

# “¿Y ahora quién podrá defendernos?”:

Exploring the application of ally theory in  
community interpreting in Aotearoa from a Latin  
American service-user perspective

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For Maddy

*“If the structure does not permit dialogue the structure must be changed”.*

**Paulo Freire**

*“Ultimately, a society will only value a profession if that profession values its society”.*

**Michael Cronin**

*“A mí me tocó un día irme muy lejos pero no me olvidé de las vederas”.*

**Julio Cortázar**

## Abstract

Community interpreters hold a powerful position within any interpreted event due to their linguistic and multicultural knowledge, as well as their agency to make decisions that affect the outcomes of the interaction (Davidson, 2000; Mason & Ren, 2013).

Interpreters' power interacts with other sources of power at the individual and social levels, creating a network of power differentials intrinsic to community interpreting, where power is constantly being negotiated interpersonally through discourse and within institutions that reflect the covert hierarchies imposed by the state (Mason & Ren, 2013; Rudvin, 2005). However, these power differences are often unacknowledged as a result of non-engagement and invisibility ideals in professional interpreting, as well as cultural and linguistic hegemonies which hide systemic injustices (Coyne & Hill, 2016).

In opposition to restrictive conduit views of the interpreting role, the ally model of interpreting recognises interpreters' power and contextualises decision-making within historic oppression and inequality, enabling interpreters to act in ways that promote social justice, empower interpreting service users, and offer equality of access (Baker-Shenk, 1991; Witter-Merithew, 1999). However, the ally model has mostly been studied from within the field of signed languages, in relation to the deaf community (Baker-Shenk, 1986; Hsieh et al., 2013). In addition, there is limited research into users' experiences of interpreters from their own point of view (R. Edwards et al., 2005), with interpreting guidelines remaining mostly in the hands of the practitioners (Rudvin, 2007).

The purpose of this research is to explore allyship and social justice in spoken-language interpreting from a service-user perspective. The research was conducted

with the Latin American community in Aotearoa, employing a horizontal methodology developed by Latin American and European transdisciplinary researchers who see research as a political commitment to improve life in public spaces (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). Knowledge was created collaboratively with Aotearoa-based interlocutors through four one-on-one dialogues with service users and one group dialogue involving two service users, three professional English-Spanish interpreters, and one Latin American community representative.

The results of the dialogues show a disparity between users' expectations and the deontological ethical principles guiding interpreter behaviour. Users were found to value interpreters' humane qualities over linguistic proficiency, which was not considered enough to meet users' needs. Instead, professional practice was seen to require empathy, flexibility, self-reflection, and a middle ground that avoids over-intrusions and unnecessarily rigid behaviour. From this research, this approach to practice was seen to promote an understanding of situated needs and challenges and, consequently, to enable a consideration for social justice and critical perspectives. While the findings suggest that there is room for the incorporation of the ally model in spoken-language interpreting, they also reinforce the need to complement discussions about role models with the development of professional responsibility and a focus on the consequences of interpreters' actions, similar to other caring and practice professions (Dean & Pollard, 2018; Drugan & Tipton, 2017). Therefore, this research supports recent calls to reinforce a teleological, consequence-based approach to ethics (Enríquez Raído et al., 2020) and encourages a revision of the Euro-centric bias and universality ideals in the current code and training programmes to align them with Aotearoa's multicultural identity.



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## Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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This study was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) on 12 November 2020, AUTEC reference number 20/325. The ethics approval letter has been included under Appendix A. *Ethics Approval.*



# Chapter 1. Introduction: “The discussion must be started”

## 1.1 Research problem and rationale

Interpreters are often conceptualised as conduits or machines who objectively transfer information from one language to the other without adding or omitting anything (Dean & Pollard, 2018). However, research has revealed interpreters’ agency and input as active participants in the communicative exchange (Angelelli, 2004a; Wadensjö, 2014). Together with their knowledge of the languages and cultures on both sides of the interpreted exchange, interpreters’ agency makes them powerful participants whose decisions affect the outcomes of the interaction. That means that interpreters often stand between individuals and what they want (Baker–Shenk, 1991). Unlike the conduit model of interpreting, the ally model explicitly recognises interpreters’ power and contextualises it within the broader scheme of power differences and historic oppression. This way, the ally model takes into consideration the power wielded (or not) by the other participants of the interpreted interaction: those who can speak the majority language and those who cannot. This results in interpreters consciously choosing to act in ways that will encourage social justice, empower interpreting service users and offer equality of access (Witter–Merithew, 1999).

The ally model of interpreting has mostly been studied from within the field of signed languages and, in general, there is limited research into service users’ perspectives (R. Edwards et al., 2005). Therefore, this study focused on the ally model within spoken–language interpreting, centering the voices of interpreting service users from those culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities who have largely remained unheard. Informed by horizontal methodologies, the design relied on one–

on-one dialogues with Latin American interpreting service users, followed by one group dialogue with Latin American users, professional interpreters and community representatives. The aim of the study was to explore how CALD users view the role of interpreters and whether they consider that there is room for the application of ally theory to spoken-language interpreting. In the context of the Language Assistance Services Programme<sup>1</sup> that is being implemented by Aotearoa's<sup>2</sup> government, the findings can contribute users' knowledge to inform local policy development, decision making and interpreter training in times of change. In turn, this study can advance the international body of research which studies community interpreting as a situated, sociocultural activity and analyses the suitability of current interpreting practices. The research can also prompt further explorations of what allyship and social justice could look like in community interpreting. Ultimately, the study sought to improve interpreting service provision for immigrants and forced migrants in Aotearoa who rely on interpreters to access services and institutions by aligning CALD users' knowledge and expectations with professional practice.

## 1.2 Background to the research problem

Discussions on the interpreter role have been at the core of the profession since its inception, guiding professional behaviour and ethics (Dean & Pollard, 2018). A variety of models have been developed as a result, the most prominent of which is commonly known as *the conduit model* of interpreting, which emerged in the second

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<sup>1</sup> The Language Assistance Programme is a new comprehensive model that is being rolled out across the public sector as of 2017 by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) (MBIE, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> "Aotearoa" is the Māori word for the land called New Zealand since colonisation. Throughout this thesis, "Aotearoa" will be used in recognition of and solidarity with the indigenous people of this land.

half of the 20th century in the context of increasing professionalisation. Under this model, interpreters are supposed to follow tenets of non-intervention, extreme objectivity, invisibility and detached impartiality (Witter-Merithew, 1999). The conduit model is supported by institutional regulations and prescriptive codes of ethics (Tate & Turner, 2001), such as the one endorsed by the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (2013). At the same time, interpreter education all over the world tends to base guidelines and curricula on interpreters' detachment instead of viewing interpreting as a complex socially-situated practice (Boéri & de Manuel Jerez, 2011).

The standards imposed by a conduit model of interpreting result in incongruent expectations for the interpreter to be neutral and remain invisible at all times. However, studies into naturally occurring interpreted events have revealed that interpreters are active participants who facilitate communication and manage the flow of the interaction (e.g. Krystallidou, 2014; Major & Napier, 2019; Metzger, 1999; Van Herreweghe, 2002). Moreover, evidenced-based research has shown that, when interpreters are emotionally-involved and visible instead of neutral or impartial, the trust and rapport that they create among the parties can improve the outcome of the communicative event (R. Edwards et al., 2005; Hsieh & Nicodemus, 2015; Mirdal et al., 2012). Nevertheless, interpreters still often see themselves as an objective entity, adding and omitting nothing to the communicative exchange (Angelelli, 2004b; Hsieh, 2009; Krystallidou, 2016). As a result of the discrepancy between expectation and reality, interpreters are often caught in dilemmas that they struggle to resolve because of their misunderstanding of their own role and a limiting, deontological interpretation of ethicality (Dean & Pollard, 2018; Mikkelsen, 2000; L. Wilson & Walsh, 2019).

Beyond the implications for individual interpreters, the prevalence of the conduit model has broader consequences at a societal level. Interpreting is a social service which evolved as a response to a social need (Roberts, 1997). Community

interpreting—that which is performed to support immigrants who are not native speakers of a language with the aim of facilitating their access to statutory services (Collard–Abbas, 1989)—involves members of the dominant culture who can speak the dominant language, and immigrants or forced migrants who cannot. Therefore, power differences are always present in community interpreting, not only because power is negotiated through discourse, but also because community interpreting involves CALD individuals, on the one hand, and public service providers as representatives of the state, on the other (Mason & Ren, 2013; Rudvin, 2005). Each party negotiates power using social and cultural factors such as their cultural norms and their understandings of gender, age, race, nationality and socio-economic status (Angelelli, 2004a). In turn, each interaction is framed by institutions which reflect the hierarchies imposed by the state (Rudvin, 2005). In such a context, interpreters' multicultural and linguistic knowledge makes them a powerful participant whose decisions affect the outcomes of the interaction (Baker–Shenk, 1991), but the part they play is often concealed by non-intervention and invisibility ideals, as well as cultural and linguistic hegemonies which hide systemic injustices (Coyne & Hill, 2016).

As such, understandings of the interpreter role such as the one supported by the conduit model, which fosters invisibility and non-involvement, help maintain the status quo and current power distribution (Adelstein & Clegg, 2016; Coyne & Hill, 2016; Minges, 2016). This model and the codes of ethics drafted based on the same conduit metaphor stop interpreters from acting in ways which will facilitate equity, as well as users' access to much needed services and institutions such as the legal and healthcare systems (cf. MacFarlane et al., 2009). When interpreters are not aware that messages are co-constructed and think of them as having one true meaning that must be accurately conveyed in translation, they do their jobs unconscious of the decisions

that they make as active participants in the interaction, oblivious of their power and responsibility.

In contrast, *the ally model* of interpreting recognises interpreters' power and contextualises it within the broader scheme of power differences and historic oppression, taking into consideration the power exercised by the other parties to the exchange: those who can speak the majority language and those who cannot. Brown and Ostrove (2013) define an "ally" as a person who commits to engaging in as little prejudice as possible and intentionally chooses to fight for social justice. The ally model in interpreting arose together with the deaf civil-rights movement in the United States. As a result, the majority of the research on it in relation to interpreting exists within the field of signed languages (Baker-Shenk, 1986). However, even within the field of signed languages, there have been limited attempts to define what the ally model looks like in practice. In the field of spoken-language interpreting, the ally model has been overlooked and often condemned by researchers as problematic (Hsieh et al., 2013) because it is at odds with the understanding of ethics which supports interpreters' detachment (Boéri & de Manuel Jerez, 2011).

Many interpreting scholars have highlighted the importance of service users' contributions (Alexander et al., 2004; Greenhalgh et al., 2006; Zimányi, 2010). However, service users' knowledge is not prominent in interpreting research (R. Edwards et al., 2005). This silencing could be a sign of what Freire (1996) considered a "lack of confidence in the [oppressed] people's ability to think, to want, and to know" (p. 60). Therefore, to explore the possibility of applying the ally model to spoken-language interpreting, this study draws on users' expertise, centering the voices of immigrant and forced migrant communities in need of interpreting services who have largely remained unheard, both in local and international research (R. Edwards et al., 2005; Enríquez Raído et al., 2020; Hlavac, 2011). By engaging the

users in the research process, this study acknowledges the complexities of interpreting as a social practice which must meet the expectations of those who need interpreting services the most.

### 1.3 Aim, research question and scope

This study understands that interpreting service users have their own knowledge to share about what they need to communicate successfully through an interpreter. The term “interpreting service users” will be used to refer to end users who need an interpreter to engage with Aotearoa’s services and institutions because they are not proficient speakers of the majority language. In a context of change in language service provision, this research will study whether there is room for the application of ally theory to spoken–language interpreting as it seeks to (re)define the interpreter’s role so that it is more closely aligned to the expectations of the users. To do so, the current study sets out to address the following overarching research questions:

- 1) How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter? (RQ#1)
- 2) What are service users’ perceptions on allyship and social justice in relation to the interpreting profession? (RQ#2)
- 3) How do interpreting service users think their perceptions on allyship and social justice should be incorporated into the interpreter’s practice? (RQ#3)

Even though this study will be focusing on spoken–language interpreting specifically, it will draw from theories and literature generated from within the fields of spoken–language interpreting, signed–language interpreting and social sciences in an attempt to embrace the “inevitably and characteristically” interdisciplinary nature of

interpreting research (Wadensjö, 2013, p. xvi). It will also draw on both academic and non-academic knowledge, considering users' knowledge as valid as any other.

The scope of this study will be limited to community interpreting. Even though there is a variety of mostly equivalent terms including “liaison interpreting”, “public service interpreting”, “cultural interpreting”, “escort interpreting” and “dialogue interpreting” among others (Bancroft, 2015), the term “community interpreting” will be used throughout this study to include medical, public service and legal interpreting (Roberts, 1997), excluding the role and activities involved in the conference interpreting setting. The international standard “Interpreting–Guidelines for community interpreting” (ISO 13611:2014) establishes that community interpreting helps those who cannot speak the societal language as well as those who are not proficient enough to access the services offered by public institutions, healthcare institutions, social services, faith-based organisations and emergency services (Pokorn & Mikolič Južnič, 2020).

My identity as an Argentinian immigrant, translator and interpreter doing research in Aotearoa has considerably shaped this study, as it was my “racially marked body in a geo-historical marked space” which called me to engage in this research (Mignolo, 2009, p. 160). All the dialogues conducted with the Latin American community in Aotearoa were held in Spanish. In order to remain faithful to our identity, the study is based on a research paradigm that respects a Latin American epistemology in order to “[affirm] the epistemic rights of the racially devalued, and decolonial options to allow the silences to build arguments” (Mignolo, 2009, p. 162). Therefore, this study is guided by horizontal methodologies which were developed by a transdisciplinary group of Latin American and European researchers who understand the research process and the production of knowledge as a political commitment to create better living in public spaces (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). The aim of

horizontal methodologies is to arrive at different answers and avoid perpetuating the same hegemonic discourses which cannot offer solutions for complex and heterogenous lives and contexts (Cornejo & Rufer, 2020; Corona Berkin, 2020a).

## 1.4 Thesis structure

I have structured this thesis to closely follow the horizontal methodologies that function as my research paradigm (Section 2.1 Horizontal methodologies) by taking my consultation with the Aotearoa Latin American Community (ALAC) organisation as the starting point of this study (Section 2.2 Consultation with ALAC). Horizontal methodologies consider that the social nature of subjects is the starting place for any research because we build our own identity in dialogue with others (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). For this reason, horizontal methodologies will be introduced first, as they provided the conceptual framework through which I approached this research. In her study about the approaches to indigenous research using a tribal methodology with a Nêhiyaw Kiskêyihtamowin worldview, Kovach (2006) started her doctoral thesis with an explanation of her indigenous conceptual framework, stating that she struggled to decide whether to include this explanation at the beginning of her thesis or in the methodology chapter. Like her, I have decided to foreground the framework that guided every decision I made even before I began studying any existing literature: horizontal methodologies came first in this journey and, therefore, are presented first in this thesis.

Following the research paradigm, the subsequent literature review (Chapter 3) will be understood as the (mostly academic) knowledge from previous researchers which I brought into the dialogues in which I participated throughout this study. As noted by Kaltmeier (2012), within horizontal methodologies, this knowledge which has been shaped by my position within different social fields, institutions and postcolonial



contexts is in no way truer than anyone else's. Rather, it is tied to the dynamics and practices of the academic field, which has been profoundly influenced by the coloniality of knowledge (Kaltmeier, 2012, p. 36). This coloniality of knowledge is based on a Eurocentric understanding of knowledge as the product of a subject-object relation which is portrayed as universal (Quijano, 2007, p. 172). Therefore, it must be highlighted that the literature review does not precede the dialogues to signal prioritisation. Rather, it must be understood as an influence on my knowledge and identity which was then developed and negotiated through the relationships established throughout the research process (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012).

The subsequent chapter (Chapter 4. Methodology) offers a more detailed account of the operationalisation of horizontal methodologies for this project, followed by the horizontal knowledge production stage (Chapter 5. Knowledge Creation). In this stage, the accumulated academic knowledge was combined with that of my interlocutors through one-on-one and group dialogues to create new knowledge incorporating the voices of service users, community representatives and professional interpreters. This knowledge creation will be presented in three stages of description, analysis and interpretation following Wolcott's (1994) categories of qualitative writing. The description stage includes the summarised transcripts of the one-on-one dialogues with service users. The analysis stage includes the thematic analysis of their knowledge, used to answer the first two research questions more directly. The interpretation stage was conducted through the group dialogue, where we analysed the themes that emerged through the analysis in order to answer the third research question. Finally, the last chapter (Chapter 6. Conclusion) focuses on contributions, recommendations and limitations of this research.

## Chapter 2. Research Paradigm: “A coming together where we were going to clash”

I set out to design this research project from a critical perspective. My understanding that power dynamics affect all relationships—including those established through interpreters—led me to critical theory, as the aim of critical inquiry is to confront societal injustices (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011), challenge the status quo and empower those who are systematically oppressed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This is the ultimate goal of this research project which seeks to question current conceptions of the interpreter role, as these are seen to perpetuate the power differentials between majority language speakers and interpreting service users (Witter-Merithew, 1999). Moreover, given that critical theory values and foregrounds subjectivity (Ross, 2011), using critical theory as my methodology would allow research within diversity while fostering an understanding of difference (Given, 2008). This was crucial given that the project would involve people from a variety of backgrounds and from different countries in Latin America, which is diverse in and of itself.

However, in the early stages of the project, I realised that critical theory was the theoretical framework that I had used to assess some of the problems I had been experiencing as a practising interpreter. Critical theory had offered a connection with existing knowledge and had informed some of my theoretical assumptions. However, I then found it difficult to use critical theory as a methodology that could inform my own research practice. Critical theory often felt imposed rather than a methodology that would allow for the role I wanted to play in knowledge construction. At the same time, the collaborative or participatory methods which I initially considered for this project

do not alter the structural asymmetries sustaining hegemonic research. Although they recognise that participants have knowledge to share, research remains in the hands of the researcher who defines the topics, chooses the methodologies and puts forward the results (Corona Berkin, 2020a). Similarly, intercultural approaches, which seem like useful options to guide translation and interpreting research, are based on normalised practice and tend to seek stability and crisis-avoidance (Corona Berkin, 2020a). Instead, the aim of this research is finding a different conceptualisation of the interpreter role based on interpreting service users' perspectives; defying current practice and codes of conduct which prevent change; and fostering the transition to a practice that challenges the status quo and achieves greater equity for users.

With the help of supervisors, colleagues and peers, I realised that the answer to this project's methodological questions were to be found closer to home. After all, I had the Argentinian feminist movement and Paulo Freire to thank for my own consciousness building, which helped me question systems of oppression and the validity of "common sense". It was not until I started researching Latin American methodologies that I could get a sense of who I was as a researcher. Therefore, in Section 2.1 below, I offer a summary of the horizontal methodologies which have informed the entire research process which will then be further operationalised in Chapter 4.

## 2.1 Horizontal methodologies

There is a relation between horizontal methodologies and critical theory, but the former goes beyond the critical perspective and the western research tradition. In her recent book about horizontal knowledge production, Corona Berkin (2020a) stated that, in Latin America, research aimed at finding social harmony is still being conducted using Eurocentric analytical tools. These tools were created to support

capitalist and colonial domination which has led to an epistemological crisis in the region. As a result, the knowledge we have been accumulating through research is not enough to offer solutions that are congruent with the heterogeneous lives that coexist in complex social spaces (Corona Berkin, 2020a). A similar crisis can be seen in the interpreting field's inability to move past the invisibility ideals and the conduit metaphors that still dominate interpreting practice (Dean & Pollard, 2018), especially considering that "problem-awareness within the scientific community has not led to major improvements in practice and service provision" (Bergunde & Pöllabauer, 2019, p. 3).

Horizontal methodologies were developed to address these epistemological issues and pursue dialogue and reciprocity among and from a variety of worldviews in an innovative way. The approach was developed by a politically-driven transdisciplinary group that saw research as a way to improve living conditions (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012), avoiding hegemonic discourses (Cornejo & Rufer, 2020). Dialogue plays a central role within horizontal methodologies as the means through which new knowledge is constructed and drawing from all the voices involved in the problem (Corona Berkin, 2020a).

Even though dialogue is considered to be the way to find answers to everyone's questions, from a horizontal perspective, dialogue cannot be expected to be harmonious given the current contexts of power differentials, exploitation and discrimination (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). Given that demands are a fundamental part of human relationships, every interaction can constitute a *generative conflict*. This generative conflict can be defined as the moment when the interest of the researcher is brought "into shocking relief with the interest of the researched" (Kaltmeier, 2017, p. 53). Generative conflicts arise at the intersection of different perspectives, such as those offered by academics and non-academics, or by

researchers from different disciplines. Generative conflicts are seen as a crucial part of social research and a necessary condition to establish horizontality (Corona Berkin, 2020a).

For this conflict to be productive—or *generative*—the parties to the interaction need *autonomy over their own viewpoint*. This means they need to be able to express themselves from a variety of places and in a variety of ways, defining their own identity beyond the labels which have been historically imposed by dominant structures and Eurocentric knowledge. This autonomy is constructed through the horizontal dialogue itself, where interlocutors take turns as both speakers and listeners, accepting even the knowledge that they do not understand or that goes against what they believe in.

The purpose of horizontal dialogue is to combine the interlocutors' knowledge into something new. This way, every interaction offers the possibility of establishing *discursive equality* so that all parties can portray themselves how they want to be seen. This equality differentiates horizontal methodologies from participatory or collaborative methodologies, as collaboration implies the subordination of one of the members' work to the interests of the other (Pérez Daniel & Sartorello, 2012). Participation, on the other hand, implies the subordination of someone's view to the researchers' control (Pérez Daniel & Sartorello, 2012). By using horizontal methodologies, this study can help address the call for participatory-type research in the field of interpreting (Wurm & Napier, 2017) while also trying to avoid perpetuating inequality in research.

To maintain discursive equality, horizontal methodologies pursue a disregard for academic distance. Instead, knowledge is validated through reciprocity and an open, uncertain and productive dialogue (Cornejo & Rufer, 2020). This, in turn, tries to put an end to the researcher-participant dichotomy which is seen to further perpetuate

inequality. The academic's task is not to speak *about* the other, but rather to speak *with* the other (Kaltmeier, 2017). Therefore, horizontal researchers engage in dialogue and share their own interests with an equal: their interlocutors<sup>3</sup>. Those who join the researcher in dialogue are considered peer-researchers who bring their own viewpoint and goals to the conversation, as well as their own procedures for knowledge production.

In this way, horizontal methodologies challenge Western ways of doing research. Choosing subject matters which are considered “appropriate” and are based on “correct” theories within a defined discipline severely limits research options and the creation of new knowledge, reproducing dominant structures and keeping certain voices out of the conversation (Corona Berkin, 2020a). This research seeks to blur previously imposed distinctions between disciplines such as sign-language interpreting, social work, sociology and gender studies, looking at interpreting within a wider social context. It also pursues the involvement of frequently-ignored stakeholders such as interpreting service users and community representatives (R. Edwards et al., 2005; Hlavac, 2011).

In Section 2.2, I will explore the three main axes of horizontal methodologies described above (the generative conflict, the autonomy over our own viewpoint and discursive equality) in the context of the consultation meeting with the community organisation Aotearoa Latin America Community (ALAC). The consultation took place in an attempt to avoid prioritising my own interests and views when designing this project, as treating individuals as a research object results in “imaginaries about the

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<sup>3</sup> An interlocutor is understood here as any person who takes part in a dialogue (Oxford University Press, n.d.).

other that are not based on dialogue but on the field–intern dynamics of the academic field” (Kaltmeier, 2017, p. 53).

