coordination of the turn-taking as the client starts to tell her story in a very detailed manner. After two minutes, the counsellor interrupts her, turns to I1 and asks him to perform the interpreting in order not to lose details. I1 starts to interpret in a very accurate way throughout the turn. In the post-task and retrospective interview, I1 said that it was his first experience in dialogue interpreting as his specialisation is conference interpreting and that he was not used to two-way interpreting (Italian is formally a passive language for him and he had the impression that he struggled with the search for the appropriate words). As a conference interpreting student, I1 was familiar with long consecutive; turns with a two-minute length were not a problem to him in terms of accuracy.[11] This could be the reason why I1 did not interrupt the client. Interestingly, in two further sections of the simulation, I1 interrupts the client proactively in order to interpret. This strategy change could be due to the fact that during the encounter, I1 understands the counsellor's expectations in terms of turn-taking management, and this could, therefore, be seen as a step towards the development of interactional competence.

(4) I2_2

[67]

C [v]	Ja, möcht/ Können Sie kurz? Damit die Dolmetscherin dolmetschen
C [en]	Yes, I would like/ Could you please? So that the interpreter can
MR [nv]	o --------------------------------------B > D, waits to understand what was said

[68]

C [v]	kann, jaa? • • • Hm˙
C [en]	interpret, ok?
C [nv]	% B > D
C [k]	nodding
MR [nv]	------------------------------- o
I2 [v]	Eehmmm • il signoree ha chiesto diii eeehm fare una piccola
I2 [en]	The gentleman has asked me to pause a little bit
I2 [k]	reassuring, nodding

[69]

C [v]	Dami, damit
C [en]	So that
MR [k]	nodding
I2 [v]	pausaa, così che facciooo la prima parte dellaaa/dell'interpretazionee. —Se le va
I2 [en]	so that I can do the first part of the interpretation. If it is

---

[11] At the ZTW, students with conference interpreting specialisation should achieve the goal of interpreting consecutively a speech of six minutes.

[70]

MR	ja nichs runtergeht, ja?
MR [en]	nothing gets lost, ok?
I2 [v]	benee. Hm˙ • ((browses und takes a breath)) • Alsooo ääähmm ((1s))
I2 [en]	Ok.
I2 [nv]	*o ------------------------Eyes down, reads his notes------------------------ o*

After talking for two minutes, the client is interrupted by the counsellor who asks I2 to interpret in order not to lose details. Even if I2 has a specialisation in dialogue interpreting and she manages the turn-taking in a more natural way than I1, sometimes we had the impression she did not want to interrupt the client in her speech flow, as this happened especially when the client explained her violence story. Nevertheless, her interpretation was accurate despite the length of the turn. In the post-task and retrospective interview, I2 did not mention the turn-taking at all but stressed many times the importance of translating each detail of the client's narration. It is plausible, therefore, that she deliberately chose not to interrupt the client, considering the client's need to elicit her story without being interrupted more relevant than the coordination of turn-taking at this point of the interaction.

4.3.3. Translational competence – accuracy

(5) I1_3

[169]

I1 [v]	Ähmm ich muss noch einmal
I1 [en]	Ehm, I have to

[170]

C [v]	Bitte. Ja, ja! Ja, Ja! Natü/ natrürlich! (Machen Sie das).	
C [en]	Please. Yes, yes! Yes, Yes! Of course! (Please)	
C [nv]	*o ---------------------B > K, nods--------------------- o*	
MR [v]		Sì, mi dica.
MR [de]		Ys, please.
I1 [v]	ganz kurz nachfragn. Scusi, Signora Rossi.	Ehmm •
I1 [en]	ask a quick question. Excuse me, Frau Rossi.	Ehmm
I1 [k]		hesitant

[171]

I1 [v]	queella seraa • ehm • sì • • • äähm vi siete messi d'accoordo • di fare una cena
I1 [en]	That evening, ehm, yes you had arranged a dinner

[172]

C [nv]	o --B > D-----------------------------
MR [v]	Sìì, saa, quelle cene di claassee, che si faannoo quando si vanno a
MR [en]	Yes, you know, this typical dinners you arrange whenever you attend a
I1 [v]	insieme con chii?
I1 [en]	with whom?