As this first dialogue with Esteban Espinoza, founder and current CEO of ALAC, guided the entire project, the other sections in this thesis which expand on each one of the topics discussed during the consultation have been added in parentheses to highlight the threads that keep this project together. In her research on the decolonisation of artisanal design and the recognition of indigenous design from the Global South, Albarrán González (2020) conceptualised her project as a cyclical process through which the researcher, alongside with indigenous communities, weaved the investigation collectively, horizontally and interculturally. Similarly, in her thesis examining approaches to indigenous research, Kovach (2006) spoke of finding connecting threads in collective experiences. Therefore, throughout this project I will draw attention to the common threads weaving each dialogue—and this whole research—together.

## 2.2 Consultation with ALAC

The mission of the Aotearoa Latin American Community (ALAC) organisation is “to provide all Latin American and Spanish people in New Zealand with access to holistic, culturally appropriate, bilingual and safe social and cultural services, which will lead to independent lives and positive resettlement in Aotearoa/New Zealand” (ALAC, n.d., para. 1). ALAC offers services to every Latin American in Aotearoa, regardless of political affiliations or beliefs, with the aim of fostering the community’s wellbeing (E. Espinoza, personal communication, September 9, 2020).

Founded in 1993, ALAC has long been involved in translation and interpreting coordination under their wellbeing framework, established to support Latin American immigrants and forced migrants in their resettlement in Aotearoa (ALAC, n.d.–b). It

was through that first dialogue with Esteban, ALAC's CEO, that I began to explore the three main axes of horizontal work: the autonomy over our own viewpoint, discursive equality and the generative conflict. As developed in Section 2.1, the generative conflict is the moment when the interests of the researcher and the researched meet. This encounter creates an opportunity for horizontality and intervention which has the potential to understand the other as they themselves wish to be understood (Corona Berkin, 2017). However, conflict can only be generative if the conditions of discursive equality and autonomy over our own viewpoint are met. Therefore, I start this examination of horizontality in the context of the consultation with ALAC by discussing how Esteban and I expressed ourselves and defined our identities, both as speakers and listeners. After presenting a summary of the conditions of discursive equality and autonomy over our own viewpoints (Section 2.2.1), I move on to discuss the generative conflicts that prompted this research (Section 2.2.2).

### **2.2.1 Autonomy of our own viewpoint and discursive equality**

A horizontal understanding of research involves dialogues where we define ourselves through the way our interlocutors see us (Corona Berkin, 2020a). The autonomy of our own viewpoints, one of the three main concepts of horizontal research, can only be achieved when dialogue offers the possibility of a unique identity. Early on in the conversation with Esteban, I identified myself as "Latin American, but Argentinian first and foremost", to which Esteban immediately replied, "and on top of that, you're from Córdoba". Esteban is Chilean, and his acknowledgment that I am not from Buenos Aires—Argentina's capital city—made me feel seen and understood. This exchange marked the first step towards defining our identities, which we negotiated as we went along. We talked about Aotearoa as a place where we had grown and learnt about sexism, racism, discrimination, social justice,



respect and equality, with an explicit recognition of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*<sup>4</sup>, Māori values and the teachings of *tangata whenua*<sup>5</sup>, who, in Esteban's words, have been showing us the "path to liberation". Aotearoa is understood as home, but it is also considered a place where, according to Esteban, we have to speak "in a language that is not our own language and in circumstances in which we are the stranger, the outsider" (see Sections 3.4.1 Demographics and Section 5.2.2 What are the service users' perceptions on allyship and social justice in relation to the interpreting profession?). Esteban mentioned being asked where he was from and when he had arrived, even after forty years of living in Aotearoa. A similar feeling can be intuited when I expressed my hesitation about deciding whether to come back from Argentina to Aotearoa in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. I was not sure whether to stay close to my family in Córdoba or go back to my life across the ocean.

Esteban and I took turns as speaker and listener, another step towards the autonomy over our own viewpoints (Corona Berkin, 2020a). Through this autonomy, we achieved discursive equality, understood as a necessary condition to express difference (Corona Berkin, 2012). Esteban told me about ALAC's work and projects, some of which were closely related to my research interests. Discursive equality seeks to remove hierarchical systems which make the researcher responsible for the reasoning, analysis and interpretation, while limiting participants' role to that of answer provider (Corona Berkin, 2020a). During our dialogue, Esteban had the

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<sup>4</sup> A fundamental constitutional document of Aotearoa which "gives Pākehā a right to stand in this land, and it guarantees the protection of Māori rights and autonomy" (Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand, n.d., para. 1).

<sup>5</sup> "Local people, hosts, indigenous people – people born of the whenua, i.e. of the placenta and of the land where the people's ancestors have lived and where their placenta are buried" (Moorfield, n.d.).

opportunity to comment on and modify any plans I had for this study. He expressed support when I suggested the idea of using pre-recorded videos as conversation starters during the one-on-one dialogues with interpreting service users, but suggested ALAC should be included in the dialogues as well. In his own words, “not everyone here [in ALAC] is a translator, but we all translate”. Esteban’s statement pointed to the recognition of the role of ad-hoc interpreters<sup>6</sup> and the knowledge they have to offer. We decided, then, that the research project would include one-on-one dialogues with interpreting service users, as well as a group dialogue including users, professional interpreters and ALAC staff members (see Chapter 4. Methodology). After all, different perspectives from different disciplines, both academic and non-academic, are needed to explore the generative conflicts that arise during horizontal encounters (Corona Berkin, 2020a).

ALAC’s origin is intrinsically tied to the provision of interpreting as a part of other advocacy and social services. However, ALAC’s ad-hoc interpreting does not need to abide by the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013), which had not even been endorsed by NZSTI when Esteban started working as an interpreter. For ALAC, interpreting is tied to representation. Esteban acknowledged the complexities of the interpreter role but highlighted the need to summarise and “to sometimes defend” the person you are interpreting for (see Section 3.3 Social justice, power and new models of interpreting). We both knew about interpreting in practice, but our knowledge and the expectations we had to fulfil as interpreters seemed conflicting. This conflict will be addressed in the following section.

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<sup>6</sup> Ad-hoc interpreting is “performed by untrained, unqualified individuals who may be family, friends, untrained bilingual staff, volunteers, community advocates or anyone who claims to speak two languages” (M. Bancroft, 2015, p. 220).

### 2.2.2 Generative conflicts

Every social exchange implies conflict (Corona Berkin, 2012). Esteban showed an understanding of this notion when he conceptualised the creation of ALAC as “starting down a road” where, at one point or another, there would be “a coming together where we were going to clash” (see Section 5.3.1 “Oh, I have so much to say”: reflexivity and horizontality). In such a simple way, Esteban conveyed one of the foundational conditions for horizontal research: understanding that, in a dialogue, conflict can be harnessed to create something new (Corona Berkin, 2020a, p. 29). Together, we laughed about Latin Americans’ inability to see eye to eye and our tendency to disagree and argue. In the context of horizontal research, these tendencies acquire a positive connotation conducive to change.

Esteban’s understanding of what an interpreter should and should not do was influenced by his experiences doing social work within ALAC. That knowledge interacted with my experiences as a professional interpreter, with my studies at university, and with my understanding of the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013), posing a conflict which was to guide this research (see Section 5.2.1 How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter?). When we talked about interpreting, Esteban framed the conflicts that he could identify both in relation to the profession and to the wider social context. At the social level, he referred to power differences related to language and Latin Americans’ position as foreigners in Aotearoa. When I told him that I was interested in researching the relationship between interpreting and social justice, he immediately stated that language is “an instrument of power”. He added that not speaking English in Aotearoa creates a dependency on others and makes people vulnerable. He then equated the inability to speak English with a disability, and stated that social inequality and linguistic abilities are intertwined (see

Section 5.2.2 What are the service users' perceptions on allyship and social justice in relation to the interpreting profession?).

Conflict was also seen in relation to interpreting as a profession. Aware of the existence of the NZSTI, Esteban indicated that “a very heavy rock” would be cast my way if I intended to question interpreting codes of ethics. He showed himself doubtful of NZSTI's ability to accept such a challenge, but agreed that “the discussion must be started”. Both Esteban and Sandra (one of ALAC's staff members) acknowledged interpreters' power and their gate-keeping role. Esteban, for example, mentioned a case heard by the New Zealand Refugee Status Appeals Authority in which ALAC's correction of a translation mistake led to a successful appeal. For her part, Sandra mentioned a conflict she had witnessed while working with the organisation's service users involving their lack of trust towards interpreters. She also mentioned that the lack of trust sprung from forced migrants' vulnerability, and that it extended beyond the Latin American community.

Throughout the conversation, conflict was seen in relation to translation choices as well. Esteban mentioned that interpreters often do not understand interpreting service users' backgrounds, which results in translation mistakes. He highlighted the significance of the issue by clarifying that they had seen this happening “up until very recently. It's not something that happened in the past. We've seen it constantly whenever we've been listening”. This comment reinforces the need for research that can address conflicts and offer new solutions. Esteban recalled an interpreter he used to work with who “got angry with [him] a lot” because he corrected her translations and offered cultural and contextual information to help clarify what service users were saying. These comments and anecdotes point to the need to reinforce cooperation and dialogue between interpreters and social service

providers (see Section 5.3.2 How do interpreting service users think their perceptions on allyship and social justice should be incorporated into the interpreter's practice?).

The differences in our understandings of the interpreter's job and the role of the code of ethics; the acknowledgment of the power of language and, therefore, of interpreters; users' lack of trust towards professional interpreters and the confrontation—instead of collaboration—between professional interpreters and community representatives; and the users' vulnerability, disempowerment and lack of agency in their new country are all topics that arose in my original consultation with ALAC and have guided the current research. These topics will re-emerge both in the literature review and in the dialogues conducted for this study. In this sense, the whole thesis stands as a conversation among Latin Americans in Aotearoa who have both collective and distinct individual experiences and knowledge to contribute.

## Chapter 3. Literature Review: “They might be experts in their fields, but they don’t know everything”

Horizontal methodologies have helped me position myself not only as a researcher working within a Western institution, with an identity and privileges which are constantly interacting with the other parties involved in this project, but also as a practising interpreter, an immigrant and a Latin American myself. When I first tried to design this project, I positioned myself outside of the community, distancing myself from the other parts of my identity. However, I came to understand that the objectivity and impartiality I was seeking by trying to detach myself from my experiences were derived from Western research traditions that do not represent me (cf. Fernández Santana et al., 2019). Like Cornejo and Rufer (2020a) have noted, maybe the insistence on such tenets conceals an implicit yet persistent relation between distance and status quo (p. 9).

I was originally concerned that my own privileges would perpetuate the power imbalances I was aiming to address. However, horizontal methodologies use relationships rather than comparison as a point of departure, following Bakhtin’s (1979) conceptualisation of humans as social subjects for whom others represent a constituent part of their being. Identity is therefore not defined in contraposition to others. Instead, it is constantly being developed and negotiated through our relationships with others (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). My interpreting work with the Latin American community in Aotearoa and the problems I encountered in the field brought me to this research in the first place. It was the complexity of my context and my identity which helped me identify problem areas within interpreting practice. This thesis was written by me as a social subject who expresses what is enabled by their individual, social and historical

circumstances (Corona Berkin, 2016, p. 16). However, my knowledge is limited to my experiences as a bilingual immigrant and a professional interpreter. For this reason, I have sought to incorporate the voices of my interlocutors as much as possible, so that the thesis itself represents a dialogue among different voices.

Having recognised that a researcher brings to the research their personal and professional background, as well as the knowledge acquired from the literature in the area of inquiry (Ramalho et al., 2015), this literature review stands as the collection of academic knowledge to which I had access as a translation and interpreting student and researcher. It is presented before the dialogues not to prioritise academic knowledge, but because this is the knowledge with which I approached the dialogues in this study, influencing the construction of my identity and, therefore, my interlocutors and the knowledge that we produced. The topics covered below include the controversies over the interpreter role, particularly the conduit model and the reasons for its prevalence in interpreting. Then, community interpreting is defined as a social practice which must consider the broader context, particular power differentials at the social and individual levels. Allyship is defined and presented as a way to relate to others in contexts of power differentials, followed by a summary of previous research into the ally model of interpreting. Finally, there is a review of Aotearoa's society and of the local interpreting landscape, including information about the Latin American community on which this project is based.

### **3.1 The role of the interpreter**

The controversy over the role of the community interpreter dates back to the very birth of the profession (Bancroft, 2015), with a considerable amount of scholarly research into the topic (Angelelli, 2003, 2004a, 2004b; Davidson, 2001; Ginori & Scimone, 1995; Hale, 2007; Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013; McCartney, 2017; Metzger, 1999). As a result, a variety of models have emerged, the most prominent of which is

commonly known as the conduit model of interpreting. The term “conduit model” was coined by Reddy (1979) and is based on an understanding of human interaction as a process of unidirectional transfer of information from one person to another. In interpreting, this model was adopted in the second half of the 20th century, as professional interpreter organisations and societies were created around the world in a context of increasing professionalisation (Dean & Pollard, 2018; Witter–Merithew, 1999). Under this model, interpreters are seen as conduits, machines, telephones, faithful echoes or ghosts (Springer, 2009) who are supposed to follow tenets of non-intervention, extreme objectivity, invisibility and detached impartiality (Witter–Merithew, 1999). These assumptions can be seen in definitions of the interpreter’s role such as the one offered by Knapp and Knapp–Potthoff (1986), who state that, in formal settings, “the interpreter’s function in general is comparable to that of a machine, giving more or less literal translation of what is said in language A in language B” (p. 152). When the role of the interpreter is understood as that of a conduit, interpreters strive to make communication as smooth as it would be if all the parties shared the same language and the interpreter was not there (Angelelli, 2004b).

The standards of a conduit model of interpreting were originally transferred to community interpreting from the field of conference interpreting, which is characterised by pre-prepared, carefully constructed discourses which are more predictable and uniform in nature (Springer, 2009). Conference interpreting is not generally performed face to face, but rather from a separate room or from within specially-designed interpreting booths, which makes it more monological in nature (Wadensjö, 2014). Moreover, in conference settings, speakers tend to be of equal social status, as communication tends to happen from one specialist to another. Transferring conference interpreting standards to community interpreting results in incongruent expectations for the interpreter to be neutral and remain invisible at all



times, which community interpreters find impossible to meet (Gentile et al., 1996; Roy, 1993). Even when many codes of ethics and codes of practice encourage interpreters to act as channels who do not alter interactions, research has found that interpreters' humanity and physical proximity to the clients make neutrality unfeasible, as being a non-person is impossible when the interpreter is physically present in the space where the interaction is taking place (Bahadir, 2001; Wadensjö, 2014).

New models have been developed since, with a considerable amount of literature based on the concept of interpreter visibility (Angelelli, 2004a; Berk-Seligson, 1990; Böser & LaRooy, 2018; Davidson, 2000; Downie, 2017; Gallai, 2017; Ozolins, 2016; Roy, 1999; Zhan & Zeng, 2017). Angelelli (2004a) defined interpreter visibility as all instances in which "the interpreter's role goes beyond that of a language switcher" (p. 75), explicitly challenging the idea of interpreters as impartial machines who do not add or omit anything during the interaction. These new understandings of the role were based on research into naturally occurring interpreted interactions that revealed interpreters' agency and input as active participants of the communicative exchange (e.g. Angelelli, 2004a; Krystallidou, 2014; Major & Napier, 2019; Van Herreweghe, 2002). Angelelli (2004c) concluded that "to a greater or lesser degree, interpreters perceive themselves as aligning with one of the parties, expressing affect as well as information, controlling the flow of the communication traffic, establishing trust and facilitating mutual respect, and interpreting culture as well as language" (p. 98).

In spite of research findings, interpreters' power is still not clearly acknowledged, with interpreters' conception of their own role often stuck on that of an objective entity, adding and omitting nothing to the communicative exchange (Angelelli, 2004b; Hsieh, 2009; Krystallidou, 2016). Moreover, many of the new labels that emerged from these findings convey the same conduit notion even if they appear

to be broader and more flexible (Roy, 1993). For example, the role of interpreters as “facilitators of communication”, mentioned in the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013, p. 3), still prevents interpreters from becoming “personally involved” in order to avoid any responsibility for the outcome of the interaction (Caccamise et al., 1980, p. 13). The prevalence of the conduit model in spite of research findings can be understood by examining a series of interrelated factors which will be developed in Section 3.2 below.

## 3.2 The perpetuation of the conduit model

The tenets of invisibility, objectivity and non-intervention are embedded deep into professional codes of ethics and institutional guidelines in community interpreting (Dean & Pollard, 2018; Inghilleri, 2012; Witter-Merithew, 1999). This section will examine how the prevalence of these Western-centric tenets imposed by academia and the community of practice (Rudvin, 2005), in combination with the interpreting field’s initial isolation and slow transition to interdisciplinary research (Angelelli, 2004b; Wadensjö, 2014) facilitated the perpetuation of the conduit model of interpreting.

### 3.2.1 Professional codes of ethics

Codes of ethics are “documents that outline best practices in a profession and give guidance on conduct and deontological orientation to practitioners and users of the services” (Pokorn & Mikolič Južnič, 2020, p. 82). Some examples include the code endorsed by the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (2013), as well as other codes all over the world, such as the ones drafted by the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators (2012) or the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (2014) in the United States. One of the reasons why the conduit model is still prevalent today is related to the endorsement of prescriptive

codes of ethics which are often drafted following a conduit model of interpreting (Dean & Pollard, 2018).

Codes of ethics are meant to guide interpreters' decision making (Tebble, 2012), but they construct an image of the interpreting profession which does not reflect the reality of practice (Drugan, 2017; Inghilleri, 2005; Marzocchi, 2005). Moreover, many codes have been written in a deontological manner, fostering decision-making based on rules which must be upheld regardless of the context or the consequences (Dean & Pollard, 2018). These standards based on a simplified image of the interpreting process result in ethical dilemmas that interpreters struggle to resolve because the recommendations in their codes of ethics often do not go beyond that of non-intervention (Springer, 2009). Furthermore, a focus on rules rather than consequences and responsibility encourages reactive rather than proactive approaches to decision-making, meaning that interpreters avoid addressing issues that can develop into larger, more problematic dilemmas (Dean & Pollard, 2011).

Impartiality is one of the core principles in most codes of ethics for interpreters (Crezee et al., 2020; Mikkelsen, 2016) and it is often considered "a constitutive rule for any kind of interpreting" (Ozolins, 2016, p. 281). In Aotearoa, the NZSTI's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct (2013) establishes that interpreters must "remain unbiased throughout the communication exchanged between the participants in any interpreted encounter" (p. 2), as well as avoid softening, strengthening or altering the message conveyed. Although seemingly simple and straight-forward in writing, impartiality becomes extremely difficult to uphold in certain contexts, such as in settings of armed conflict. From a humanitarian point of view, for example, impartiality can be seen as hierarchically related to respect and humanity, which might take precedence over neutrality and accuracy in certain cases (Delgado Luchner & Kherbiche, 2019). Moreover, the need to remain neutral can be considered a

consequence of the importance ascribed to concepts such as “objectivity” and “truth value” by the Western world (Rudvin, 2002).

In spite of the difficulty of acting as a conduit and abiding by the principle of impartiality imposed by most codes of ethics, there is often a lack of acknowledgement of how these challenges affect interpreters, their feelings and the decisions they must make in everyday practice. According to L. Wilson and Walsh (2019), “there is an expectation that, in order for interpreters to remain impartial, they must also present a neutral persona—even if this clashes with their felt emotions” (p. 125). Disregarding interpreters’ feelings results in their inability to develop and use coping strategies to address them. Tate and Turner (2001) speak of a “conspiracy of silence” forced onto interpreters because of their perceived duty to respect their codes of ethics at all times (p. 55). This silence also forces interpreters into making choices and exercising power covertly (Tate & Turner, 2001). More importantly, it obstructs conversations about the disempowering effects of trying to act as a conduit on service users from CALD communities, as “impartiality often contributes to the legitimization of the moral, ethical and evaluative discursive frameworks of powerful public institutions at the expense of less powerful voices” (Inghilleri, 2012, pp. 39–40).

Abiding by the ethical principles of impartiality, neutrality and role boundaries is often considered to be conducive to reliability and quality in interpreting. However, previous research has argued that the opposite can be true. Hsieh and Nicodemus’s (2015) study on emotion in healthcare interpreting found that, “when interpreters’ interpreting style incorporates strategies to build rapport and trust with the patient (as opposed to being emotionally detached), patients are more likely to accept providers’ recommended treatment” (p. 1477). Research on the experiences of CALD service users in the United Kingdom found that personal character, attitude and trustworthiness defined the participants’ understanding of good interpreting, which

often resulted in a preference for ad-hoc interpreters from their own social circles instead of professional ones (R. Edwards et al., 2005). Similarly, a study on curative and hindering factors in psychological therapy involving traumatized forced migrants, therapists and interpreters in Denmark found that developing trust was considered the main curative factor by most parties involved (Mirdal et al., 2012). These evidence-based studies seem to suggest that emotionally-involved and visible interpreters—not impartial and neutral ones—can build trust and rapport among the parties, actively improving the outcome of the communicative situation.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that concepts such as “neutrality”, “impartiality” and “professionalism” are culturally constructed (Rudvin, 2007). Therefore, acting impartially can be seen as acting out the expectations of the majority culture, which places majority language speakers before members of minority cultures (Elliott, 2016). When we fail to recognise how culturally permeated and context-dependent our understanding of professionalism and the expectations of interpreted interactions are, we are unknowingly accepting the majority culture as the norm. Research within sign-language interpreting has even argued that codes of ethics can be misused as shields to protect interpreters from getting too involved and collaborating with CALD service users (Blankmeyer Burke & Nicodemus, 2013; Elliott, 2016; Shaw, 2014).

### 3.2.2 Institutional guidelines

Another fact which could clarify why community interpreting has not effectively moved past the conduit model is related to government departments and interpreter education all over the world, which underscore the importance of interpreters’ detachment (Boéri & de Manuel Jerez, 2011), seemingly avoiding in-depth discussions of real-life challenges. Formal interpreter training, in fact, is unlikely to

focus on social responsibility at all (Drugan, 2017). In Aotearoa, the prevalence of ad-hoc interpreters, the use of interpreters with different levels of training and competency, and the lack of one centralised language service policy have driven several organisations to create their own guidelines and codes in an attempt to clarify ethical and professional conduct (Enríquez Raído et al., 2020). Some examples include the interpreter service operations manual (ADHB, 2006) created by the Auckland District Health Board, as well as the guidelines for interpreters (MoJ, 2016) developed by the Ministry of Justice.

According to Adelstein and Clegg (2016), codes created by organisations “have a largely cosmetic and insurance function, acting subtly and strategically to control organizational risk management and protection” (p. 53), rather than actually fomenting ethicality. By way of example, when interpreters working for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)<sup>7</sup> accept their terms of employment, they commit to making decisions which are deemed correct by the institution and accept the legitimacy of this enforced decision-making process. In Adelstein and Clegg’s (2016) words, the “capacity of the individual to act according to personal ethical choices is removed, and discursive boundaries are closed to alternative interpretations” (p. 57).

Adelstein and Clegg’s (2016) recommendations to address the problems inherent in codes of ethics include the need to have regular conversations about ethics, as well as training and professional development for ethical decision making. While it is true that some institutions like the MBIE engage in such practices through, for example, the training on ethical dilemmas and integrity offered to their interpreters

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<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) oversees the Refugee Quota Programme in Aotearoa through the Refugee and Migrant Services Branch (RMS) (Immigration New Zealand, n.d.).

during the 2020 COVID-19 Alert Level 4 lockdown in Aotearoa (MBIE, 2020), the institution's understanding of ethical principles tends to be deontological rather than teleological in nature (Dean & Pollard, 2011). A deontological understanding of ethical principles fosters the adherence to prescriptive, "pre-ordained rules" instead of relying on a teleological framework that enables "context-based critical reasoning" (Dean & Pollard Jr, 2011, p. 157).

Recently, interpreting scholars have argued that Aotearoa's central government should endorse "teleological interpretations of ethical decision-making to achieve their goals of greater transparency, awareness, professionalization, and recognition of [translation and interpreting] practices" (Enríquez Raído et al., 2020, p. 23). A teleological interpretation of the NZSTI's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct (2013), as well as a modification of this code to expand its understanding of interpreted events based on real-life interpreting practice and dilemmas, would allow for and facilitate a more critical evaluation of the role of the interpreter.

### 3.2.3 Interdisciplinary approach

When examining the field's inability to move past the conduit metaphor in spite of the growing body of research demonstrating interpreters' visibility and agency as co-participants in interpreted interactions, Angelelli (2004c) stated that knowledge about interpreting had mostly been generated from within the field, in isolation. Angelelli (2004c) argued that interpreting practice was not based on a comprehensive theory which included socio-political aspects of the profession due to the scarcity of interdisciplinary research involving interpreting. Nearly a decade later, Candlin (in Wadensjö, 2013) stated that interpreting had only rarely been considered a social as well as a linguistic process. In related research areas such as applied linguistics,

translation has long been addressed in conferences and publications, but interpreting “has hardly featured until quite recently” (Wadensjö, 2013, p. xiv).

Despite influences from outside the field in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Anderson & Bruce, 1976; Kaufert & Putsch, 1997), it was not until the 2000s that interpreting research slowly began experiencing a sociological turn (Wolf, 2012). More recent studies started focusing on the role of the interpreter in relation to social macro-features such as culture, society or politics (e.g. Inghilleri, 2012; Torikai, 2009; Valero Garcés & Gauthier Blasi, 2010), which demands that “the position of interpreters is examined both as individuals and as professionals who act within socio-cultural contexts which have an enormous impact on their performance” (Aguilar Solano, 2012, p. 18).

In line with this sociological turn, the interpreting field’s inability to move past the conduit model can be understood in relation to Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of habitus, defined by Aguilar Solano (2012) as “a specific predisposition, a way of thinking, which is in harmony with the structures of the professional field in which the agent is situated” (p. 39). According to Inghilleri (2006), who also draws on Bourdieusian concepts, the conduit model of communication and the tenet of invisibility imposed by more powerful agents’ social conventions have helped develop a translatorial habitus tending towards subservience to pre-established translation norms and expectations. Once the habitus was developed, internalised impositions have been helping reinforce these beliefs, norms and conventions, reproducing shared patterns in spite of empirical research showing interpreters’ agency and decision making (Sela-Sheffy, 2005).

When examining the tension between translators’ constraints imposed by cultural group identification and translators’ versatility determined by their position in



their field of action, Sela–Sheffy (2005) highlights that the Bourdieusian concept of habitus is flexible enough to allow for its continuous transformation based on changes in practice as well as in the positioning within a cultural space. If there is a translatorial habitus influencing interpreter positionality, it follows that interpreters themselves can be “either conservative or revolutionary with regard to the accepted repertoire in the field” (Sela–Sheffy, 2005, p. 5). This research explores the possibility of interpreters being the latter, using an interdisciplinary approach that attempts to disregard the Eurocentric rationalisation that knowledge can be divided into simplified, independent, decontextualised elements that can be studied more easily (Germaná, 2009). Instead, this research follows Anibal Quijano’s comprehensive interpretation of social knowledge which understands reality as a complex historical system (Germaná, 2009).

### 3.3 Social justice, power and new models of interpreting

The current study is based on the assumption that the complexity of communication within interpreting studies calls for research that goes beyond disciplinary boundaries (Wolf & Fukari, 2007). Therefore, this project aims to add to the body of interdisciplinary research to further explore interpreting practice in relation to social theory. Avoiding a purely text-bound approach and including the broader context of each interpreted event reveals asymmetric transfer conditions and helps conceptualise interpreting as an interactive social event (Wolf & Fukari, 2007). Power is at the core of social views of community interpreting because power is negotiated, manipulated and challenged interpersonally through discourse in a context of institutional power asymmetry (Rudvin, 2005). Therefore, this research understands power as “a phenomenon that intersects the relationship between those who are granted privilege by virtue of social institutional systems and those without those same privileges” (Russell & Shaw, 2016, p. 2). This section will focus on the complexity of power in community interpreting: how it affects the interpreter at a personal level, but

also how it affects the interpreting process when it is examined as a socially-situated practice tied to broader systems of injustice.

At the individual level, interpreters can be seen to have more power than any other party in an interpreted interaction because of their linguistic and cultural abilities, which turns them into the only party who can understand everything that is being said throughout the exchange. Even if they are often lacking in institutional power—that wielded by government, authorities, corporations or organisations—the interpreter holds power *within* the interpreted event by virtue of being an interpreter (Mason & Ren, 2013). International research into naturally occurring face-to-face interpreting events has found that interpreters make decisions based on the participants, their agendas and their power differences (Major & Napier, 2019) and exert power through “verbal and non-verbal strategies to negotiate, coordinate, check, and balance power relations” (Mason & Ren, 2013, p. 233). However, the interpreter’s power is not always recognised because power asymmetries are more subtle when analysed at the individual level (Rudvin, 2005), especially considering the prevailing tenets of neutrality and invisibility in the profession (Baker-Shenk, 1991).

Power asymmetries at the individual level are constantly interacting with other collective sources of power (at the institutional and socio-political levels) because interpreting is a socially-situated activity. To consider power in interpreting at the collective level, the larger context of community interpreting comes into play, as it involves members of the dominant culture who can speak the dominant language, and immigrants or forced migrants who cannot. Language can be seen to reflect the power of its users which, in turn, affects a language’s prestige (Reid & Ng, 1999). Language can even create power because the direction and outcome of a conversation, for example, is determined by someone’s linguistic ability to participate in it and win conversational turns (Reid & Ng, 1999). At the same time, language can be used to

conceal power differentials and therefore prevent any process of social change, as well as reinforce dominance by instituting one language as the standard (Reid & Ng, 1999).

In the case of an interpreted interaction between an English-speaking Pākehā doctor and a Spanish-speaking Latin American patient, the doctor's language community is the largest in Aotearoa (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). English is the language of the government, legislation, education and most other institutions in the country. This offers English speakers a degree of influence and control over institutions which is further supported by the sociohistorical and cultural status of the English-speaking community, both in Aotearoa and around the world. If language reveals and reflects power (Ng & Deng, 2017), English in this example is both revealing and reflecting the structural dominance in society. In the same way, English in itself has power as a tool to reinforce and maintain these power structures through speakers' access to the means of punishment, reward and information; as a unifying or divisive symbol of social identity; and as means to create influence through words, oratories, conversations and narratives (Ng & Deng, 2017).

Because of the power of language, a person's linguistic abilities affect whether they are considered agents or targets of oppression (Gibson, 2014). Speakers of the dominant language who hold power because of the language they speak can be considered "agents of privilege", as they are "members of dominant social groups privileged by birth or acquisition, who knowingly or unknowingly exploit and reap unfair advantage over members of target groups" (Adams et al., 2007, p. 20). Forced migrants and immigrants who cannot speak the majority language and need interpreting services to access the systems and institutions to which they are entitled

are, in turn, the “targets of oppression”. However, because of the intersectional<sup>8</sup> nature of our identities, most people will have membership in other target and agent groups at the same time (Gibson, 2014).

The power of language and the role played by interpreters in power negotiation are often concealed by cultural and linguistic hegemonies which hide systemic injustices (Coyne & Hill, 2016), making it hard for the dominant group to recognise the benefits they enjoy as agents of privilege. The damages caused to members of oppressed groups who need interpreting services to access basic services and institutions become invisible to the privileged groups (Goodman, 2011). This dynamic helps maintain interpreting models which foster non-involvement and neutrality, while a critical analysis of interpreters’ choices and positionality makes society’s marginalisation and oppression dynamics visible (Adelstein & Clegg, 2016; Coyne & Hill, 2016; Minges, 2016).

As a consequence of previous experience or knowledge of service users’ backgrounds, interpreters are more likely to recognise when users are at risk (NCIHC, 2021). Therefore, interpreters are “in a unique position to understand and recognise the imbalance which exists and to create more equity” (Witter-Merithew, 1999, p. 2). Without critical assessment, interpreters do their jobs unconscious of the unavoidable decisions that they have to make as co-participants (Major & Napier, 2019), oblivious of their power and responsibility (Baker & Maier, 2011), as if there were no alternative courses of action and their decisions did not affect the outcome of the interaction and the people involved in it (Baker-Shenk, 1991).

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<sup>8</sup> Defined as “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage” (Oxford University Press, n.d.).

### 3.3.1 Who gets to speak

This research explores the possibility of studying, teaching and conducting interpreting with social justice in mind. Social justice can be defined as involving both distributive and procedural justice. Distributive justice entails “the equitable distribution of benefits among the members of various social groups” (Reason & Davis, 2005, p. 6), while procedural justice focuses on the amount of input that each group has in decision-making processes (Tyler & Smith, 1995). If the goal of social justice is the full and equal participation of all groups (Reason & Davis, 2005), a new understanding of the interpreter’s role informed by the notion of social justice must be informed by what users need and expect from their interpreters. However, a vast majority of the research into interpreting service provision focuses on service providers, that is, interpreters themselves (Vuori & Hokkanen, 2020).

Professional interpreters are often the only participants involved in interpreting studies. Examples of this kind of research conducted in Aotearoa include Magill’s (2017) study on healthcare interpreting from the perspective of qualified New Zealand Sign Language interpreters, as well as Wang and Grant’s (2015) research into the challenges faced by court interpreters in Aotearoa from the perspective of qualified interpreters working in this context. Some larger, more comprehensive research projects outside of Aotearoa included all the parties to the interaction, such as Robb and Greenhalgh’s (2006) study on interpreted consultations in primary care in the United Kingdom. The research involved 18 service users, 17 professional and nine ad-hoc interpreters, 13 general practitioners, 15 primary care nurses, eight receptionists and three practice managers. Another comprehensive study is that of Mirdal et al. (2012), who interviewed four psychologists, 16 patients and eight professional interpreters in Denmark to study how these parties perceive both curative and hindering factors in psychological therapy. Examples of this kind of

research in Aotearoa is limited, as studies tend to focus on one or two groups, generally interpreters and/or public service providers (e.g. Bouterey, 2019; Crezee, 2003; Crezee et al., 2011; Dani & Britz, 2017; Seers et al., 2013). An exception to this is González Campanella's (2022) research into interpreting in refugee contexts in Aotearoa, which was based on insights from professional interpreters, interpreting service users, public service providers and other stakeholders.

A review of the scholarly literature suggests a gap in knowledge, particularly in Aotearoa, but also at the international level, as few studies have focused on the users' views on interpreting services (Hlavac, 2019). Even when many scholars have highlighted the importance of listening to what users have to say (Alexander et al., 2004; Greenhalgh et al., 2006; Pöchlacker, 2021; Zimányi, 2010), R. Edwards et al. (2005) found that "there has been little work that looks at users' experiences of interpreters, both professional and informal, from their own point of view" (p. 78). When they published their research on the use of interpreters in Swedish healthcare services from the perspective of service users from the former Yugoslavia, Hadziabdic et al. (2009) found only two other studies on migrants' perceptions of interpreting in this field. The authors emphasized the importance of these perceptions to improve service provision, foster communication with CALD communities, and avoid the negative effects that these language differences can have on them. Similarly, Costa and Briggs (2014) addressed this gap with their study on users' experiences in psychological therapy in the United Kingdom, finding that service users are often confused by the role of the interpreter and disappointed because their expectations are not fulfilled. Martínez-Gómez (2015) called for further research from a service user perspective after studying non-professional interpreter interventions in two Spanish prisons. Interestingly, the research found a tendency for users to prefer interpreters who lean towards the visible end of interpreter intervention.

MacFarlane et al. (2009) conducted a study involving Serbo-Croat and Russian refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland which highlighted these service users' need to organise informal, ad-hoc interpreting services for their primary healthcare appointments. The study found that interpreting service users often had to rely on ad-hoc interpreters sourced from their own personal networks, partly because general physicians were acting as gatekeepers to professional interpreting services. Physicians were seen to decide whether a professional interpreter was needed or whether the ad-hoc interpreter sourced by the patient was adequate. MacFarlane et al.'s (2009) findings highlighted the burden borne by service users who needed to "invest a tremendous amount of energy attempting to construct, enact and negotiate effective use of informal interpreters" due to their lack of access to professional interpreters (MacFarlane et al., 2009, p. 213). This points to a language service provision which is failing to support CALD communities who must navigate linguistic differences with inadequate resources, and calls for further attention to matters which are seen to impede equity of access to public institutions.

In Aotearoa specifically, Shrestha-Ranjit et al. (2020) researched the effectiveness of interpreting services for Bhutanese forced migrants from the perspective of the service users and service providers. The study was the first of its kind in Aotearoa, involving 32 Bhutanese women and eight Bhutanese men who were interviewed in focus groups conducted in the Nepali language. The research was facilitated by the shared cultural, religious and linguistic background of one of the researchers involved who grew up in Nepal and was in charge of collecting the data, transcribing it and translating it from Nepali into English. Shrestha-Ranjit et al.'s (2020) findings revealed an inadequate provision of socioculturally and linguistically effective interpreting services, calling for "practice and policy changes to realize the right to health care for forced migrant populations in New

Zealand” (p. 1707). Of note, the authors recommended the establishment of community navigators, often conceptualised as culturally-appropriate links between communities and systems who can help reduce barriers, increase engagement, and offer additional information and support (Crezee & Roat, 2019; Henderson & Kendall, 2011). This recommendation suggests the need for intercultural experts to assist with CALD communities’ access to public services (see Section 3.3.4 Intercultural mediators and patient navigators).

The lack of insights from the service user perspective is not necessarily unique to interpreting studies. Brown and Ostrove (2013), for example, found that, even though there is literature on the characteristics that define an ally, studies on allyship<sup>9</sup> are rarely from the perspective of members of non-dominant groups. In his research about how American people of colour perceive allies, Brown (2015) also indicated that research on allyship generally addresses dominant group members (cf. Broido, 2000; Goodman, 2011; Washington & Evans, 1991). Users’ lack of participation in interpreting research could be a sign of what Freire (1996) defined as “lack of confidence in the [oppressed] people’s ability to think, to want, and to know” (p. 60). In spite of current research practices, seeking out marginalised narratives is the best way to incorporate social justice in interpreting (Coyne & Hill, 2016).

### 3.3.2 Characteristics of an ally

In recent decades, practising interpreters have become crucial players in movements that advocate the rights of minorities and challenge injustice all over the world (Baker & Maier, 2011). Some scholars consider that a neutral position can be understood as an unconscious complicity with current unequal structures (Baker–

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<sup>9</sup> Discussed in Section 3.3.3.



Shenk, 1991; Coyne & Hill, 2016; Witter-Merithew, 1999). This view of the profession highlights the importance of interpreters' examination of their own and other parties' privilege and power, leading some scholars to suggest that "interpreters who do not incorporate social justice work into their professional practice risk worsening situations" (Coyne & Hill, 2016, p. 3). However, there is a fine line between an active, visible interpreter and a paternalistic, over-powering one. According to Mikkelsen (2000), early understandings of codes of ethics for interpreters "erred on the side of caution" to ensure that the interpreter role was reactive instead of proactive in an attempt to avoid pre-professional paternalistic behaviour (p. 54). Even though it is important to acknowledge interpreters' power and participation in interpreted events, Shaw (2014) warns us that positioning interpreters as privileged servers and service users as underprivileged recipients would quickly result in "the helper model of yesterday" (p. 8). Unlike the ally model of interpreting, the helper model recognised the disadvantaged position of service users, but saw interpreters taking control of situations and making decisions for the users (Baker-Shenk, 1991).

The literature outside the interpreting field has defined an ally as a person who, on the one hand, commits to engaging in as little prejudice as possible and, on the other hand, intentionally chooses to fight for social justice (Brown & Ostrove, 2013). Nieto et al. (2010) summarised these two aspects of the definition by describing an ally as "awareness plus action" (p. 127). Comparably, Carlson et al. (2020) found that 80% of the forty different activist and academic sources in their study about current understandings of allyship mentioned action as a key concept defining allyship and stated that, according to the literature, allies that do not act are not really allies.

Apart from an active role, allyship requires the creation of close and meaningful relationships (Goodman, 2011), as all anti-oppression work is "time-intensive, labor-intensive, long-term, and relational" (Nieto et al., 2010, p. 128). The relationships

between allies and members of non-dominant groups help allies avoid speaking *for* the oppressed and contribute to ensuring the ally's accountability. This accountability, however, must be driven by allies themselves, without placing that burden on the members of the non-dominant groups (Kivel, 2000). In order to do this, allies must be open to critiques from non-dominant groups, and should develop their own systems and structures to hold themselves accountable (K. E. Edwards, 2006).

Another key factor to consider when applying ally theory to interpreting is that “ally” should not be a self-applied label (Carlson et al., 2020). However, interpreters can still strive to operate within this framework without co-opting the term for self-gratification purposes or virtue signalling. This is related to the need to avoid the spotlight, which is considerably more accessible to those who can harness privilege (Giannaki, 2016). Instead, interpreters striving to become an ally can focus on amplifying marginalised voices, which, due to the nature of the profession, can have both a literal sense and a broader, multi-level sense related to their engagement with social justice.

What is understood by “ally” has been shifting with time and research. Originally, allies were exclusively members of the dominant group who offered their support to members of non-dominant groups while giving up their own privileges in the process (Brooks & Edwards, 2009b; Washington & Evans, 1991). However, disregarding intersectionality and falling into the ally-oppressed dichotomy is one of the main critiques against the concept of allyship (Carlson et al., 2020). For this reason, in more recent years, the definition has been expanded to include people who are members of non-dominant groups themselves (Brooks & Edwards, 2009a). Allies typically “have their feet in the worlds of both the dominant and the oppressed” (Reason, 2005, p. 1). This acknowledgement is important because the position occupied by allies is reminiscent of the one occupied by interpreters, who mediate

between languages and cultures. According to Carlson et al. (2020), a lack of intersectionality leads to a false sense of opposition based on only one aspect of identity. To address this, Reynolds (2010) suggests a fluid ally positioning which takes into account that “our ethics are not always tied to one location of oppression” (p. 13).

The topic of allyship has been more prevalent in sign language interpreting (e.g. Baker–Shenk, 1991; Elliott, 2016; Mole, 2018; Witter–Merithew, 1999; Ziebart, 2016). By necessity, sign language interpreters are members of the privileged hearing community<sup>10</sup>, while deaf service users are members of an oppressed sociolinguistic, collectivist minority (Elliott, 2016). In contrast, spoken–language interpreters are often immigrants and forced migrants themselves, members of the same non–dominant community as their service users. Given that current understandings of allyship are broad enough to include spoken–language interpreters who are members of the non–dominant community themselves, it is important to note that these interpreters enjoy the privilege of speaking the dominant language and being familiar with the systems and institutions of the dominant culture. Angelelli (2004c) highlighted that interpreters’ actions, like all human behaviours, are dually constrained “by the individual’s own habitus and also by the institution within which individuals interact” (p. 38). Intersectionality is therefore crucial when evaluating the possibility of applying ally theory to interpreting, facilitated by its multi–dimensional view of every individual’s social identity as both oppressor and oppressed (Guadalupe, 2003).

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<sup>10</sup> I am referring exclusively to hearing sign–language interpreters, but I would like to acknowledge the work of deaf interpreters who, as native speakers of their languages who have lived experience of deafness, work together with hearing interpreters whenever a deaf person is facing challenges to communicate effectively through a hearing sign language interpreter (Office for Disability Issues, 2018).

### 3.3.3 The ally model in interpreting research

The use of models as labels to capture interpreters' attitudes, behaviours and approaches to decision-making has been a part of interpreting since the beginning of the profession (Janzen & Korpiniski, 2005). Different models have used role metaphors and analogies (e.g. interpreters as helpers, as conduits, as communication facilitators and as allies) to describe behaviour in a broad sense and convey complex ideas by associating them to something concrete. However, these metaphors do not provide sufficient decision-making guidance in situated interpreted events, which is why any discussion of the interpreter role must be combined with an assessment of interpreter responsibility (Dean & Pollard, 2018). This also means that behaviours which are typically associated with a specific model can be used to operate within a different model altogether (Janzen & Korpiniski, 2005). For example, behaviours such as interpreting simultaneously, keeping a fast pace and avoiding clarifications—associated with the conduit model—can be used as a strategy to cope with a speaker's speed if there are no chances of immediately altering that situation.

The ally model, then, should not be understood as a break from the past, but rather as a repositioning of the interpreter based on the acknowledgement of their own partiality, their power, the consequences of their actions, and the broader systems of oppression. It is also important to remember that models are useful “as long as one keeps firmly in mind that [they] are always ‘utopian’, in the sense that they are tools to facilitate investigations of a messy world” (Andersen & Neumann, 2012, p. 465). This is consistent with the understanding that allyship is never a complete process, but rather a practice which is actively developing every day (McDermott, 2017).

An ally model of interpreting can offer some much-needed flexibility. It can also function as a compass for interpreters to assess the wide variety of possible

behaviours with the help of other ethical devices to justify their decision-making.

According to Baker-Shenk (1991), an ally model that draws on users' expertise would help interpreters improve their performance, which would translate into greater job satisfaction. Moreover, it would foster a critical analysis of the use and consequences of interpreter power (Baker-Shenk, 1991), encouraging professional responsibility, which must accompany any discussions of the interpreter role (Dean & Pollard, 2018).

In interpreting research, the ally model arose together with the deaf civil-rights movement in the United States (Baker-Shenk, 1986). Since the early 1990s, this model has been proposed as a way for interpreters to contribute to the advancement of the deaf social and political agendas. In 1991, Baker-Shenk acknowledged the power differentials between deaf and hearing people, classified neutrality as a myth, called machine models of interpreting "terribly naïve" (p. 4), and suggested that the role of the ally is the most empowering position hearing people can adopt if they want to avoid supporting an unjust system. In 1999, Witter-Merithew defined the ally model as one that recognises "the historic oppression that has been perpetuated on deaf people" (Witter-Merithew, 1999, p. 5). Like Baker-Shenk, she highlighted the importance of interpreters' self-awareness in the process of becoming an ally to avoid reverting to a care-taker and paternalistic position, and further clarified that allies are not crusaders or leaders who take control. More recently, Ziebart (2016) stated that, "although oppression generally comes from hearing people that do not understand the Deaf, interpreters are often oppressors" (p. 5). Even though Ziebart shared general guidelines for interpreters that include fostering equality, not speaking for service users and not behaving as their saviours, these general recommendations did not offer specific insight into what this role means in practice.