[173]

C [nv]	--- o	
MR [v]	seguire questi corsi di tedesco.	((1,7s)) Con i miei compagni di corso.
MR [en]	a those German classes.	With my course mates.
I1 [v]		((1,7s)) ((takes an audible breath)) Aah! Okay, okay,
I1 [en]		Oh so, okay!

In this section, the interpreter deals with the translation of swear words and with turns containing a high density of information on and description of violence. The client explains how psychological violence has developed into physical violence in recent months. She speaks quickly and describes many details of verbal and physical violence, using very direct language, including the swear words her partner uses to humiliate her. I1 tries to be very accurate in his interpretation and does not hesitate to reproduce the swear words. During the interpretation, I1 asks MR an explanatory question to verify whether he has understood what at first glance might have appeared to be a detail. In the post-task and retrospective interview, I1 mentions accuracy, showing the importance of being accurate in interpreting the details and violence-related terminology, so that the counsellor could understand the gravity of the situation.

In the same section of the other simulation, I2 also tries to be very accurate and reproduce the story in a detailed way. Concerning the translation of the swear words, she uses a different strategy: first, she repeats the words in Italian –*"sono soltanto una puttana"* (in English: I am just a bitch) – and then provides a translation for it and gives a cultural explanation for the counsellor too –*"eine puttana, also eine Schlampe bin"* (in English: I am a puttana, i.e., a bitch). In the post-task and retrospective interview, she said that she was aware of the importance of accuracy in this kind of context: the sequence of the events and the words used are more than details because they help the institution to get an appropriate picture of the situation. For this reason, she was not afraid to ask questions whenever she was not sure she had understood something correctly (e.g., in a previous section of the interaction, she had briefly interrupted MR to ask how long she had a long-distance relationship with her partner, as she was not sure she had noted the correct number and this could be an important detail).

4.3.4. Technical and instrumental competence – problem-solving of technical issues

(6) I1_4

[219]

C [v]	Sie entscheidenn, • wie wir jetzt weiter vorgehen. Okay? • Ich lass mal kurz
C [en]	You decide how we proceed now. Ok? I'll let him
C [nv]	o ----------B > D, hand > D, nods

[220]

C [v]	dolmetschn.
C [en]	interpret
C [nv]	---------- o
I1 [v]	• • ((takes a breath)) • • ähmmm ((1s)) • • • (quindi), la Sua situazionee • èèè
I1 [en]	Your situation is

[221]

I1 [v]	molto pericolosa, perchééé • ora èè in unaa. • • • 'Tschuldigung, hören Sie mich
I1 [en]	very dangerous because you are in a. Excuse me, can you still hear me?
I1 [k]	hesitant

[222]

C [v]	• Ja.
C [en]	Yes
I1 [v]	noch? • Ja?• Ah, ja. Hm˙ ja. • • Sah/ Sch, schien, als wären Sie kurz eingefroren.
I1 [k]	Yes. Ah, ok. It seemed like you froze for a moment.

In this section, the focus of our analysis is on technical and instrumental competence. The transcript shows the way I1 directly addresses a technical issue. Before this sequence, his internet connection had already been unstable, but he did not seem to realise it or he just did not thematise the problem. Possibly this is the first time that the image on his screen has been distorted, and therefore he decides to ask the counsellor "Excuse me, can you still hear me?". In the post-task and retrospective interview, I1 never addressed the poor internet connection, but only stated that this was his first RI simulation in a dialogic setting. The only aspect he mentioned was the fact that he felt very distant in this remote constellation.