There have been limited attempts to define what allyship looks like within sign language interpreting. In conversation with four professional interpreters, Baker-

Shenk (1991) identified the following concrete ways for interpreters to take on this role: acknowledging the user first; asking the user about the logistics of the interpreting setting (e.g. where they would like the parties to sit); paying attention to body language (e.g. interpreter proximity to one of the parties); using culturally appropriate turn-taking behaviour; sharing prior knowledge about the system and what can be generally expected from it; dressing according to the user's comfort level; using a comfortable pace; redirecting questions to the users instead of answering them as interpreters; asking for feedback from users after an interpreting session; soliciting pre-session guidance; and using consecutive instead of simultaneous interpreting whenever possible. Some of these concrete examples were adapted and included in the videos used for data collection in this study (Section 4.2.1 One-on-one dialogues).

Examples of allyship in the literature include a group of professional interpreters who worked for free to support Gallaudet University's student-led protest of 1988, commonly known as Deaf President Now (Gallaudet University, n.d.; Witter-Merithew, 1999). When approached by the media, these interpreters gave the floor to the deaf students, interpreting for them for free because the movement had no funding to pay for their services. Another example offered by Witter-Merithew (1999) involved an interpreter who managed to assist a therapist in understanding their patient's deaf experience, and sharing with them further sources about oppression and the psychology of deafness. This intervention helped the therapist gather the background information they needed, which in turn derived in a referral to a more qualified person.

Previous research into the skill sets needed by American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters' to work with the deaf community (Minges, 2016) identified a lack of knowledge about interpreters' understanding of allyship. The study used a measurement tool to assess interpreters' skill sets and allyship awareness, collecting

data from 270 ASL interpreters through an online questionnaire created by the researcher. To the best of my knowledge, there is no equivalent research targeting spoken-language interpreters, nor a similar project seeking to elucidate interpreting service users' knowledge, either deaf or hearing. Research findings revealed that the majority of participants self-identified as allies, described as including advocacy, empowerment of the deaf community, quality assurance, equality of access, help, solidarity and support. However, in spite of the high proportion of self-identified allies, only 41% of respondents mentioned a specific strategy that could action allyship, which might suggest an acceptance of the concept, but uncertainty about how to apply it.

Similarly, Dean's (2015) study on sign-language interpreters' ethical reasoning abilities in the United States found that interpreters favour a pattern of reasoning which is typical of adolescents. The pattern was considered to be at odds with the actual age and education level of the participants, as well as their social justice claims. In her words, justice "is only weakly evident in the ethical discourse of the interpreter participants" (p. ii). These findings support Janzen and Korpiniski's (2005) conclusion that "perhaps even more so than with the other models (...), what it means to be an ally of the community is unclear" (p. 171). Minges (2016) concluded that the positive value attached to allyship and social justice is indicative of its "potential for growth" (p. 95), which suggests that further research is needed when it comes to translating awareness into action—a key part of the definition of allyship.

In their study to identify health providers' expectations for spoken-language interpreters in the United States, Hsieh et al. (2013) identified three components in their data: Patient Ally, Health Care Professionals and Provider Proxy. The following behaviours were included under the definition of the interpreter acting as a patient ally:

...interpreters' ability to provide emotional support to the patient (item 8), interpreters' familiarity with the patients' needs (item 12), interpreters' ability to help the patient seek information (item 11), interpreters' willingness to assist patients outside of the medical encounter (item 10), interpreters' ability to read the patients' nonverbal behaviors (item 2), interpreters' ability to develop rapport between the provider and the patient (item 9), interpreters' ability to advocate for the patient (item 14), and interpreters' ability to help patients navigate the health care system (item 13). (p. 560)

Hsieh et al. (2013) recognised that many of these behaviours are often considered problematic in interpreting scholarship. According to the authors, allyship has been overlooked and condemned by researchers but preferred by some medical specialties. Data from this study showed that nurses, in particular, prefer a patient ally approach which is in keeping with their own role as links between the patient and the health system. Hsieh et al. (2013) concluded that what interpreters understand as an appropriate performance is highly contextual, with the users' communicative competence determining the extent of the interpreter's advocacy and intervention.

Even when allyship has been considered problematic, it is important to note that some codes of ethics such as the one drafted by the International Medical Interpreting Association (IMIA) and the California Healthcare Interpreters Association (CHIA) in the United States do allow advocacy in certain circumstances (Phelan et al., 2019). The National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC, 2004) in the United States, for example, establishes that interpreters can engage in advocacy when a patient's health, wellbeing or dignity is at risk. The California Healthcare Interpreters Association (CHIA, 2002), on the other hand, establishes that interpreters "require a clear rationale for the need to advocate on behalf of the patients" (p. 14). Although these examples recognise interpreters'



responsibility toward interpreting service users, in both cases the provision of advocacy is seen as either optional or as a last resort. Moreover, there is no general consensus on the definition of advocacy even among the few code of ethics for interpreters which recognise it as a possibility (Phelan et al., 2019). Finally, as identified by Minges (2016) above, advocacy is only a part of allyship, as all anti-oppression work requires long-term dedication on a relational basis (Nieto et al., 2010).

In one of the few studies addressing service users, Witter-Merithew et al. (2005) documented the state of professionalisation of sign language interpreting in the United States from a stakeholder perspective. The authors found that, according to deaf users, interpreter allies must stand together with the deaf community and fight for equality, which would involve “personable, collegial and collaborative relationships with interpreters based on open communication, a contribution towards common goals, and mutual respect and understanding” (p. 39). Counter to these users’ requests, Minges (2016) found that interpreters were educating other members of the hearing community about deafness and inequality using an outsider framework. This outsider mentality was seen to risk ethnocentrism because of the use of hearing culture to explain the deaf world. In Minges’s own words, “without the Deaf community’s support and guidance, awareness may occur but actions will be moot, superficial, and perhaps contradictory to the struggle for liberation and equity” (p. 96). These studies and their findings highlight the need to hear users’ voices not only during interpreted interactions, but also during interpreting research, education and the construction of new social justice models for interpreters.

### 3.3.4 Intercultural mediators and patient navigators

The overlap between the profiles of community interpreters and intercultural mediators is confusing for interpreters and service users alike, and might lead to distorted expectations of the competence and services typical of each profession (Pokorn & Mikolič Južnič, 2020). The role of intercultural mediators has not been clearly nor unequivocally defined to date. In the European context, the term “intercultural mediator” is used to refer to a variety of jobs with a wide and diverse scope. In some cases, it is used to refer to work in cultural conflict prevention and resolution, the adaptation or transformation of text for a specific audience, or the guidance and training for multilingual content creation (Pokorn & Mikolič Južnič, 2020). In other cases, it is used as a synonym for “community interpreter”.

Attempts to differentiate interpreters from intercultural mediators have often assumed that the interpreter’s role is limited to that of a language switcher who can address only the language barrier. In comparison, intercultural mediators are assigned broader functions and are seen as the ones who can achieve and ensure mutual comprehension (Theodosiou & Aspioti, 2015; Verrept, 2019). Such a distinction ignores the close relationship between language and culture, which makes interpreters’ linguistic role inseparable from cultural mediation tasks (Pöchhacker, 2008). The distinction then relegates interpreters to the role of “mere conduits of a linguistic code” (Pokorn & Mikolič Južnič, 2020, p. 86). Once again, the problem lies with the conduit model used to define interpreting practices (see Section 3.1 The role of the interpreter).

In Aotearoa, the use of intercultural mediators is limited, but similar roles exist within certain fields. In the health setting, patient navigators help patients understand their health problems, treatments and options, and assist medical professionals with

their understanding of cultural health beliefs and the impacts of health illiteracy (Crezee & Roat, 2019). However, as is the case with intercultural mediators, a study based in the Wellington region found “a significant overlap between the roles of navigators and interpreters in the study area, with navigators routinely interpreting for patients, especially in the hospital” (Gray et al., 2017, p. 2). When interviewed, navigators themselves considered that the limitations imposed on professional interpreters’ functions prevented patients from getting the help they needed.

Even if the boundaries of these professional profiles remain ambiguous, the emergence of roles such as that of intercultural mediators and patient navigators speaks of a need for advocating and mediating functions which has remained unmet by professional interpreters (Gray et al., 2017; Pöchhacker, 2008). It is also important to note that the categorisation of professions is always a dynamic process (Rudvin, 2007). The ally model of interpreting, then, could be understood as developing the interpreter’s role to meet the need for advocacy and mediation.

### 3.4 Interpreting in Aotearoa

The end of the 20th century saw new patterns of migration which brought about changes in spatial distribution, legal statuses and labour market experiences (Vertovec, 2007). These changes entailed a “diversification of diversity” (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1025), one which also created new forms of inequality and racism, segregation, and relationships within places of residence (Vertovec, 2019, p. 126). In Aotearoa, more than a quarter of the population (27.4%) were born overseas (Statistics New Zealand, 2020), and this ethnic diversity is only expected to increase in the next few decades (Statistics New Zealand, 2017).

Recent studies prepared for the Aotearoa Human Rights Commission have found that people born outside of Aotearoa experience higher rates of

discrimination (Malatest International, 2021). This discrimination was seen to be accompanied by a prevalence of institutional, interpersonal and internalised racism in governance, health, housing, employment, society, education and the justice system. Accordingly, racism was found to affect the migrant and Māori populations, who reported culture and identity loss, colonised thinking, loss of confidence, disengagement and marginalisation as a result (Malatest International, 2021). Linguistic differences play a crucial part in Aotearoa's racism and discrimination, as a large percentage of forced migrants and some immigrants cannot speak sufficient English to access the support services established by the government to help with their re-settlement or integration (MBIE, 2016). Moreover, English proficiency affects migrants' employment status, their participation in the community and their access to statutory services (MBIE, 2016).

Aotearoa's linguistic landscape grew exponentially in the mid-1990s as a result of policy changes which sought to address a shortage of skilled migrants (Chen, 2015). Interpreting services began to be offered in the same decade, with the concurrent establishment at the Auckland University of Technology of the first centre for translation and interpreting studies in the country (Enríquez Raído et al., 2020; MBIE, 2016). Since then, the need for interpreting services has been recognised in several pieces of legislation<sup>11</sup> which establish that they must be offered in court and asylum hearings, as well as in health settings and for disability services whenever the participants are not proficient in English (MBIE, 2016). The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's summary report on the use of interpreters in Aotearoa (2016) states that public servants "must work to make government services

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<sup>11</sup> The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, the Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights) Regulations 1996 and the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992, among others.

accessible and effective, including considering customer-focused alternatives to traditional ways of service provision” (p. 5). These regulations are based on the understanding that the ability to use one’s own language is a human right, and that this should not only be tolerated, but also provided for and promoted (United Nations, 1992).

However, the legislative framework is part of a language policy characterised by uncoordinated legislation dispersed around and originating from different government departments (Harvey, 2014). At the time this thesis was written, Aotearoa had not yet applied a coherent language framework across all government sectors. Nevertheless, the need to do so was recognised by the creation of the Language Assistance Services Programme in 2017, coordinated by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Department of Internal Affairs (MBIE, 2021). The aim of the programme is to address the barriers and gaps that prevent people with limited English proficiency from accessing public services and information in Aotearoa, as identified in two reviews conducted in 2015 and 2016 (MBIE, 2021). The programme establishes a new certification requirement which will come into effect in 2024. These provisions will affect interpreters working in the public sector, who will need to pass a certification test developed by the National Australian Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) (MBIE, 2021).

### **3.4.1 Demographics**

This research project was conducted in Spanish with members of the Latin American community in Aotearoa. The Latin American community has more than tripled in the last decade (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). Of the total 25 000 Latin Americans in Aotearoa, most of whom are based in the Auckland region, approximately 10% cannot speak English and 83% have been born overseas (Statistics New Zealand,

2018, 2019). Part of this group arrived in Aotearoa through the Refugee Quota Programme based on the criteria set out by the 1951 Refugee Convention, which defined a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (UNHCR, 1951, p. 3).

The first wave of these Latin American refugees arrived in Aotearoa from Chile after Salvador Allende’s left-leaning government was overthrown by the military dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet in 1973 (Sanchez, 2016). At the time, Aotearoa did not have an established Spanish-speaking community and, among Latin Americans, was relatively unknown as an immigration destination (Beaglehole, 2013). In the 1980s, some of these forced migrants moved to Australia in search of larger and more established Spanish-speaking communities or back to Chile after the collapse of the military regime, often escaping the cultural alienation and isolation they had been experiencing in Aotearoa (Dürr, 2011). The second wave of Latin American refugees to Aotearoa was mainly of Colombian origin. These Colombian refugees were fleeing the civil war in their home country and started arriving in Aotearoa in the 1990s (Sanchez, 2016).

In recent years, Latin Americans have been migrating to Aotearoa looking for job opportunities and a better lifestyle, as well as for environmental and ecological reasons, often using the working-holiday agreements as ways to create networks and opportunities (Dürr, 2011). Unlike refugees, migrants choose to move to a different country “to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons” and can return home and continue to receive the protection of their government if they choose to do so (UNHCR, 2015, para. 6).

The diversity of Latin America itself is reflected in the community of immigrants and forced migrants in Aotearoa, which shows differences in class and social background, political ideas, migratory reasons and lifestyle (Dürr, 2011). However, migration patterns might change in the near future, given that there are currently more than seven million Latin Americans who have been displaced, with a considerable increase of asylum applications from El Salvador, Guatemala and other countries in Central America (UNHCR, 2020). By the end of 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported a total of 146 741 Latin American refugees, 937 289 asylum-seekers and 108 760 Latin Americans living in refugee-like situations (UNHCR, 2019). The worst displacement crisis in recent history involves 4.5 million displaced Venezuelans (UNHCR, 2019). The international situation translated into an increase in the refugee quota in Aotearoa, effective as of July 2020. From 2005 to 2015, 663 Latin American refugees entered Aotearoa under the programme (Sanchez, 2016), but this number is predicted to increase as a result of these changes.

In this study, both the refugee and immigrant Latin American populations were represented, as it involved Colombians and Chileans with a refugee background, as well as Argentinian, Uruguayans and Colombians who arrived as immigrants. Given that the research was below. conducted primarily by and for this diaspora, the project relied on a culturally affirming Latin American methodology which prioritised a Latin American epistemology, as described in Chapter 4. Methodology.

### 3.5 Summary

This chapter focused on the development of the interpreter role throughout the history of interpreting, from the pre-professional helper model to the conduit model prescribed by codes of ethics and institutional guidelines. It also offered a critical view

of the factors which have contributed to the prevalence of the conduit metaphor even after research into naturally occurring interpreted discourse revealed interpreters' active participation in the interpreted event. The ally model of interpreting was presented as an alternative model which allows for the acknowledgement of interpreters' partiality and power, as well as of the larger societal structures affecting any interaction. The chapter also offered a summary of the demographic landscape of Aotearoa, particularly in relation to the Latin American community which is the focus of this research. At the same time, it briefly examined the currently changing nature of the interpreting sector in Aotearoa, which is due to incorporate NAATI certification by 2024.

This literature review is a summary of the academic knowledge I brought to every dialogue. As previously mentioned, this research does not seek to prioritise the scholarly literature in the area of inquiry over the service users' knowledge, which is considered different, but just as legitimate and valid. This thesis has been structured to include this chapter before that of knowledge creation (Chapter 5) because it is understood that the academic literature affected the position from which I engaged with the users. My identity was further developed and negotiated through the one-on-one and group dialogues, as "the subject is a dialogic phenomenon in which the other is a constitutive part of being" (Corona Berkin, 2017, p. 97). Chapter 4 below describes these dialogues and the stages of knowledge creation in detail as it seeks to clarify how horizontal methodologies were operationalised.



## Chapter 4. Methodology: “You have asked me so many things. Now I’m asking you”

Some of the main proponents of horizontal methodologies have stated that they “never imagined these horizontal approaches as a method” (Cornejo & Rufer, 2021, p. 109). Instead, the choice of method must be informed by horizontal methodologies based on their adequacy and relevance. Wilson (2001) suggested that there are methods which are “built on the dominant paradigms, and they are inseparable from them” (p. 177). Similarly, Kovach (2020) established that it is not the method which determines the characteristics of a methodology, but rather “the interplay (the relationship) between the method and paradigm” (p. 40). One of the challenges of this research, then, was finding methods which would respect horizontal methodologies, but still comply with the expectations and time constraints imposed on a master’s thesis process. Corona Berkin (2020a) herself recognised that writing a thesis which attempts a horizontal production of knowledge is a “radical effort” (p. 84). Therefore, in this section, I will explain the design choices through which I tried to address this challenge.

To do so, I will examine how the original design involving interviews and a thematic analysis of the data evolved through dialogue and consultation to arrive, instead, at a design involving three stages of knowledge creation. These stages are based on Wolcott’s (1994) categories of qualitative writing: description, analysis and interpretation. The first stage (description) involved one-on-one dialogues which were then summarised, transcribed and included in this thesis. The second stage (analysis) involved a thematic analysis of the data using NVivo 12. The third stage (interpretation) involved a group dialogue to discuss the themes found during the stage of analysis. In this chapter, I will discuss each one of these stages in more detail.

## 4.1 Data collection

When designing this project, I first set out to interview only interpreting service users because, from a critical perspective, I was seeking to empower and include those who had so often been ignored by past interpreting research. Semi-structured interviews are a common research method employed in interpreting research (Vuori & Hokkanen, 2020), understood as those conducted with the aid of prompt questions that guide the discussion, while keeping the process flexible enough to allow for freedom in the responses (Hale & Napier, 2013).

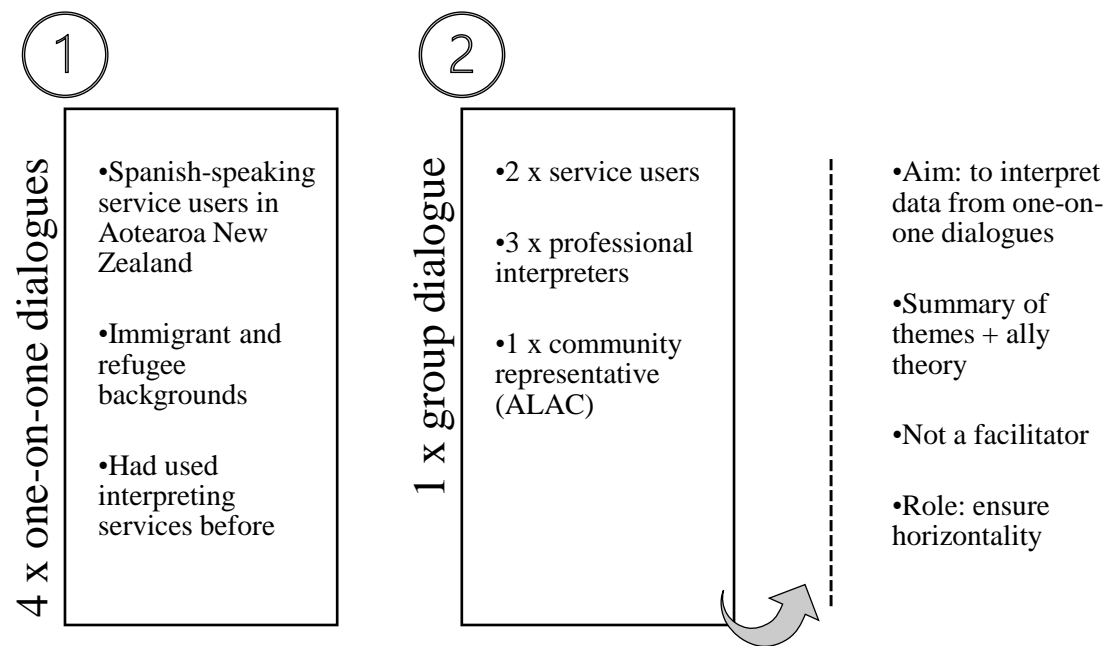
In their research about how traumatised forced migrants, their therapists and interpreters in Denmark perceive curative and hindering factors in therapy, Mirdal et al. (2012) chose to focus on the interviewees' narratives and minimise the number of questions asked during the interview. R. Edwards et al. (2005), who interviewed solely users of interpreting services in the United Kingdom, also highlighted their need for a narrative approach encouraging storytelling, giving prominence to "the biographical, cultural and political context of [the users'] lives as a whole" (p. 81). In both cases there is a cross-over between the focus on the users' perspectives and stories, and the use of interviews to hear what these users have to say. However, contrary to these two examples, a recent overview of empirical designs in community interpreting studies (Vuori & Hokkanen, 2020) found that interviews tend to be short and rarely depict a narrative approach where the interviewees can speak freely about a topic. Moreover, this overview found that interviews in community interpreting research are not generally considered to be a space for the co-production of discourses, where cultural meanings are negotiated through the interaction.

Although interviews could be seen to offer a space in which interpreting-service users who are members of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

communities can share their stories (Hale & Napier, 2013), the idea of being an objective party extracting other people's knowledge and adding nothing to a conversation in which I am heavily invested made me uncomfortable. Corona Berkin (2020a) states that, when the problem is not constructed together with others, actively seeking discursive equality and the autonomy of everyone's viewpoint, participants can often feel betrayed after their knowledge has been extracted and/or misinterpreted. Therefore, in this research project, I positioned myself as an interlocutor participating on the same terms as everyone else who joined me in dialogue. For this reason, I have chosen to distance myself from the concept of "interviews" as they are often understood in academic contexts. Wilson (2001) warned us that a method might have been built on dominant paradigms and be inseparable from them. Therefore, I used the concept of one-on-one dialogues instead, informed by horizontal methodologies.

Apart from the one-on-one dialogues, this study involved one group dialogue with service users, professional interpreters and a community representative, as shown in Figure 1. As doing horizontal research means promoting encounters in which to exchange different viewpoints to arrive at more comprehensive knowledge, in consultation with ALAC it was decided that the study should include a subsequent group dialogue with a variety of stakeholders to workshop the findings from the first stage of one-on-one dialogues. In the following section, I will address how these one-on-one dialogues and group dialogue fit into the three stages of horizontal knowledge creation.

Figure 1

*Research design*

## 4.2 Description, analysis and interpretation

Wolcott (1994) speaks of three categories of qualitative research writing: description, which includes observations reported to the researcher; analysis, involving a systematic account of the relationships among essential features; and interpretation, which incorporates meanings and contexts in order to reach an understanding beyond the limits of what can be explained through analysis. These categories are neither mutually exclusive nor clearly distinct, but they will be used in this project to present three interrelated stages of knowledge creation.

A horizontal methodology implies that the relationship between those involved in the research is transformed through dialogue, which is where knowledge is constructed (Cornejo & Rufer, 2020). This is consistent with what Wolcott (1994) defines as description, whose “underlying assumption, or hope, is that the data ‘speak for themselves’” (p. 10). According to Corona Berkin (2020a), horizontal

methodologies do not see research as the process of connecting theories to the specificities of a particular context, but rather suppose that those who participate in the research to create new knowledge already possess theories shaped by each individual's background. I am therefore including the transcripts of the dialogues so that the reader can engage directly with interpreting service users' knowledge. In doing so, I am also trying to avoid the process of "purification" frowned upon by Kaltmeier (2012), through which data is adapted and analysed to fit pre-established expectations, terminology and theories, erasing the presence and rationale of anyone who cannot be forced into those categories. Moreover, by prioritising the transcripts and, therefore, the dialogues themselves, this study distances itself from western and Eurocentric analytical tools which contribute to the colonality of knowledge (Corona Berkin, 2020a). Seeing each interlocutor as a subject exchanging knowledge in context can help counter the subject-object relationship to focus on relationship building instead (Kluttz et al., 2020).

These dialogues will be followed by the thematic findings of my own analysis, as this research is about formulating theory based on interpreting service users' knowledge. It is important to note that this stage of knowledge creation has often been considered reductive as it decontextualises knowledge by sorting the data into thematic groups (Kovach, 2010). Fernandez (2020) suggests that, "in thematic analysis, the importance of the topic (as defined by the researcher) prevails as the criterion for collecting, organising and interpreting data" (p. 102), resulting in fragmented knowledge. Kovach (2010) notes that grouping knowledge in themes is inconsistent with making meaning in a holistic manner. Therefore, this conventional analysis of research data could be considered incompatible with the horizontal methodologies that have guided this study.

However, as I stated at the beginning of this chapter, it is not the method which determines the characteristics of a methodology, but rather how that method is incorporated into the research paradigm (Kovach, 2020). In order to address similar issues when analysing her data in a participatory and culturally-affirming way, Fernandez (2020) used a series of writing strategies to ensure the inclusion of contextual information, as well as the integrity of her participants' narratives. She included the use of creole orthography in transcripts, captured prosodic data and cross-referenced fragments that are included in different sections to maintain a thread that portrays the account of each participant. Similarly, in her study about the approaches to indigenous research using a tribal methodology, Kovach (2010) resorted to a mixed-method approach. She presented transcripts of the stories offered by the participants, which offered contextualised knowledge before presenting the thematic analysis of the same data to draw further meaning from it.

Corona Berkin (2020a) highlights the importance of contextualisation and interconnectedness for the horizontal production of knowledge. She calls for an analysis that helps understand social events from multiple perspectives, not just from the perspective of the researcher. It is in this spirit that I first present a transcript of the dialogues themselves as a way of prioritising the service users' voices and honouring their stories and experiences. Moreover, I believe that once the dialogues themselves have been introduced, the information in the themes will be more easily contextualised. The separation into themes will help the process of connecting service users' knowledge. This would allow me to remain true to the horizontal methodologies that informed this whole research, while still directly answering the research questions, working within the constraints and expectations imposed on this master's thesis.

The third category of qualitative writing, i.e. the interpretation of the themes acquired through analysis, was conducted together with two out of the four interpreting service users who participated in the one-on-one dialogues, three professional English-Spanish interpreters, one community representative from ALAC and myself. The aim of the group dialogue was to answer my third research question<sup>12</sup> in a horizontal manner. According to Kaltmeier and Corona Berkin (2012), it is important to create these horizontal situations through research so that different voices can be heard in a context of discursive equality. Polyphony is seen to reduce the role of the analyser and limit the authority of the researcher so that their interpretation is only one of the possible perspectives (Kaltmeier, 2012).

#### 4.2.1 One-on-one dialogues

In interpreting research, interpreting service users seem to be hard to find and engage with. R. Edwards et al. (2005) focused on users' experiences of interpreters in the United Kingdom and incorporated bilingual research assistants who oversaw the access to the participants through a combination of their own personal networks and community organisations. The authors highlighted the difficulty in successfully getting users to participate, with research assistants often having "to dedicate much time and effort to establish a relationship of trust with potential research participants and persuading them to be interviewed" (R. Edwards et al., 2005, p. 79). According to Corona Berkin (Corona Berkin, 2020a), however, research can be sustained when there is reciprocity and all sides are gaining knowledge. The horizontal understanding

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<sup>12</sup> How do interpreting service users think their perceptions should be incorporated into the interpreter's practice?

of reciprocity goes beyond a simple economic exchange and involves the mutual advantage of all members of the community.

In this regard, I believe that my position as a Latin American seeking to meet other Latin Americans to create new knowledge about interpreting together was, in fact, more conducive to engagement. When I asked these interpreting service users about their motivations to participate in this research, the key drivers included a feeling of appreciation and gratitude towards the interpreters they had worked with; an interest in the topic and a desire to contribute to the creation of new knowledge; a feeling of fraternity towards fellow Latin Americans; and, more specifically, a feeling of sisterhood among women. For my part, during the dialogues I expressed an interest in changing interpreting service provision; improving users' experiences and their lives in Aotearoa; closing the gap between interpreters' behaviours in the field and interpreting theory; and getting closer to the Latin American community in Aotearoa. I discovered this last motivation during the research project itself, which took place in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Traveling and border restrictions meant I was unable to return home to Argentina for an uncertain amount of time. During that period, this research and the connections I formed with those in similar situations to mine served to expand not only my support network, but also my understanding of home.

I believe that the nature of the horizontal knowledge exchange also contributed to engagement. "You have asked me so many things. Now I'm asking you", one of the interlocutors (Alfredo) said during the first one-on-one dialogue. Asymmetry is reinforced by one-way questions (Briones, 2020). Instead, horizontal dialogues are spaces where all interlocutors can alternate between the positions of speaker and listener, each with their own contextual and background knowledge (Cornejo & Rufer, 2020). When all interlocutors can position themselves as subjects, different voices can



be heard. This polyphony helps to reduce the researcher's authority, placing their vision and interpretation as only one possible perspective (Kaltmeier, 2012).

For this research project, I participated in four one-on-one dialogues with Spanish-speaking interpreting service users in Aotearoa who had worked with interpreters in the past: Alfredo López, Carlos Mosquera, Julie Gomez Pardo and Gabriela Nicoletta. An advertisement in Spanish was posted on social media, distributed through Latin American community-based organisations and sent via email through existing networks to engage with members of the Spanish-speaking community in Aotearoa. Following a horizontal perspective, participation in the research is based on transparency and participative choices (Kaltmeier, 2012). For this reason, both the Aotearoa Latin America Community (ALAC) organisation and the individuals who participated in the one-on-one dialogues were able to recommend others whom they thought would have knowledge to contribute to the conversation.

Of the four service users who participated, two had a refugee background (Alfredo and Carlos) and two had an immigrant background (Julie and Gabriela). Two of them were men, and two were women. Alfredo, Carlos and Julie are Colombian, although only Alfredo and Carlos arrived in Aotearoa under the New Zealand Refugee Quota Programme. Alfredo and Carlos's arrival is consistent with the second wave of Latin American refugees in Aotearoa, who were mainly coming from Colombia (Sanchez, 2016). Julie and Gabriela migrated here as part of the group of Latin Americans who have been migrating to Aotearoa in the search of a better lifestyle (Dürr, 2011). This heterogenous group of people offered a multiplicity of experiences and various types of knowledge from different perspectives. The aim, however, was not to make the findings generalisable, as the latter is not of concern in the case of purposive sampling (Emmel, 2013).

## Videos

During the one-on-one dialogues, pre-recorded videos of acted scenarios were used to illustrate certain interpreting dilemmas, as digital artefacts are an efficient way to inspire comments and stimulate engagement among the different parties involved in the research (Mitchell et al., 2018). The videos portray a scenario involving catheter-care discharge for a patient who has gone into urinary retention. In cases such as this, patients in Aotearoa usually have to wait about two weeks before they can see a urologist, so they have to manage the catheter themselves during that time. Instructions provided by nurses at discharge include information about cleanliness, what to expect, what the point of the catheter is, concerning signs, and how to sleep with it. In this case, the whole situation would be managed and discharged in the Emergency Department, a setting which was chosen because it is a highly time-sensitive area which is more likely to place both the interpreter and the patient in problematic situations.

The scenario was written in consultation with a practising Registered Nurse based on her knowledge and experience, and two videos were recorded based on it. In the first video, which will be referred to as Video 1 hereafter, the interpreter takes a direct approach, defined by Hale (2007) as that which “renders each turn accurately from one speaker to the other, leaving the decision-making to the authors of the utterances” (p. 42). The interpreter dilemmas I devised for this video are the following:

- 1) The interpreter replied to the nurse’s small talk instead of interpreting and letting the patient answer himself, thus limiting the relationship he could have established with the nurse.
- 2) The interpreter asked the nurse if she had worked with an interpreter before, but did not ask the patient.

- 3) The patient asked a question because he heard a number that he recognised (“two weeks”) and wanted to know what it was about. He interrupted and spoke over the nurse, and the interpreter did not manage turn-taking to ensure the patient’s understanding nor tried to step in to clarify the confusion. The nurse regained the floor and the situation resulted in some information not being properly conveyed to the patient.
- 4) After the consultation with the nurse, before the interpreter left, the patient asked for the interpreter’s notes because he seemingly did not understand parts of what was being said. To this, the interpreter said that, according to NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013), the interpreter cannot offer medical information nor advice and that interpreters cannot overstep the boundaries of their role as communication facilitators. The patient replied that he will Google the information that he needs.

The behaviour of the interpreter in this video focuses on non-involvement and aligns more closely with the expectations imposed by the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013). It is also more closely aligned with the conduit model of interpreting (as defined in Section 3.1 The role of the interpreter), particularly in the case of dilemmas three and four listed above. However, it also shows poor interpreter behaviour which would be considered unethical by those standards, but which are common problems in interpreting practice. In the case of the first dilemma listed above, not translating the nurse’s small talk to the patient can affect the relationship between those parties, as it has been argued that small talk can help medical professionals build rapport with their patients (Holmes & Major, 2002). In the case of the second dilemma above, the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013) provide for the possibility of interpreters offering “an explanation of their role in line with the principles of [the] Code” (p. 3) and securing “satisfactory working conditions for the performance of their duties” (p. 3). However,

the interpreter is supposed to remain impartial and address both the patient and the nurse, keeping everyone informed.

In the second video, which will be referred to as Video 2 hereafter, the interpreter takes a more active approach, further away from the conduit model. The instances of interpreter agency and intervention in the second video were adapted from Baker–Shenk (1991), who talked to practising interpreters working with the deaf community in the United States to identify a series of concrete ways for interpreters to take on the role of allies. The interpreter dilemmas I devised for this video based on that information are the following:

- 1) The interpreter is dressed in a similarly informal outfit to the one worn by the patient.
- 2) The interpreter translated the small-talk and re-directed to the patient. The patient got an opportunity to tell the nurse how he was feeling.
- 3) The interpreter asked the patient first whether he had worked with an interpreter before and asked if he had any preferences as to how she should be interpreting. Then she explained what was happening to the nurse and asked her if she had worked with an interpreter before.
- 4) When the patient recognised the number and asked for clarification about what was happening in two weeks, the interpreter stopped, addressed the concern and managed the information and turn-taking to ensure that the patient's question was being answered.
- 5) The interpreter managed the floor by stopping the nurse when she was going too fast and asked for clarification on technical terminology instead of translating it directly.

- 6) The interpreter asked the patient whether it would be useful to have the information in writing and, when the patient agreed, she asked the nurse for some information in writing.
- 7) While the nurse was outside of the room, the interpreter double-checked with the patient whether there were any other questions he would like to ask before she left and the consultation was over.

The Registered Nurse with whom the consultation took place acted as a nurse in the videos. The role of the interpreter was played by a professional English–Spanish interpreter from my personal network and the patient was played by a Mexican man who is a contact of said interpreter. These actors were chosen to make the videos look as natural as possible, and none of the actors participated in the subsequent dialogues for knowledge creation. After the videos were recorded, I transcribed the dialogue, translated it into Spanish and created subtitles for both of them. Although I would have preferred to create these videos in collaboration with service users and the Latin American community in Aotearoa, time constraints forced me to rely on existing data and my own experience as a professional interpreter working in Aotearoa. There is, therefore, scope to further horizontalise the production, ownership and use of visual artefacts such as these with the aim of using them as tools for dialogue and engagement.

#### 4.2.2 Thematic analysis

I used NVivo 12 software for this stage of analysis to arrive at the different themes inductively. I then used these themes to find answers to my first two research questions:

- 1) How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter? (RQ#1)
- 2) What are interpreting service users' perceptions on allyship and social justice in relation to the interpreting profession? (RQ#2)

During the transcription and translation of the audio, I engaged in the process of immersion, which involves a repeated and active reading of the data (V. Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcript and my initial reflections in Spanish were shared with the service users for approval and remarks. Before and throughout the coding process, I used analytic memos to record my decisions and reflect on emergent patterns and the relationships with my interlocutors (Saldaña, 2013). The coding process involved three cycles. During the first cycle, the codes were developed following Saldaña's (2013) coding manual. The codes I created included a combination of descriptive codes with information on the topic that was being discussed; in vivo codes including words or phrases used by my interlocutors and by myself during the dialogues; process codes involving gerunds to connote actions; and emotion codes to label feelings (Saldaña, 2013). I used in vivo codes as much as possible to prioritise users' voices. The second cycle involved the refinement and rearrangement of the codes into themes, which were then further polished during the third cycle to create the final thematic frameworks. These thematic frameworks will be presented in Section 5.2 before the analysis of the themes. The codebook can be found in Appendix C. *Codebook*.

#### 4.2.3 Group dialogue

The group dialogue involved two service users, three professional interpreters and one community representative. Out of the two service users who participated in the group dialogue, one was an immigrant woman and the other was a man with a refugee background so that both perspectives would be included in the group dialogue. In terms of the community representative, ALAC independently decided who would represent them. Their presence was important not only because they had expressed their interest in participating during the first stages of consultation and design of the project, but also because "community organisations, resources and

networks are a crucial source of help and support for those needing to access interpreting services” (Alexander et al., 2004, p. 33).

To find Spanish–English professional interpreters in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), I used the online directory of the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters. All interpreters included in this list undergo a “rigorous system of qualification approval and admittance” (NZSTI, n.d., para. 1), with full members being “the most highly qualified practitioners in the chosen language pair” (NZSTI, n.d., para. 2). At the time of this study, there were eight interpreters listed as full members under the English–Spanish language pair, including myself and the interpreter who had participated as an actor in the videos created for the one-on-one dialogues. Out of the six interpreters I contacted, four of them were interested in participating, but only two were available when I was organising the meeting. I had to source a third interpreter from my own personal network. It is important to clarify that this interpreter had all the qualifications required to be listed in the directory, but was not a member of NZSTI by choice.

The three professional interpreters who participated had a varied range of experiences. One of them had worked as an interpreter in Aotearoa for decades in a range of legal and medical settings. A second interpreter had a specialisation in conference interpreting, with limited experience in community interpreting. The third came from an academic and research background. All these parties are considered stakeholders with different kinds of knowledge that can help shape the future of interpreting, as well as a vested interest in the new knowledge created through this dialogue.

The meeting was held at the Auckland University of Technology because it was more convenient for the majority, particularly the service users. Before the meeting,

each person was sent a summary of the themes from the one-on-one dialogues and the characteristics of an ally (see Appendix B. *Tool/s*). I used different fonts and colours to differentiate my words from the words of the service users and from the literature I was including in the analysis. Through this polyphonic text, I wanted to highlight the dialogic nature of all the different knowledges entering into a silent and symmetrical dialogue (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). This text was both a product of the one-on-one dialogues with service users and the object of analysis of the group dialogue. At the end of the document, I shared the three questions that we would try to answer together during the meeting:

- 1) What are the ideal characteristics of an interpreter?
- 2) What excites me about the ally model in interpreting? What worries me or stops me from implementing it?
- 3) What does the model look like in practice? What do we have to do?

On the day of the meeting, I presented the information in the summary of the themes (Appendix B. *Tool/s*) using PowerPoint. Due to the heated discussions that were held throughout my presentation, we only had time to address the first of the three questions directly. In order to ensure discursive equality, the answers to the first question were written down independently in a piece of paper that was later attached to a poster (Figure 6). We then read out and discussed each answer one by one, clarified any information or misunderstandings, and modified each card until we all agreed with it. The interpretations arising from the group dialogue will be presented in Section 5.3, together with its limitations and difficulties.

### 4.3 Summary

This chapter explained the relationship between the methods used in this project and the horizontal methodologies which informed it. The design evolved



throughout the research process as I interacted with each one of my interlocutors. Instead of the planned semi-structured interviews, the research included four one-on-one dialogues and one group dialogue. As a part of the Latin American immigrant community involved in the project, behaving like an outsider and pursuing objectivity was incompatible with my identity and my understanding of research. Therefore, I positioned myself as one of the interlocutors, and the project used dialogues instead of interviews as the main research method.

A detailed description of the three interrelated stages of knowledge creation (description, analysis and interpretation) was presented together with an explanation of the interplay between the stages and the research paradigm. Moreover, Alfredo López, Carlos Mosquera, Julie Gomez Pardo and Gabriela Nicoletta—the four interpreting service users involved in this research—were introduced. Their knowledge and their voices can be found in Chapter 5 below, which develops the process of knowledge creation through the three stages of description, analysis and interpretation explained in this chapter.

## Chapter 5. Knowledge Creation

As discussed in Chapter 4. Methodology, I will be presenting the knowledge created throughout the research process in three stages. The first stage of knowledge creation involved four one-on-one dialogues with interpreting service users. The transcripts of these dialogues will constitute the description stage of qualitative writing (Wolcott, 1994). This will be followed by the second stage presenting the analysis of the one-on-one dialogues and discussing the thematic findings. The third stage will include the interpretation of the dialogues, which was conducted through a group dialogue. As previously stated, even though I have separated the process of knowledge creation in three stages for the purpose of presenting it in this thesis, the stages are interrelated rather than clearly distinct. The last section (Section 5.4 Incorporating allyship and social justice into spoken-language interpreting) summarises the three stages of knowledge creation to answer the research questions more directly.

### 5.1 Description

In this section, I will present the transcripts of the horizontal one-on-one dialogues with Alfredo, Carlos, Julie and Gabriela. Horizontal methodologies understand that dialogue is about speaking *with* the other, not *about* the other (Kaltmeier, 2017). Therefore, I begin this chapter on knowledge creation with the transcripts of the dialogues to allow readers to engage with these users' knowledge directly. However, the full transcript is over 35 000 words long, which means that, due to word limits, I have had to summarise the contributions, taking care to preserve each interlocutor's essence and their conversational style.

Each one of the interpreting service users who participated in the one-on-one dialogues was sent a copy of their transcript in Spanish for their approval, with some preliminary annotations about emergent patterns, themes and concepts (discussed in Section 5.2 Analysis). They were all invited to add, delete or modify any information in the transcripts or the annotations. I had to translate them into English because the dialogues were in Spanish, so I used the process of translation to prompt my own reflections on the way each dialogue changed me and this research. As developed in Chapter 2. Research Paradigm, horizontal methodologies see dialogue with others as one of the most efficient ways to gain self-awareness (Corona Berkin, 2020a). Similarly, Kovach (2010) notes that insight comes from the self-in-relation, as the process cannot be separated from the product because they belong together and complete each other (Kovach, 2010, p. 131). For this reason, I have included these reflections after each one of the dialogue transcripts. The latter have been single-spaced and italicised for the purpose of clarity.

### **5.1.1 A dialogue with Alfredo López: “The line is not right”**

Alfredo is Colombian and arrived in Aotearoa under the Refugee Quota Programme in 2008. At the time of our meeting, he was writing his doctoral thesis at the Auckland University of Technology (AUT), where I am doing my master’s degree. We both share a supervisor, which is how we first got in contact. He chose to meet me at my office at university and, even though we did not know each other before this meeting, we immediately related to each other as student researchers. We exchanged questions, comments and feedback about our theses, and examined our distrust of certain aspects of academia. Having Alfredo in the first dialogue of the data collection process helped me gain confidence. He opened our conversation by saying that “it’s true that [academics] might be experts in their field, but they don’t know everything. There’s always someone who knows something, because nobody knows everything.

One has knowledge and shortcomings like everyone else". The statement works as a summary of the spirit guiding this research and embedded in horizontal methodologies. When I came into this first dialogue, I was not feeling confident about my ability as a researcher and Alfredo's own academic knowledge supplemented mine.

**ALFREDO:**

*When I got to New Zealand, we were taken to the refugee centre in Mangere. There, in order to go to the doctor we started using interpreters. For medical stuff, for stuff with Housing New Zealand. Anything you needed, you sometimes needed an interpreter. Some were there in-house, but in certain special cases, for special meetings, they came and interpreted what you wanted to say or what you were told so as to sign a document. As an interpreter, they explained to you what the document was for and all the other things. So I remember that I felt two things: first, I was happy, on the one, hand because I had someone who could speak for me, but on the other hand I felt disabled, because I would have liked to be able to express myself on my own. But I couldn't understand, so I felt happy because there was someone there. But yeah, disabled on the other hand. Like a mute, rather.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Did you feel like you could make yourself understood through the interpreter or did you feel like it was an impediment?*

**ALFREDO:**

*That it was an impediment. I knew that I couldn't speak on my own at all.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And with the interpreter?*

**ALFREDO:**

*Oh, yeah, I felt good. I even, oh, I had forgotten about it. I even had around 10, 12 sessions with a psychologist there and each session was an hour, an hour and a bit. With an interpreter. And yeah, I felt really well.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*You didn't feel a bit uncomfortable?*

**ALFREDO:**

*No, not at all. Not at all. I even remember that the interpreter was Colombian and no, I felt comfortable. And in those sessions with the psychologist I shared everything openly, I opened my heart, because that's what it was about, right? About being honest. And I talked about everything and felt that a weight had been lifted. So I felt*

*really well. With all of them who interpreted for us there I felt really well. I didn't have any problems with them.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And you didn't have problems feeling that they weren't saying what you wanted to say or that you couldn't communicate? Nothing at all?*

**ALFREDO:**

*I never thought about that because I didn't know any English so, if it happened, I didn't notice. And I didn't care either. I could only see that they were kind towards me and that's what helped me a lot. Their kind attitude.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And when you left the centre?*

**ALFREDO:**

*When we left that place, I was resettled in Hamilton. Same thing in Hamilton, Agustina. I had to go to the doctor, had to go to the psychologist and sometimes to Work and Income. So I had an interpreter from a place that helped refugees there. She was also very kind, very loving, so we went to the doctor with her. Sometimes you need to tell the doctor things that are, like, embarrassing, right? But I was there already and yeah. I didn't feel uncomfortable.*

*Then I had another interpreter around that time. We went to the psychologist and he used to say "Alfredo, after this session with the psychologist, you and I are not friends, we are nothing because there's a code of ethics that says that I can't help, so in the street I can say hi, but we are not friends or anything". From the beginning he stipulated that. It was clear. So because I didn't have a car, he even picked me up from my house and took me to the psychologist and then took me back. He dropped me off and that was it. We wouldn't talk ever again.*

*I felt okay in the sense that he was kind to me, you know? He could have said "no, we'll meet at the psychologists', you know where it is". But no, he went to my house and picked me up in his car and then he dropped me back home, so I saw that as an act of kindness from him. And he was always like that. Very loving. Kind. I saw what all interpreters' behaviour was like. A feeling of going a little bit beyond what was strictly professional. Like some sort of social worker, I think, if you can call them that. But when they tell you that there's a line that you cannot cross because there's a code of ethics, then you're like, ssssssss. That's not right.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*That the line's not right?*

**ALFREDO:**

*That the line is not right.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Because you would prefer that...*

**ALFREDO:**

*That there was a friendship between the two.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And you think that a friendship wouldn't affect the interpreting service or the quality of the services that you are getting?*

**ALFREDO:**

*Not at all because they can have their code of ethics of not disclosing anything, right? And you can be a friend, but you won't disclose anything. And it's even nice to know that you can tell him something and that he won't say anything because of his code of ethics.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And so you don't think that the code of ethics should–*

**ALFREDO:**

*That it should be modified maybe.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And did you ever have a bad experience with an interpreter?*

**ALFREDO:**

*No, never.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Did you ever feel that the interpreter was siding with someone? Or were they impartial?*

**ALFREDO:**

*Right, now that you touch on this, yes. I'll tell you about a situation that may be related to what you're asking. It was when I was depressed. I was angry, depressed, all that. So I was taken to hospital and, there, the psychiatrist came and asked me if I had been thinking about suicide. The interpreter, was telling me: "He is asking if you have tried to kill yourself or if you are hearing voices". When he said that, I was offended.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Offended by the psychiatrist?*

**ALFREDO:**

*By the psychiatrist. I said to the interpreter: "tell him that I'm not crazy, tell him to respect me". So the interpreter made like a side comment and said: "Alfredo, that's his job, do you understand? Do you understand that he has to ask you that? So if you get angry, you're making it worse". He gave me some sort of advice there, right? "If you get angry and show him that you're angry, that's not the solution. Answer the question. Are you hearing voices? If you're not hearing voices, say you're not and that's it. If you are, tell him, but don't go about arguing or making this harder". So I thought: he's right. And I said "no, I am not hearing voices. I am not hearing voices and I'm not thinking about suicide, but I do feel depressed".*

*So I'm mentioning this example because maybe you could have thought that the interpreter was siding with the doctor instead of me, when he was supposed to be there helping me, but that's not the case. I understood that he was saying something reasonable. What he did, rather, was advise me and help me, and I could understand that he was right.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And you think that those interpreter behaviours should be allowed to be a part of the interpreter's role?*

**ALFREDO:**

*What the interpreter did was really helpful. I was out of it, transformed, in a fit of anger. And then I got asked if I was hearing voices, and what does that have to do with my problem! I don't understand. Respect me, I'm not crazy.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And so in that sense it was like the interpreter kind of mediated between your expectations or what you understood from that interaction, and what the psychiatrist was telling you.*

**ALFREDO:**

*That's right. And so I think that the interpreter was really helpful. I think he was being humane because if he hadn't advised me— I mean, he goes a little beyond the protocol. I imagine he has a protocol. If he hadn't, they would have taken me to the respite clinic for who knows how long. Because, Agustina, I'm a controversial person. At that time, I would have started saying stupid stuff to argue with the psychiatrist, but ultimately, where would that lead. I was the one affected. So I couldn't see that, and the interpreter made me see it.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And do you think you took it better coming from Juan<sup>13</sup> [the interpreter] because he is someone you already had a relationship with, instead of this New Zealand psychiatrist? I mean, do you think you would have reacted differently if it was coming from the interpreter or from the psychiatrist?*

**ALFREDO:**

*At that time, I think so. You are blind, you can't see anything, and there's a stranger. And at the time I saw the doctor as an enemy. He won't help you, but rather attack you, stress you out more. In the case of the interpreter, he's there to help you, like a lawyer. I think that what Juan did was very good, Agustina. It helped me. It helped me a lot. If he had not done that, if he hadn't intervened, given advice, gone beyond the protocol he had, the code of ethics, it would have been serious for me, truly. So I think that the*

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<sup>13</sup> A pseudonym has been used for the purposes of anonymity.