In the simulation with I2, there were no technical issues at all that I2 had to solve. We noted that, in the entire interaction, I2 tried to replace visual backchanneling cues like nodding through verbal cues like "mm-hm". In the post-task and retrospective interview, I2 said that while doing RI, she had the impression that a pause or a word spoken softly could be interpreted as a poor internet connection or a technical issue with the microphone.

5. Conclusion

In the present paper, we have opted for a didactic focus and tried to bring together two research avenues within interpreting studies (RI and interpreting in GBV), aiming to establish a research-led role-play model, while also giving a glimpse into some issues that we have identified in relation to interpreting in the field of violence protection and students' perception of their experience and performance in the role-play. We have chosen an inclusive approach, where we not only established a research-led role-play scenario that we conceptualised and presented in this paper but also consciously included students who showed interest in this topic. The aim was to involve students not only in terms of participating in the simulation as interpreters but also a student to aid us in the data gathering process. In this way, the student had the chance to use this data for a Master's thesis, thus also gaining relevant insight into a research project and acquiring research skills. The student did not only help us with organisational matters, for example, getting in touch with the participating students, but also in conducting the post-task interviews and the transcription of both the simulation and the interviews. This allowed the students to reflect on their experiences without the possible restraint they might feel talking to teachers who also played roles in the simulations. The didactic goal of our role-play was to familiarise students with different challenges to foster the development of translational, interactional, thematic and institutional as well as technical and instrumental competencies (see Table 1 and section 4.2.).

From an interactional point of view, we focused on the management of the entire communication (turn-takings and overlapping utterances) and the replication of professional empathy despite the distance caused by the RI situation. Our analysis suggests that students taking part in the simulations have deployed a variety of strategies to manage turn-taking, for example, switching from short to long consecutive, interrupting speakers, but also intentionally not interrupting in phases where the client is exposing her story, which highlight that they are able to make decisions based on contextual clues.

Concerning the replication of empathy, both students used different strategies (compassionate gaze vs. a reaffirming smile), which nonetheless worked in their particular cases. While both students reported that the difficulty in replicating empathy using RI was a challenge, they both used a variety of non-verbal and verbal strategies to convey their empathy towards the client.

Both students highlighted the importance of accuracy, especially for details concerning the story of the client. To maintain fidelity, they asked questions to affirm important details. Both recognised the difficulty of maintaining accuracy when it comes to the interpretation of swear words, which they nonetheless managed to convey adequately.

From the point of view of technical competence, we focused on the ability to use RI technology and to solve technical issues. In one sequence, we could observe a weak internet connection which quickly stabilised and no further problems arose due to technical aspects. Both students had the necessary equipment (e.g. headphones with microphones) to ensure high-quality sound and were versed in the use of RI from previous courses. In one simulation, we observed an increased use of verbal backchanneling, as the student claimed that in her view it was important to maintain the impression that there is no technical issue, instead of assuming that there are by default no technical issues.

Even though the post-task and retrospective interviews, triangulated with some relevant excerpts from the simulation, have already touched upon questions of empathy and emotional intelligence, there would still be more room to explore aspects relating to the

emotional intelligence of students (Hubscher-Davidson, 2014). Furthermore, as we only focused on one domain within a broad range of possible GBV contexts, in future simulations it would be desirable to simulate other settings (e.g., GBV in police interrogations, court hearings, asylum interviews or medical consultations) in order to confront students with the differences in specificities and constraints on an interpreter's agency and detect potential differences and similarities. Another interesting aspect to be explored in future research endeavours relates to the gender of the students playing the role of interpreters in order to understand which issues are perceived as challenges by male and female interpreters and whether there is a difference in the strategies they apply to face these challenges. The evaluation of our simulation based on post-task and retrospective interviews allows for a deeper understanding of the needs our students have as well as their self-perceptions about their own skills and competencies. This, in turn, helps us to further fine-tune our concept, so that we can provide our students with the chance to enhance the necessary skills to face social, emotional and technological challenges in the future.

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