*interpreter was humane. He tried to put himself in my shoes, as well as the doctor's shoes, because he was seeing things from the psychiatrist's point of view.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Have you ever heard about the ally theory?*

**ALFREDO:**

*No, never.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*My research has to do with this allyship concept. An ally is a person who commits to engaging in as little prejudice as possible and who actively fights to achieve social justice. So the role of the ally has to be active, like, actively making decisions. And the ally needs to be aware of the world's injustices, understand racism, sexism, all of those things. And they need to do things to tackle those injustices, take action against them. So an ally is aware of the mechanisms of oppression built by the societies we live in. So what I was considering and thinking is whether there is room to see interpreters as allies.*

**ALFREDO:**

*Absolutely, I think there is. I think so. I think he is an ally. In fact, he is there to help you. Because, Agustina, what else can you call someone who is there to help you. Because that's what he is there to do, help you get your words heard by someone who doesn't understand your language and the other way around. So if that isn't an ally, then what is it?*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Yes, but the code of ethics says that we need to be impartial parties between you and the doctor.*

**ALFREDO:**

*But in this case, for example, let's say I don't speak English, like at the beginning, when I arrived. I have to go to the doctor. I'm getting a medical examination and I don't speak English. The doctor doesn't speak Spanish. So I always asked myself: Who is more interested in this, the doctor or the patient? In this case, it's the patient, because it's me who's sick. I need to get better. And that man or woman who is interpreting for me is there to help me get my medical examination. So they're on my side in this case. There might be some principles saying he is neutral, but in reality he is being more useful to me than to the doctor. That's what I think. At that time, he's more useful to me, he's more of an ally to me than to the doctor.*

*In this case, you can see impartiality to mean that he's there as a bridge to transmit from here to there and from there to here. It is understandable that, according to those principles, the interpreter won't be friends with the doctor nor the person that he is helping, but how would it affect the situation in this case if there was a friendship*



*between the interpreter and the person he's helping? That would go against the New Zealand code of ethics, right? The ethical parameters for interpreters.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Yes.*

**ALFREDO:**

*But what's the point of neutrality there!? I honestly do not understand. I do appreciate them not disclosing what is being said, so that what was spoken in that conversation doesn't become public, so that it remains confidential. Otherwise, there's no logic behind being neutral. I don't see the logic behind it.*

*There are people from my country, for example, people I know, who have come with a lot of trauma. There are some that are more secretive, and they don't trust anyone. Anyone. And they tell you that themselves: "I don't even trust my own shadow", they say. So it is understandable that someone like that won't trust the interpreter and would rather they do them the favour of translating, and nothing else. With some distance, then.*

*For that type of clients, you need to respect that. It's true. But if there is another client, at least in my case, I would have wanted that there was a friendship with my interpreter. Maybe one day I could have gone to their house, or they could have come to mine and chat.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And do you think that, in the case of those people who do not trust anyone, if they don't trust the interpreter, they won't trust the doctor...*

**ALFREDO:**

*Well, there you go. It's interesting because I've heard them speaking badly of the interpreter, saying "that interpreter interpreted me incorrectly". But how do you know that he did if you can't speak English? They say that because they went to see someone with some authority in order to get something, get some help, and because they were denied it, they say that they were not interpreted properly.*

*I always felt like being my interpreters' friend, maybe have them over at mine for a meal, things like that, but they couldn't because there was a code of ethics telling them that there was a line. I always thought that it was rubbish, pardon my expression. Oh! I forgot to tell you something. Sometime later, one of my interpreters moved abroad, then returned to Hamilton later and we became friends.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Your old interpreter?*

**ALFREDO:**

*Yes, she interpreted for me in Mangere and there I spoke a lot about my personal life and my problems in Colombia. She knew everything about that and, even so, we*

*became friends and she visited me with her husband, we shared meals, went out and everything. We had a good friendship.*

*With the other interpreter I could never do that because he was still working there, so I couldn't bypass that. If he had become my friend, he would have lost credibility. So, at present, I'm not in touch with him anymore. I moved to Auckland and I lost contact with him because of his work and all that.*

*So I think it's unfair, Agustina, that system. I respect it, yes, I respect it, but it's sad because it's like giving candy to a child. The interpreter is kind to you, interprets for you, and you see him as a friend! An ally! But when you want more he says no, this is as far as we go, there is a line, you can't go past it, so you feel disappointed. I don't think this is how it should be.*

*When I arrived in New Zealand I put plastic containers, bottles, cans, everything inside a cardboard box because I didn't know that, in Hamilton, you had to put them inside a green bin. And the rubbish truck came and saw that cardboard box, you know? And they didn't take it, they left it there. Another day I went to buy petrol for the lawn mower using a white plastic container. I went to the petrol station and they just looked at me, but nobody explained anything to me and they didn't sell me anything. Another day we were going to buy a car, so we had to have it looked at by the AA, who made this long report. "The car has all of this, yes, you can buy it, it's fine, and there's a small screw that needs tightening". And we paid a lot of money for that, I think it was 700 dollars for it all, and they wouldn't–*

**AGUSTINA:**

*They wouldn't tighten the screw.*

**ALFREDO:**

*Because it was not a part of the inspection. What I mean by this is that sometimes New Zealand systems are strict. It is what it is, not a millimetre beyond it, not a millimetre short of that. So that's what I saw in the first video<sup>14</sup>, that the interpreter was following the protocol and nothing else. Wouldn't go beyond that. The world can end, but this is my protocol and I won't go beyond the line. And I think that's not right. It's ridiculous. Interpreters should speak more. It's like when you're writing your thesis and sometimes you need to digress and explain something, right? I don't know if you've done that. I do it sometimes. When it's too long, I add a footnote because otherwise the reader gets lost. We must try to get others to understand what we are saying, right? So if the interpreter has a little more understanding, they can digress and explain. That was always my experience, Agustina. They would always digress and explain. They would go beyond the script and offer me advice. I never saw it as them sticking their noses in my life. I thought "yeah, they're right".*

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<sup>14</sup> Video 1, as described in Section 4.2.1.

*Because, on the other hand, you're there like, a bit nervous. So you appreciate a helping hand who can help you see what they are asking of you. For example, a case in which Work and Income wants to cut down your benefit, which has happened to a lot of people here. And maybe the interpreter can help you out and tell you: "look, be careful. They are asking you this. Be careful, if you answer that--"*

*It's not that we're dishonest, it's just that this is how it works! Maybe the person gives an answer which is misinterpreted and they cut down their benefit. It has happened. Work and Income decided "you know what? I'll cut down the benefit". And if you give them the papaya, like we say in Colombia, that is, the opportunity for them to take it away from you...*

*But if the interpreter is humane and tells you "look, be careful with this", I think that's not wrong.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Aren't you afraid that interpreters are not prepared to make those types of decisions given that we are not trained that way? We don't learn about social justice. We don't learn about humanitarian services. We learn about language, culture, the code of ethics. The content we get is different.*

**ALFREDO:**

*You should. You should because, can you imagine, for example... I'm asking you now. You have asked me so many things. Now I'm asking you. What do you think would happen if there were no interpreters? In a country like New Zealand, for example, with so many cultures, people speaking so many different languages who cannot speak English. What would happen if there weren't any interpreters in New Zealand, Agustina?*

**AGUSTINA:**

*I think there would be a lot less communication between cultures and that people who are immigrants here could not access the services--*

**ALFREDO:**

*And what would happen as a consequence of that?*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Well... Everything goes to hell.*

**ALFREDO:**

*It would be chaos. New Zealand would collapse. Everything would come crumbling down. So, why doesn't it? Thanks to interpreters. They are a great help for the New Zealand system, and the world in general, in countries such as the United States, Canada and other multicultural ones. So they're very valuable people, truly.*

From this dialogue with Alfredo, I learned that even considerable interpreter interventions like the one that took place during his appointment with the psychiatrist can be considered justified, an act of compassion. Alfredo highlighted interpreters' humanity, a concept which I incorporated, reproduced and resorted to in the following dialogues of this study. Our exchange confirmed many of the conclusions that I had reached as a practising interpreter and revisited some of the topics discussed during my consultation with Esteban from ALAC (Section 2.2 Consultation with ALAC). Like Esteban, Alfredo questioned the interpreter role, expanded on it and compared it to that of social workers. Alfredo used rich comparisons and metaphors to speak about the inaccessibility of the New Zealand system upon his arrival, touching on a variety of settings, from understanding the recycling system to navigating Work and Income<sup>15</sup> benefits. These comments were reminiscent of Esteban's remarks on Latin Americans' vulnerability, social inequality and otherness in Aotearoa. The lack of English proficiency was compared to a disability in both dialogues, highlighting interpreting service users' dependency, as well as interpreters' power. The trust issues mentioned by ALAC staff members during the consultation featured in this dialogue as well. Within a broader context of inequality, Alfredo portrayed interpreters' allyship and siding with users as a matter of utility and necessity, and he set the tone for the other dialogues I had throughout this research. It was Alfredo who suggested who I should talk to next, connecting me with Carlos, someone I would not have been able to reach otherwise.

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<sup>15</sup> Work and Income is a service offered by the Ministry of Social Development to help people into work and provide income support (Work and Income, n.d.).

### 5.1.2 A dialogue with Carlos Mosquera: “South Americans who help all Latin Americans who come to this country”

Like Alfredo, Carlos is Colombian and arrived in Aotearoa under the Refugee Quota Programme in 2015. At the time of our meeting, he was living in Kirikiriroa (Hamilton), working as a gardener and about to start his English language course. I travelled to Kirikiriroa (Hamilton) to talk to him, and we met outside a community centre where he had been having a meeting. I found establishing a horizontal relationship with Carlos much more challenging. When we met, our age difference resulted in my use of the second-person pronoun “usted” as a form of address to indicate respect. Carlos called me “niña Agustina”, which translates to “girl”. I found this to be one of the most challenging dialogues. I was nervous about traveling to Kirikiriroa for it and not being able to convey why I was there and what I was doing. However, Carlos’s warmth and predisposition made it a positive exchange of very different knowledges.

#### **CARLOS:**

*Because of the interpreters’ help I have a job now. I’m working with Kiwi employers. When I first got here I couldn’t understand anything so the interpreters connected me with people for whom I could do casual work. And now, after a while, I don’t need interpreters anymore, because I can take orders from the employees or managers directly.*

*Some minutes ago I got a call from one of my volunteers. As refugees, we have volunteer families who welcome us here. In South America we would call them sponsors. She told me that she’s got another spot. So I’d have three in total. I have two fixed clients now. I work as a gardener, so this spot will be the third. The fruit season is coming to an end, so in the winter someone needs to look after the garden.*

#### **AGUSTINA:**

*Excellent! And how long have you been in New Zealand?*

#### **CARLOS:**

*It was five years last October.*

#### **AGUSTINA:**

*Five years. I've been here for seven, but I already spoke English when I arrived, which means that my experience as an immigrant is completely different from yours.*

**CARLOS:**

*Well, immigrants must come here with some English, while refugees come to start from scratch.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Yes, yes. So you were telling me that interpreting services were really useful when you got here. Do you mind if I ask you why you have decided to participate in this research project that I'm conducting?*

**CARLOS:**

*Precisely because I'm grateful to the interpreters. When we arrived at Mangere, Auckland, we were translated by an Argentinian woman and a Mexican woman. And a Chilean. So they're South Americans who help all Latin Americans who come to this country. And everyone who arrives might need a medical treatment, right? So I didn't know that I had a colon problem, and I got diagnosed and operated on here. And there was an interpreter right beside me while I was sedated and up until I woke up.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*So you went through all of that with the help of the interpreting services. Was that the first time that you worked with an interpreter?*

**CARLOS:**

*No, before that. In Mangere we were always, always sponsored by an interpreter. They translate in general for the entire group. For all the cultures, even.*

*And here in Hamilton each person gets an interpreter. The needs might vary, right? If it's at the doctor's, it might be an interpreter who specialises exclusively on helping in that area.*

*But if it's someone who needs to go to court or someone who needs a lawyer, then there are other interpreters because they are really very, very specialised in what they do, and they do it with love.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*They do it with love? And is there a difference between the interpreters in Mangere and the specialised interpreters? Is it more or less the same, in your experience? In the medical context, for example.*

**CARLOS:**

*I think it's almost better to have the help of a local interpreter, so, in Hamilton, as the time in Mangere was limited. Sometimes you have doubts left that you can't clarify in that time. Here, on the other hand, the translation takes as long as it has to. The time limits given to the interpreters are no longer important. He can extend his hours. As I was saying, the interpreter who helped with my surgery could stay however many– She*

*didn't have a set time. She stayed and, when I woke up, I even asked her: what time is my surgery? And she said: no, you are done.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*[Agustina laughs] You've been operated on already!*

**CARLOS:**

*Yeah, it was a great satisfaction. And a lot of affection. That was the same interpreter who found me a job.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And what type of relationship do you have with that interpreter? I mean, do you see each other beyond the appointments? Do you talk?*

**CARLOS:**

*Mmm yes, yes. I sometimes visit her at her house. Yes. Even when they're not allowed because they are official interpreters, right? Working for Immigration and stuff. But yeah, we have a relationship, yes. With some of them, it's a close relationship.*

*I visit my interpreter to thank her for finding me a job because I love to work. So I bring her fruits. Not when she's working, but rather I go visit her at her house. She lives with her two children, who are adults already, single. So I go visit her and I bring her fruits and vegetables.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*You bring them to her?*

**CARLOS:**

*As a thank you.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Do you think that this type of relationship should be allowed? Because when they tell us that we need to limit the contact that we have with the clients, the reason why they tell us that is because, very often, as interpreters we have access to very private information. Often, people work with interpreters in the area of mental health, with psychologists, therapy, private medical issues, so there's a fear that the client will feel–*

**CARLOS:**

*Impacted.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Yes, that the client feels that having a relationship with the interpreter will make it uncomfortable or–*

**CARLOS:**

*To look into this topic a bit more, when I arrived at Mangere, they chose my case, the reason why I came to the third country as a refugee, and a Colombian interpreter had to tell my story before the Prime Minister who was in office in 2015, who was John Key, right? He visited Mangere with some 14 businesspeople from different nationalities*

*with the aim of investing in the building. To accommodate the refugees. So my case was chosen to be presented before him. And when I was narrating my troubles in Colombia, the interpreter said “Carlos, please, make it easy because it’s not easy for me to translate everything that you are saying”. So I said: “I’m sorry, but I’m narrating all of my issues, the journey that brought me here today”, right? And, in my story, I was talking about how, during the conflict, I had to see animals die. And I know that if men confront men, they are guilty of their actions, but animals are innocent. They shouldn’t be involved in a conflict, right? So the Prime Minister was delighted because my issues merited the investment in Mangere. And I used the old building, which was comfortable, but not as comfortable as the one there is today. So as a consequence of those issues in my family, which are the reason why we are here today and which were narrated to the Prime Minister, now the new refugees can enjoy a very comfortable building. So when you are saying that there must be a close relationship between interpreters and the victims, well, yes, there should be. Look at the results of my story.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*I totally understand what you’re saying, but when the interpreter tells you “Carlos make it easy for me because I can’t interpret all of this”, when you tell me that, it seems like the interpreter didn’t want to let you tell your story. So that’s why we have a code of ethics which says that we need to interpret everything, that we can’t omit nor add anything. Those types of attitudes sometimes make it so that a person cannot express themselves fully or how they want. So those are the problems. That’s the other side of having too close of a relationship with someone. It was lucky that you could say “no, this is my story and I have to tell it”, but maybe someone else would have said “oh, okay, sure, I’ll shut up”.*

**CARLOS:**

*Yeah. If we share the same nationality, I mean, Colombian, I understand that she would have felt concerned if a public such as the one that was listening to us in English heard her translation, because of the serious issues in my country, but I helped her understand that, often, saying the truth is important and has results.*

*And here, I was straightforward with my interpreter, the one who was there during my surgery, and nowadays she’s benefiting from the fruit I bring her, the vegetables I bring her, our close friendship... And that’s the result of being sincere and affectionate. Having close ties.*

*And yes, there are problems. Not for me personally, but from acquaintances who have been impacted because they haven’t received a full translation of what a person was saying in a different language. People who have been told half of the content and have been affected by it.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Interpreters who are not transmitting everything that is being said?*



**CARLOS:**

*Yes, because, given that the person doesn't understand what the other is saying in English, they under-translate.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Because interpreters don't understand what is being said to them so, when they translate it, they don't translate everything?*

**CARLOS:**

*Yeah. That's not the case for me because, as I said, I'm very grateful and that has not happened to me, but some acquaintances have told me that. The thing is that I rely on the favours of God in my daily life, so that's why that hasn't happened to me.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*You think that helps you trust people, trust your interpreters and have a relationship with them which is more true and real and-*

**CARLOS:**

*And sincere! Yes, that's right. To have a close relationship without that affecting me.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Right. And so you think it's better to have a close relationship with the interpreters? That it offers better results when you need to be interpreted and make yourself heard?*

**CARLOS:**

*Exactly. Make them understand that there is a need to sincerely express the whole issue so that it can be resolved.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Because that which isn't talked about cannot be solved.*

**CARLOS:**

*It remains hidden, exactly.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Okay. So, is there anything else that you would like to tell me or add?*

**CARLOS:**

*Mmmm the truth is that I have been very satisfied with the people who have been helping me with the interpreting and I don't think it is too demanding for the refugees. Rather, I notice the affection from the interpreters' side, an understanding of the need.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*The need for interpreting? In general, you've had interpreters who understand people's needs.*

**CARLOS:**

*Who instantly place themselves in the shoes of the victims in order to attune themselves to the topic they are translating. In fact, I admire the interpreters' job because, when they're doing it, they don't think about themselves too much. Even if it*

*is their job and they benefit from it. But they think about the other person's great need because, without the interpreter, that person would be totally lost. When someone comes and talks to you in a language that you don't understand, you feel like running away. So the interpreter brings you closer to that person and you can find that familiarity with the interpreter and the person who is talking to you.*

During this conversation I found, again, that the role of the interpreter in practice can differ considerably from the theory. Carlos seemed close with his interpreters, and he knew about their lives, their families and their homes. However, like Alfredo and Esteban, he was aware of the limitations imposed on professional interpreters. In spite of these limitations, it seemed to me that he had decided that having sincere and affectionate relationships was more important than respecting professional codes of ethics and conduct. Previously, Alfredo had talked about the need for interpreters to be humane. Similarly, Carlos conceptualised interpreters as Latin Americans selflessly helping their Latin American brothers and sisters. In return, Carlos gave back to that same community by sharing his story to secure better facilities for the refugees to come, as well as by sharing the (literal) fruit of his labour. Carlos revisited the sense of Latin American fraternity that I first discussed with Esteban during my consultation with ALAC. He understood the close ties he had established with his interpreters as drivers of trust and rapport. Like Esteban and Alfredo, Carlos also associated interpreters' power with service users' vulnerability, as "without the interpreter, [the service user] would be totally lost". However, from this dialogue I learnt to think of interpreting as part of a bigger picture, made up by people helping each other out.

### 5.1.3 A dialogue with Julie Gomez Pardo: “Break the ice because I truly want you to leave”

Julie is also Colombian, but unlike Alfredo and Carlos, she migrated here with her husband and six-month-old baby from Chile in 2018. We got in contact through a Facebook group of Latin American feminist women, and she chose to meet me at her house in the North Shore. Establishing horizontality with Julie was eased by our shared feminist and immigrant backgrounds. The Argentinian feminism which indirectly brought me to this study by helping me gain awareness of systemic inequality had brought me to Julie as well. When reflecting on interpreting and the reasons for their participation, Carlos spoke about Latin Americans helping each other, while Julie put it in terms of women helping women. At the beginning of our dialogue, I shared with her some information about my own journey and used my participation in the Argentinian feminist movement to contextualise my research interests and explain what led me to where I am now. She reciprocated by sharing her deeply personal experiences upon her arrival in this country.

#### **AGUSTINA:**

*What is your experience with interpreters here in New Zealand?*

#### **JULIE:**

*It was in the medical field. Twice, one which wasn't a full experience because it was in the GP's office when I first got here, because I had these doubts about the healthcare system, right? I arrived with a six-month-old baby. He was very young, so even the immunisation system... I didn't understand anything. I knew that my son was due the next vaccine according to the Chilean schedule, but everything here was very different, so I struggled a little. My husband is bilingual so he acted more or less like an interpreter, but he had to go to work so I was the one who had to take the boy, right? They said that if I didn't know the language they would provide an interpreter, but it didn't happen. They forgot about it. And well, obviously... I feel that English here in New Zealand is super strange, right? I thought I had a level of English that would at least let me ask where the bathroom is, but no, nothing. It is crazy. Truly crazy. So I did*

*get very frustrated that first time because the interpreter never arrived and I didn't understand anything.*

*I also had to change my contraceptive method, for example, because it wasn't the same one as the one I had in Chile. And I was breastfeeding, so I was using a contraceptive method that allowed me to breastfeed, right? So that it wouldn't affect the baby. And that wasn't the case here, so I had a few questions and got really frustrated. People were kind to me, yes. The doctor was, because she called a girl who spoke Spanish, Colombian, but I still felt that they were infringing upon my rights, because it was intimate, right? After a while I didn't care anymore, but I did feel a little violated.*

*So after the girl did them that favour, she left, and they had to explain something else that I didn't understand very well because I had never taken the pill before. Ever. So I truly didn't understand how to take it and I wanted it to be clear. I called my husband and he couldn't pick up, so I had to call my brother in law in Colombia. A whole saga, right? It was frustrating. It wasn't a cool experience.*

*I had called them beforehand and I had been organised with [the interpreting], right? Because I was going on my own. If I'd been with my husband, I wouldn't have cared, I would have told him to translate as we go. So of course, I got really frustrated. So much so that I said "no, I can't rely on my husband all the time", because it was crazy. So after that I found a doctor who could speak Spanish. Why? Because my son's health is on the line, right? He was so little and I'm a first-time mum, so I decided that I needed to clear all doubts about what was said.*

*And that was the first time. I said "right, I'm going to fix this situation because I don't want to go through that frustration again". It was terrible! I swear, it was horrible. And I'd been here for a week, no more than that. With a six-month-old, in a country where I truly didn't understand anything. Absolutely nothing. Nothing at all. I obviously ended up depressed afterwards. That situation plus other ones, right? But that was a lot. Because it was like I took a risk and it didn't go well, right?*

*After that, in June last year, my son fractured his arm. So that's why I got the interpreting services, because he fractured his arm. My husband had dropped him, so he was in shock. My son was a year and a half. He was a baby. And seeing your son in pain, imagine breaking a bone... And my husband was truly in shock. Doctors would talk to him and nothing.*

*I don't know why my brain opened up and I could, like, understand, but at the same time I was trying to get him to react. But I could understand, I don't know how. More or less understand. I felt like then they should have said "You know what? There must be an interpreter in this hospital". Because my son was getting morphine for the pain. So all of those things. Thinking "Man! My son! Morphine. I need this to be clear". So I don't know how I managed it, I swear. I think it was this mum thing and, well, I had*

*been here for a while longer, so you start to understand some things, learn how to ask for stuff. And from there we were transferred to Starship<sup>16</sup>.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Yes, Starship, at Auckland Hospital. And did you get an interpreter there or not?*

**JULIE:**

*No, not yet. The doctor came to explain something and I feel like everyone here is very soft and very sweet, but sweetness and good vibes are not useful to me if I can't understand. Because at the beginning, I don't know if it was the adrenaline, but I truly understood everything during the emergency, as if I was bilingual. But after that, stress started working against me and I felt stupid, truly, like my brain was done. That survival adrenaline, you know? I understood everything, signed. But afterwards you say, fuck, there were things left. And then after that, yes, stress started going down and I was like calm enough to understand what was going to be done during the procedure.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Because he needed an operation.*

**JULIE:**

*Yes, exactly. It was like, man, anaesthesia and seeing all those risks. They are informing you about them, they are saying it in English, one after the other. And they could tell that my husband was a bit out of it. One of the doctors told him "Hey! Come down, we know, we understand, we are really sorry that you dropped him, but your wife needs you". But she should have asked for an interpreter.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*So nobody asked for an interpreter!*

**JULIE:**

*Nobody there asked for an interpreter.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And you didn't think of asking for an interpreter either because you were all in shock.*

**JULIE:**

*We didn't think of it either. Yes, like in shock.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And he was operated on without seeing an interpreter.*

**JULIE:**

*Yes. My husband left. He was calmer already, my son came out of theatre, blah blah blah. Only one person could stay with my son because of the pandemic. I stayed, but I*

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<sup>16</sup> Starship Child Health is a public children's hospital in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) (Starship, 2019).

*was left on my own without interpreter. The bilingual one is my husband, but my son was breastfeeding still, so I couldn't leave and say "you stay with him".*

*And I felt so tired then. I was so tired already, you know? I had not slept at all. I had slept some 15 minutes. And so the doctor arrives and I thought "I don't understand shit". And I said to my husband "it's your turn to ask because I didn't understand anything". This time, not even "hello". My brain had collapsed.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And you didn't see an interpreter there either?*

**JULIE:**

*No. Nothing. They knew that I didn't speak English. They knew already.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*It shouldn't be your responsibility to make sure that you can communicate with the doctors in an emergency.*

**JULIE:**

*Exactly! Even if everything here works relatively well or how it should, I feel like it's related to that. You say "look, this looks pretty. Look how pretty, how clean". You think everything works here, right? But you understand, later, when you analyse it at home, you think "man, we pay so much tax". It works, sure, you can see that they're not just taking the money like it happens in Latin America, but I shouldn't be ashamed to say "I need this". Or getting used to saying that. But for that you need to go through the situation to learn how to be smarter about it.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*So you didn't work with an interpreter, then.*

**JULIE:**

*Not that time, no. I had access to one later. Because my son got a plaster, we left, etc. And he needed surgery to remove these wires that they'd put in to join the broken bones. That was around a month later. We got a letter saying that my son had surgery on a certain day. And it said on it "if you need an interpreter, let us know".*

*So we arrived and the interpreter was late. Like 10 minutes late. And I had already started talking to the nurses because, for the surgery, you see one person, then another, you don't even know who they are. I was like "Are you the nurse? The doctor? Who are you?" And then the girl arrived and started translating. In any case, by then I could understand a lot of it because it was the same stuff that I had read so many times, you know?*

*But she was there and I felt super calm because the questions that I had, which were only a few, she made them – we made them. I could communicate. It was the peace of saying "right, okay", she stayed the whole time, the whole time by my side, by my side, by my side, even when my son went into theatre, and she stayed there with us until my son was discharged.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*So what do you think is the interpreter's role? I mean, why do you think they're there? To fulfil what role?*

**JULIE:**

*I think it has to do with support, because obviously when you don't know the language, it's a universe you don't understand, even if I knew what we were there for. They had already explained it to us, but questions did come up about the anaesthesia, how I have to move him... And those kinds of questions such as "how long does he have to be like that?"... All sorts of details which I couldn't have said on my own, you know? Or simply having the feeling that, even though this time I understood because I had a lot of information in my head, I had the peace of knowing that, if anything happened, she was there.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*So you are telling me that the role of the interpreter has to do with support...*

**JULIE:**

*And information, right? For power purposes. Because, ultimately, if you have information, you have the power, so it is power.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Exactly. The reason why I'm asking you this is because we are told that our role is limited to communication. We have a code of ethics that we need to respect. And the code of ethics tells us that we transfer information from one side to the other, from Spanish to English, from English to Spanish, and that's the end of our role, right? So the role as a support, or any other more humane relationship that goes beyond communication, shouldn't exist. So when the interpreter was working for you, did she only translate or could you chat?*

**JULIE:**

*No, we talked. And I'm kind of good at that, right? So it started like "Oh, where are you from?" and stuff like that. Because we waited for a while for my son to leave the theatre, right? Like an hour, hour and a half, more or less. What happened at the beginning was that she was like very... very... dry. It even felt uncomfortable, aye? Because you have that person right next to you anyway, so you think "I don't want you to be there!". At the beginning she was very much playing her part, you know? At the beginning it was uncomfortable because it makes you feel like, ugh! Uncomfortable. Like "I need her, but I don't want her". Something like that. Like, I need you to break the ice because I truly want you to leave. Like that. Afterwards we started talking and, yeah, she lived in Colombia for a long while, in Chile, so when she realised I was from Chile then we started talking about it, you know? And then it was easier.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And did you feel at any time that the interpreter was siding with any party?*

**JULIE:**

*No, no. Super... Neutral.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Do you know about the ally theory? What an ally is? I relate that to the feminist struggle and having men as women's allies.*

**JULIE:**

*Yes, yes, yes.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*What I'm looking into is the possibility of applying that theory, the ally concept, to interpreters. So that instead of having to act from a place of neutrality or impartiality, which are concepts which don't really mean much in reality, because there is no impartiality in human contact, language, culture...*

**JULIE:**

*Plus if, as an interpreter, you realise that rights are being violated and you remain neutral, it's... Terrible, right?*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Exactly! Literally that.*

**JULIE:**

*I don't know what the story is like here, I don't know how that struggle is going, but for example, if you as an interpreter are a Latin American and also a part of the LGBT community and you see that a right is being violated, being neutral is, like, incredibly hard, I believe.*

*I don't know if there are fixed interpreters in hospitals or if they move around...*

**AGUSTINA:**

*It depends on the language.*

**JULIE:**

*Because it would be good that, in the health area, I don't know, that interpreters had like access to the patients' rights. Like, "look, this is it", so that the rights of the patients themselves are not violated. Do you understand what I'm saying?*

**AGUSTINA:**

*So you would like interpreters to have access to a certain type of education on social justice and rights.*

**JULIE:**

*Exactly! Exactly, because I feel like, to a certain extent, the interpreter becomes you at some point, right? So it would be easier to say "Okay, I, as a patient, have this right and this right and this right", so as an interpreter they're going to try to explain that those are the rights so that they are not violated.*



From my dialogue with Julie, I learnt about the significant challenges related to accessing interpreting services. The topic of access to interpreters had not come up in the previous dialogues, probably because of the provisions established for those who move to Aotearoa as quota refugees. In the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre<sup>17</sup>, Alfredo and Carlos had immediate access to interpreters and learnt how to work with them as soon as they arrived. Carlos even mentioned the volunteer families who welcome force migrants to their new communities once they leave the centre. Julie's experience as an immigrant, on the other hand, shows how the onus of securing an interpreter was on her. Julie revisited the topics of vulnerability and dependency that arose in every one of the previous dialogues. Esteban saw language as power. Similarly, Julie stated that "if you have information, you have the power, so [information] is power". To discuss power and vulnerability, she spoke about being a first-time mother, arriving in Aotearoa with a six-month-old baby, and having to rely on her husband, family members and other ad-hoc interpreters to help her communicate. From Julie I also learnt that an impartial, detached interpreter can create a considerable feeling of rejection and discomfort which seems to further underscore users' vulnerability.

#### **5.1.4 A dialogue with Ana Gabriela Nicoletta: "I felt she was more like my mum"**

Gabriela is from Argentina, and she migrated to Aotearoa in 2017, where she works as a chef. When this dialogue took place, Gabriela and I had known each other for nearly three years. When I approached her about this research, she immediately agreed to participate, not only because of our relationship, but also driven by her

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<sup>17</sup> Most quota refugees who arrive in Aotearoa spend their first six weeks in the centre to prepare them for their transition into the community (INZ, 2021).

satisfaction with the interpreting services she had received. Horizontality was easy to achieve, as we shared a friendship already and, of all the participants, she was the only one from my home country. However, even though we knew each other, the dialogue prompted deeper conversations about topics we had never touched on before. Learning about the journey that brought her here, her past in Argentina and the challenges she had to face in this new country effectively brought us closer.

**AGUSTINA:**

*When did you use interpreting services?*

**GABRIELA:**

*I used them twice. The first time was in 2018. Around... October, November of 2018, because of a precancer. I had to get an oncology treatment, and the doctor, my GP, asked me if I wanted an interpreter and I said yes because I didn't understand much of what was happening to me. I mean, I initially understood what I had but it was like "okay, but is it really what I'm understanding?". So I said yes. I mean, even though I understood English, I wanted to be a hundred per cent sure that my understanding of what was happening to me was, in fact, correct.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And it was your doctor who offered the service.*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, it was my doctor who offered me the interpreter.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Because she knew you were a foreigner?*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, because she knew I was a foreigner and she must have seen my face when she gave me the information [laughter] and so she said "don't you want an interpreter?". But yeah, it was fantastic because it truly clarified heaps of things that I had not understood when I was with the doctor. When I underwent treatment, actually, because I had an interpreter during treatment, not when I saw the doctor. The interpreter was a Chilean lady, very lovely. Very, very lovely. Very lovely. Every time I had an appointment at the hospital, she'd come with me.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And was it useful?*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, really useful. I found it really useful. In fact, I went with my interpreter and my partner to get the treatment. The three of us together.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Very good! And if the GP had not told you that you could access an interpreter, did you know that–*

**GABRIELA:**

*No, no, no, no. I didn't know.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*So you wouldn't have done it.*

**GABRIELA:**

*I wouldn't have done it, no. And the second time that I used an interpreter was for an interview with a lady from Immigration. She offered me an interpreter and I said yes even though the interview was conducted in English. She helped me in three or four questions. For example, the Immigration lady asked me a question and I understood something else, and the interpreter stopped me and said "no, no, no, no, she's asking you this". So I understood then what they were telling me, what they were asking me, and I changed the topic of the conversation, of course.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*The answer.*

**GABRIELA:**

*The answer. Because, I mean, I had understood something completely different.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And, again, do you think you would have asked for an interpreter if they hadn't offered you one?*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, I mean, after having that first experience with that interpreter, yes. When the lady from Immigration offered me one, I automatically said yes. In fact, I was going to ask her if I could have one.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And this second time it was over the phone.*

**GABRIELA:**

*Over the phone.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And? All good over the phone?*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, yes, perfect. In fact, when she asked me one of the questions, I don't know why, because I spoke in English throughout the whole interview actually, but there were two or three questions that I answered in Spanish. And I remember that the interpreter started explaining something to the Immigration lady and she said it wrong, so I said "no, no, no, no, no, it's wrong, no, no. This, this and this". And she corrected it then. I realised when she started speaking in English, saying what I had told her, that she was confused.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Because she had misunderstood you or because...*

**GABRIELA:**

*No, the interpreter was confused when translating it. In fact, she apologised to me.*

*"Oh, I'm sorry, sometimes I make mistakes". I told her not to worry about it.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And that experience of realising that she was translating you wrong, how did it make you feel?*

**GABRIELA:**

*It made me feel good about myself. Like, okay, my English is good, I understand the language. And it was like a personal goal of mine, being able to say "no, no, no, this is different", but I didn't have a problem with it nor-*

**AGUSTINA:**

*It didn't make you distrust her.*

**GABRIELA:**

*No, no, no, not at all, no.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And so if you had to go through a situation that involved going to the hospital or having to participate in another interview or whatever, you would ask for an interpreter again.*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, I would, yes. Totally. As I said, even though in this case I spoke in English during the interview in English, I had the backup. I had that support. I thought "okay, it's not my language, of course, but I have someone listening to me who might help me get the verbs right", you know? That or the sentence structure. And this is what happened when I didn't understand a question and I started speaking and the interpreter stopped me and said "no, no, no, no, it's this. It's something else". And it made me feel calm, you know? Because what I had to do was something extremely important.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And what do you think is the role of an interpreter? What are we there to do?*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, well, to do this, I assume. Support, right? Supporting you being there with a language that is not your own, right? In my case, it was feeling the support and knowing that I wasn't just saying whatever or, in certain cases, that what I understood might have been different or that there was something I was missing.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And when you were working with interpreters, did you feel that you could make yourself understood? That you could communicate?*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, totally.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Both times?*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, I felt a lot more confident because she was there and she spoke English for me or properly explained what was happening to me at the time, which was important, right? That first time, which was about a health issue, the interpreter was really lovely and very, very warm towards me because I was very scared. I mean, I thought "Okay, that's it. A few years left to live, what are you going to do". It was incredibly, incredibly shocking for me. Very upsetting. And she was very warm. She reminded me a lot of my mum. She kept saying "don't worry, don't be scared, I'll explain it to you, if you don't understand something, we'll do it together". But yeah, it was a very delicate situation. With the second interpreter, I'm not sure, because it was over the phone, you know? It was more like "Well, I'm the interpreter here, I'm going to be in this conversation" and I spoke English and she was listening. And it was about interrupting when I made a mistake or explaining certain situations, answering some questions in English for the Immigration lady. I mean, it was more... formal? The other one was face-to-face because she came with me. I kept seeing her at church afterwards. She's a Catholic like me, so we run into each other in church, yes, for mass.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And when you see each other what sort of relationship-*

**GABRIELA:**

*Oh, lovely! Lovely! "So nice to see you". Like another friend.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*So she didn't say something like "no, we can't speak or-*

**GABRIELA:**

*No, no, no, no, no. On the contrary, no. She called me over the phone to ask me what the results had been.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*Oh, really?!*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, yes, yes. Yes. She was really lovely.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And that was her, personally. Individually, let's say?*

**GABRIELA:**

*On her part. Not on behalf of the doctor, no. No, no.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*To know how you were.*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, yes. In fact, during the second session of the treatment, she was running late because she was on the motorway and was calling me constantly. "I'm almost there. I'm almost there". "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry". "Don't worry about it", I said.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And do you still see each other? In church? Do you speak once in a while?*

**GABRIELA:**

*Yes, sometimes when I go to mass and she's there, yes. We say hello, of course. That's it.*

*I think that you need to feel that the interpreter is close to you because they are your voice in the other language. You are unable to do so, and so you need to feel as if it was you who is doing it, right? That's the function, right?*

**AGUSTINA:**

*So the interpreters need to put themselves in your shoes, let's say.*

**GABRIELA:**

*Exactly. Yes.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*You had good experiences with interpreters, but are there any changes that you would like to see in interpreting services or something that could be done so that you feel more represented or more comfortable, I don't know. Anything?*

**GABRIELA:**

*No, no. No, because the experiences that I had, and as I said, I had one face-to-face and one over the phone, and truly, I think the face-to-face one was good, what can I say? Because the lady was lovely. Honestly, ten out of ten. She saved me. She helped me understand a lot and... Yes, I even started crying and she would hug me and say "don't worry, don't be scared". She supported me. She supported me a lot. I don't know if it was because she's an interpreter or because that's who she is as a person. I don't know if all interpreters are like that, but the phone one was very lovely as well. And she was very polite, but you don't feel that connection as much over the phone. And the face-to-face one was very warm towards me. And I think that, in my experience, what I would like would be that they show that warmth and that you can feel that they are closer to you. Like what I had. That's what I expect from an interpreter, you know? I don't know if I'd have the interpreter like that [referring to the behaviour in Video 1], at a distance. Answer, reply. Answer, reply. Answer, reply. I don't know if I'd feel okay. It would be more like paperwork in that case. But, as I said, I had a medical issue and it was personal and pretty invasive and shocking. In my case in particular, with this interpreter I had, I felt she was more like my mum [laughter]. Over the phone it was different. I mean, I did feel assured because I had the backup and I knew that she was there, but I can't say that I had a connection with the interpreter. But because this one was personal, she came to the hospital with me,*

*came to the treatment with me, she was there, she stayed with me when I got the anaesthesia, she stayed with me until I recovered. I mean, it's not like the job finished and she left. I mean, the lady dedicated herself to staying with me in that time, translating for me if I needed anything or if a nurse came, she was there, you know? She didn't abandon me. I mean, it's not like she did her job and left. I mean, she was there. I had two days of treatment. And for the second time, she called me on the phone and said "look, this is the date, I'll be there again", she asked me how I was doing. I mean, "How are you? How do you feel?". That's what I would like to see. Yes, if I had to access an interpreter again, I want the same lady.*

**AGUSTINA:**

*And do you think that closeness could have some negative consequences, somehow?*

**GABRIELA:**

*No, on the contrary, I think. I think it's very positive, right? It's something that really makes you want to have an interpreter again. I mean, a good experience, right? Instead of saying "Oh, no. Not an interpreter. They're a mess, I don't want that". But with this lady I had an extremely positive experience. A hundred percent. And if, in the future, they ask me if I want another interpreter, I'd say "yes, of course, totally". Because it made me feel good. It gave me what I needed.*

Like Julie, Gabriela conceptualised information as power when she spoke of her desire to learn English and her ability to communicate in a second language as a personal goal. She also touched on the feelings of vulnerability associated with having to navigate a new healthcare system. However, even though Gabriela and Julie are both immigrants, access was not an issue in Gabriela's case. The need for an interpreter was immediately recognised by Gabriela's physician, who offered her the service. This might be related to the fact that, unlike the emergency situation that Julie had to face, Gabriela's experience in the hospital involved scheduled appointments, which are more conducive to securing interpreting services beforehand. From this dialogue, I learnt about the support and reassurance that interpreters can offer to those who have a level of English that allows for everyday living but seems insufficient in more serious or delicate situations.

### 5.1.5 Summary

This section introduced the interpreting service users who were engaged in this research. It also established how I met these users and how they changed me and the course of this project. Presenting the transcripts of the dialogues fosters the reader's own analyses of the contributions and the relationships between the interlocutors. It is clear that my own understanding of professional interpreting shaped my interlocutors' contributions, and vice versa. Moreover, I have also tried to describe how each dialogue influenced the next. Finally, I identified the topics discussed during my first dialogue with Esteban (Section 2.2 Consultation with ALAC) as they resurfaced in the dialogues with the service users with the aim of elucidating the common threads keeping the whole project together.

Alfredo and I discussed that a very active and visible interpreter can be considered an asset. We also focused on inequality and the significance of interpreters' humane qualities. With Carlos, we discussed the importance of Latin American solidarity and conceptualised interpreting as a way of helping the community. Julie and I examined the problem of access to interpreting services. At the same time, we gained insight into the importance of rapport between service users and their interpreters. Gabriela helped me understand the importance of interpreters' emotional support in situations which make service users particularly vulnerable.

In the following section, these users' knowledge will be depicted as themes to answer the research questions more directly. The knowledge will also be discussed in the context of the current academic literature. However, the transcripts were presented first because this research was based on the premise that everyone who participated in the project already possessed their own knowledge and theories, which



are as valid as the academic knowledge incorporated in the next section (Corona Berkin, 2020a).

## 5.2 Analysis: “Delineating the thin line”

This section involves the second stage of qualitative writing: the analysis of the dialogues and the depiction of the themes which emerged from the process of inductive coding using NVivo 12. The transcripts of the dialogues in Section 5.1 Description offers a highly descriptive presentation of the knowledge exchanged. I presented the transcripts first to contextualise the themes presented below. Even though grouping knowledge from different individuals could be considered extractive, I believe that, in this context, it will help with the identification of similarities across Latin American users’ experiences, bringing the community together (cf. Fernández Santana et al., 2019). Reading through users’ stories first will help keep narratives and identities whole as the themes are discussed.

The themes identified serve to answer the first two research questions:

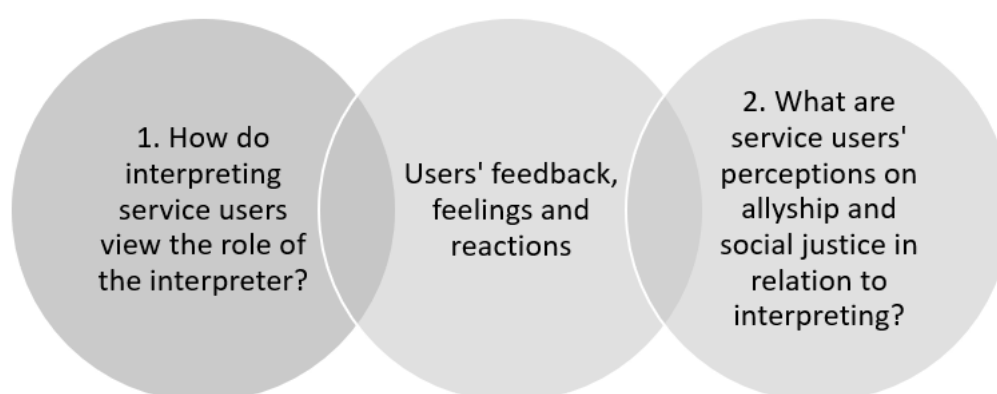
- 1) How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter? (RQ#1)
- 2) What are service users’ perceptions on allyship and social justice in relation to the interpreting profession? (RQ#2)

Using the knowledge from the one-on-one dialogues, in this section I attempt to, in Julie’s words, “delineate the thin line” of the interpreter’s role from these service users’ perspectives, particularly in relation to social justice. The third question involving the incorporation of this knowledge into the interpreter’s practice was answered through the horizontal interpretation of these themes during a group dialogue with professional interpreters, service users and community representatives (Section 5.3 Interpretation).

This section is divided in three parts. Section 5.2.1 addresses the first research question about the role of the interpreter. Section 5.2.2 addresses the second research question about allyship and social justice. Section 5.2.3 is a compilation of the four service users' feedback, feelings and comments on their interpreters' performance. This last section relates to the other two parts of the analysis as shown in Figure 2 below, as I understand that users' feelings and experiences about their own interpreters informed the knowledge used to answer the first two research questions.

**Figure 2**

*The three parts of the analysis (Section 5.2)*



The themes and subthemes presented discussed are the result of three cycles of thematic analysis of the one-on-one dialogues with Alfredo, Carlos, Julie and Gabriela. The codebook with the description of each code can be found in Appendix C. *Codebook*. The themes will be discussed in the context of each users' background and contribution, as well as of the existing academic literature.

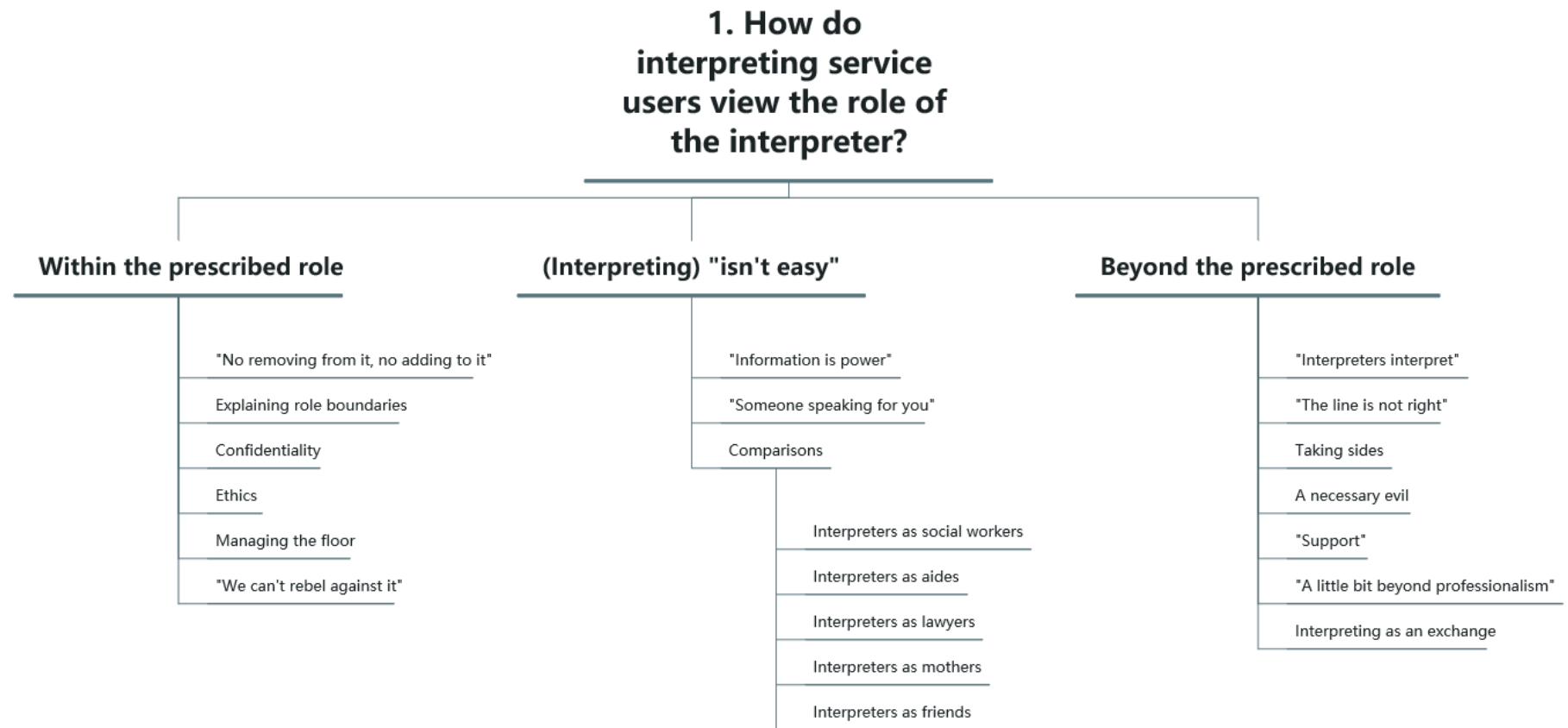
### **5.2.1 How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter?**

In order to answer the first research question, I will analyse the one-on-one dialogues in relation to the NZSTI Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct (2013), adopted

by the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI) to guide professional interpreters' behaviour and decision making in Aotearoa. First, I will discuss users' comments which align with the role prescribed by the NZSTI's code (2013), particularly in relation to the prevalent conduit metaphor in interpreting. Then, I will examine how users problematise the interpreter role and its complexities. Finally, I will move on to discuss users' comments and expectations which call for an expansion or modification of the prescribed role. To do so, I will compare their understanding of some of the ethical principles to the deontological understanding of the NZSTI's code (2013), suggesting the possibility of reconceptualising these principles from the service users' perspective. I will also analyse some examples of interpreter behaviour—as recounted by Alfredo, Carlos, Julie and Gabriela—which did not align with the role prescribed for professional interpreters in Aotearoa (NZSTI, 2013). Figure 3 below shows how the codes were organised to create the themes and subthemes in this section, while the description of each code can be found in Appendix C. *Codebook*.

Figure 3

*Code distribution for Section 5.2.1*



### **“Exactly what it is, no more, no less”: within interpreters’ prescribed role**

The conduit metaphor which portrays interpreters as a pipe moving something (language) from one person to another is still prominent in the interpreting field (Dean & Pollard, 2018). This model of interpreting prioritises accuracy, objectivity and invisibility because it is based on the premise that interpreters should not get involved in the interpreted situation for any reason other than message transfer (Angelelli, 2004b; Dean & Pollard, 2018; Witter–Merithew, 1999). The conduit metaphor underpins the ethical tenets in most codes of ethics (Tate & Turner, 2001), including the one adopted by NZSTI. For this reason, users’ comments that align with the conduit metaphor of interpreting can be considered to fall within professional interpreters’ currently prescribed role in Aotearoa. In this section, I will examine these views, as well as users’ references to interpreters following the principles in the NZSTI’s code (2013) and their comments on standard interpreting practices such as note-taking and interaction management.

Alfredo and I began our conversation talking about interpreters as conduits. When I first asked him about the interpreter role, he replied that interpreters “shouldn’t remove nor add” anything, but rather “say exactly what it is, no more, no less. Exactly”. The principle of accuracy in the NZSTI’s code establishes that interpreters must transfer complete messages “without omission or distortion” (NZSTI, 2013, p. 3). Alfredo’s comment about not removing nor adding anything certainly echoes this directive, reproduced as one of the main tenets in many codes of ethics all over the world (Hale, 2007). However, after reflecting on the lack of direct equivalents between English and Spanish, Alfredo and I discussed how language and culture are too complex for a deontological understanding of the principle of

accuracy. In a way, our dialogue mirrored the development of academic interpreting studies, which proposed the conduit metaphor to differentiate professional from ad-hoc interpreters in the 1980s until, a decade later, research into naturally occurring interpreted discourse revealed that a conduit understanding of interpreting did not hold in practice (Major & Napier, 2019). However, it must be noted that, regardless of where our conversation took us, Alfredo's initial views on the interpreter role highlighted the importance of accuracy.

Alfredo explicitly commented on some of the ethical principles included in most codes of ethics and codes of conduct, referring to interpreting "protocols" and ethics on a number of occasions as we discussed the interpreter role. Two of the nine principles included in the NZSTI's code of ethics featured more prominently in our dialogue. The first is the principle of clarity of role boundaries, which establishes that interpreters must focus on message transfer without engaging in other tasks such as "advocacy, guidance or advice" (NZSTI, 2013, p. 3). Alfredo mentioned his interpreter enforcing such boundaries with him by saying that "there's a code of ethics that says that I can't help, so in the street I can say hi, but we are not friends or anything". Carlos similarly mentioned knowing that "official interpreters" should not receive service users at their house—even if Carlos visited his interpreter anyway. These users' knowledge is an indication that interpreters have been explaining their role and its limitations in line with their code of ethics (NZSTI, 2013). The one-on-one dialogues indicated that the prescribed role boundaries are not always being upheld in practice, but these comments suggest that users are at least being made aware that there are boundaries for professional interpreters.

The second principle that featured more prominently was the principle of confidentiality, which establishes that interpreters are not to "disclose information acquired in the course of their work" (NZSTI, 2013, p. 2). It was Alfredo who

highlighted this principle's importance, as he believed that it should take priority over another one of the main interpreting tenets: the concept of neutrality. Alfredo was adamant that neutrality and impartiality seemed unjustifiable to him, but he endorsed the need for interpreters to respect confidentiality: "I do appreciate them not disclosing what is being said, so that what was spoken in that conversation doesn't become public, so that it remains confidential". Alfredo's belief in the importance of confidentiality is consistent with a comprehensive study of 20 codes of ethics of international, regional and national associations, which found that, unlike other principles, confidentiality features in every one of the codes of ethics in the sample (Phelan et al., 2019).

Some standard interpreting practices were addressed tangentially. When reflecting on the videos played during the dialogues, Julie commented positively on the interpreter's turn management skills and control over the flow of the conversation. According to Wadensjö (2013), interpreters translate and coordinate speech, and both of these activities are intrinsic parts of the interpreter's role. Moreover, the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)<sup>18</sup> requires interpreters to engage in interactional management skills to coordinate communication (NAATI, n.d.). This process involves managing overlapping talk and turn-taking, using appropriate cutting-in techniques, asking for clarifications and engaging in self-correction in case of interpreter mistakes. Often, controlling the flow of the conversation is necessary to comply with the principle of accuracy (Major, 2014). For her part, Gabriela pointed out note-taking, which similarly helps interpreters remain accurate (Carlson et al., 2020).

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<sup>18</sup> In charge of the national standards for translators and interpreters in Australia since 1983 and in Aotearoa as of 2024 (MBIE, 2021).

These comments revealed that note-taking and interaction management sit comfortably within these service users' expectations of their interpreters. The dialogues also seem to indicate that not all ethical principles are equally controversial. Moreover, based on these users' experiences, it could be argued that interpreters are fulfilling the educational function described in the NZSTI's code of ethics (2013), which establishes that "the onus is on interpreters to clarify the boundaries of their role" (pp. 12–13). This code also established that message transfer is interpreters' main function, yet only one of the four users focused on this when asked to define the interpreter role and, even in that case, he did so briefly. Therefore, the next section—*Interpreting "isn't easy"*—will discuss the complexity of the interpreting process. This discussion helps to contextualise users' call for an expansion or modification of the interpreter's role, discussed in the last section—*"But what's the point of neutrality there!?"*: beyond interpreters' prescribed role—.

### Interpreting "isn't easy"

It might be useful to begin discussing service users' views on the expansion or modification of the interpreter role with their acknowledgement of the role's complexity. "I don't wish to be an interpreter one day because I know it's hard", said Carlos. Interpreting is complex and defining the role of the interpreter has never been an easy task (Leanza, 2005; Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2013; Rudvin & Tomassini, 2008). This complexity was manifested in the discussions that I had with service users. The complexity of the role is related to the fact that interpreters can stand as gatekeepers<sup>19</sup> to information and services (Davidson, 2000; R. Edwards, 2013). This gives interpreters considerable power to control the outcome of the interpreted

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<sup>19</sup> Wadensjö (2013) defined gatekeepers as "officials working within local bureaucracies that handle and distribute public resources" (p. 67).



interaction (Wadensjö, 2014). Alfredo, Carlos and Julie all reflected on power and responsibility in relation to interpreting. These issues will be discussed below in relation to service users' knowledge, together with a series of comparisons that the users drew on in order to explain and make sense of a highly contested professional role.

At the very beginning of our dialogue, Alfredo recognised interpreters' duty as "a very serious commitment" to be undertaken by highly ethical people. Julie reflected on the importance of having access to information and the role played by interpreters in granting this access. In her view, "if you have information, you have the power, so [information] is power". Carlos shared a similar view on the importance of interpreters communicating clearly and ensuring service users' understanding. After watching both videos during our dialogue, he expressed a preference for the interpreting behaviour elicited in Video 2 because the interpreter was being "more explicit". If information is power, then interpreters being explicit and clear enable users to access that power. This is consistent with calls for communicative translations<sup>20</sup> to promote literacy and understanding among members of CALD communities (Pym, 2017b) and, similarly, with some scholars' views that interpreters must "unpack" complex concepts so that service users can understand the message (Burn & Wong Soon, 2020, p. 66).

Users' acknowledgement of the power at play during an interpreted event is an interesting contrast to the lack of recognition of interpreters' power in institutional settings (Mason & Ren, 2013). Maybe service users, who have experienced a sense of dependence on interpreters to communicate, are also more prone to recognising interpreters' interactional power—the power within an interpreted interaction which

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<sup>20</sup> Communicative translation can be defined as that which draws from a "wide range of resources in order to communicate a message" (Pym & Ayvazyan, 2017, p. 394).

arises as a consequence of interpreters' linguistic and cultural abilities (Mason & Ren, 2013). At the same time, it might be due to the users' ability to put themselves in the interpreter's shoes. Previous studies of interpreting in Italy found that interpreters "often tend automatically to be 'lumped' together with the client" and be subjected to the same treatment as them (Rudvin, 2005, p. 171). Similarly, Alfredo, Julie and Gabriela showed that, at times, they tended to merge interpreters' identities with their own. Alfredo referred to his interpreters as being there to speak for him. Julie, for her part, said that "to a certain extent, the interpreter becomes you at some point". Gabriela thought of interpreters as "your voice in the other language". These feelings might be more conducive to recognising the difficulties of being an interpreter and, by extension, the intricacies of trying to use that power ethically.

The complexity of the interpreter's role can be discerned based on the comparisons that the users drew on to discuss it: interpreters as aides, as mothers, as lawyers, as social workers and as friends. These comparisons convey a set of expected behaviours which are generally associated with someone according to a particular social framework (Dean & Pollard, 2018). This sociological definition of the term "role" is common in community interpreting literature, where it has been used to convey desirable and undesirable behaviour (Dean & Pollard, 2018). Firstly, Gabriela spoke of her interpreter as an aide who assisted her with terminology, sentence structure and verb conjugation during the interview she was doing in English. Given that, at the time it took place, Gabriela had already learnt enough English to answer immigration-related questions mostly independently, she saw her interpreter as a backup. Often known as "stand-by interpreting", where interpreters participate intermittently and otherwise monitor interaction when service users have emerging competencies in a second language (Monteoliva-García, 2020), the role played by Gabriela's interpreter is not the typical role involving the "optimal and complete message transfer into the

target language” (NZSTI, 2013, p. 3). A stand-by mode understands interpreting as “a communicative activity that occurs in and through interaction” rather than just as a transfer of information (Monteoliva–García, 2020, p. 265). However, stand-by interpreting would still typically fall within the boundaries established by the NZSTI’s Code of Ethics (2013), which limits interpreters’ role to that of “facilitators of communication” (p. 3). When acting as a linguistic backup, Gabriela’s interpreter was operating within her prescribed communicative role.

However, it was also Gabriela who offered the comparison which surprised me the most because of the close, unique bond between interpreters and service users which the comparison implied. She spoke of seeing another one of her interpreters as a mother. This comparison arose when she was talking about the support and soothing nature of the relationship established while Gabriela was going through a stressful health problem in a country where she was relatively new. Unlike the previous function of interpreters as aides, this function goes well beyond the boundaries established by most codes of ethics. Mothering service users would certainly go against the principles of impartiality and clarity of role boundaries in the NZSTI’s Code of Ethics (2013), as these principles try to eliminate any bias and constrain the interpreter’s role to the aforementioned communicative function. These two comparisons—interpreters as aides and interpreters as mothers—hint not only at how much the role can vary from one situation to another, but also at the added functions that certain interpreting jobs or service users can demand.

Alfredo compared his interpreters to lawyers and social workers. Of all the participants, Alfredo was the one who regarded the interpreter’s role in the broadest terms. Firstly, he compared interpreters to lawyers who are “there to help you”. Lawyers are supposed to assist their clients and protect their interests (United Nations, 1990), which hints at an advocacy function which is explicitly discouraged by

the NZSTI's code of ethics (2013). Some codes, such as the one drafted by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC, 2004) in the United States, consider advocacy as a last resort that interpreters can use when a patient's health, wellbeing or dignity is at risk. The literature on interpreting is also often against interpreters engaging in advocacy, with some scholars even stating that "advocacy for one party is a betrayal of the trust of the other party" (Phelan et al., 2019, p. 118).

Secondly, he compared interpreters to social workers as a result of his understanding of interpreting as a "humanitarian service". The International Federation of Social Workers defines social work as a profession which "promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people" based on principles of "social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities" (IFSW, 2014, para. 2). If we consider this definition of social work, Alfredo's second comparison is particularly relevant to this study, which focuses on allyship and social justice in interpreting. However, both comparisons—interpreters as lawyers and interpreters as social workers—go beyond interpreters' prescribed role (NZSTI, 2013).

Alfredo, Gabriela and Julie all compared interpreters to friends. Julie expressed a preference for the behaviour modelled by the interpreter in Video 2 and described it as "friendlier". Gabriela commented that, when she ran into her interpreter in church, she greeted her like she would greet any other friend. Alfredo, however, went beyond the identification of friendliness as a positive attribute. He also expressed disappointment and frustration at the impediments to establishing a true friendship with his interpreters, questioning the reasons behind it: "how would it affect the situation in this case if there was a friendship between the interpreter and the person he's helping?". During our conversation, he expressed his desire to chat with his interpreters, visit them and even have them over for dinner.

Users' acknowledgement of the power of interpreters as gatekeepers to information and of the complexities of the interpreter role serve as a framework to examine what they expect from their interpreters. Many of these expectations call for an expansion or modification of the interpreter's role as is defined in the NZSTI's Code of Ethics (2013) guiding interpreters' behaviour in Aotearoa.

### **“What’s the point of neutrality there!?”: beyond interpreters’ prescribed role**

The dialogues with interpreting service users included the reconceptualisation of some of the main ethical principles in the NZSTI's code (2013), as these principles were understood differently or redefined based on the users' own knowledge. These dialogues also included examples of interpreter behaviour which went beyond the prescribed role. It is clear from the comparisons explored above that users expect interpreters to fulfil a variety of functions, some of which are not considered to be within the prescribed role boundaries. According to Pöllabauer (2004), “highly discrepant roles, and the role overload that interpreters have to bear, suggest that traditional codes of ethics may only be valid on paper” (p. 175). In the first half of this section, I will discuss users' comments relating to the reconceptualisation of the principles of confidentiality, clarity of role boundaries and impartiality. In the second half, I will discuss users' examples of interpreter behaviour and how this behaviour challenges the role outlined in the NZSTI's code of ethics (2013).

### ***Reconceptualisation of the ethical principles***

The first reconceptualisation of existing ethical principles involved the principle of confidentiality. Alfredo recognised this principle's importance, which is not uncommon in international literature, as interpreting service users tend to associate confidentiality with professionalism (R. Edwards et al., 2006; Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006). However, in this case, Alfredo used this principle to justify a friendship with his

interpreters, which he believed would be supported and enhanced by the need to abide by the principle of confidentiality. According to Alfredo, interpreters “can be a friend, but [they] won’t disclose anything. And it’s even nice to know that you can tell [the interpreter] something and that he won’t say anything because of his code of ethics”. Alfredo’s comments indicate that he did not associate confidentiality exclusively with a detached interpreter. Instead, he extended the principle to other types of relationships.

The second reconceptualisation involved the principle of clarity of role boundaries. All service users involved in this research questioned this principle, some more explicitly than others. Both Alfredo and Julie expressed very negative reactions to the limitations imposed on the interpreter’s role. Gabriela’s and Carlos’s comments resulted from the videos that we watched during our dialogues. To address the reconceptualisation of this principle, I will begin with Alfredo’s views, as he most openly criticised interpreters’ role boundaries.

Alfredo seemed actively displeased by how role boundaries affected his freedom to relate to his interpreters. He explicitly stated that “the line is not right” and referred to the situation as “unfair”. To explain his view on the matter, Alfredo used a rich metaphor through which he conceptualised the situation as “giving candy to a child”. The Spanish idiomatic expression is related to the idea of giving candy to a child and then taking it out of the child’s mouth, once they have already tasted its sweetness. During the interpreted event, interpreters bond with service users and ensure that their communicative needs are being met. This bond creates expectations, the same way children come to expect candy from the person who gave them some before. However, these expectations cannot be met by the interpreter outside of that interpreted event. The relationship between interpreters and service users is not permissible once the job is over. According to Alfredo, interpreters act as friends and

allies while interpreting. However, outside of that situation, users are met with a wall that cannot be overcome: “in the street I can say hi, but we are not friends or anything”. The result of this limitation, in his words, is disappointment.

Julie’s observations about role boundaries were based on the way she felt about her interpreter before she could establish a closer relationship with her through casual conversation. Julie described her interpreter as being initially “very dry”, which made her feel uncomfortable. In her words, the interpreter was initially “very much playing her part”, when in fact what Julie needed was for her to break the ice. These feelings created an inner conflict: she needed an interpreter, but she did not want the interpreter there. This is a common feeling among interpreting service users, who often conceptualise interpreters as a “necessary intrusion” (Napier et al., 2006, p. 2) or a “necessary evil” (O’Donnell, 2020, p. 17). The NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013) establishes that interpreters must “take care that conversations that may arise during periods of waiting remain courteous but do not become personal” (p. 13). However, if Julie’s interpreter had refused to go beyond these boundaries to establish rapport through a more personal exchange, it would have been difficult for Julie to trust the interpreter and communicate through her. This attitude is consistent with previous research in the United Kingdom which showed that service users’ lack of trust in interpreters was related to a perception of “coldness or interpersonal hostility” (Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006, p. 441).

Gabriela and Carlos questioned the principle of clarity of role boundaries after watching the videos played during our dialogues. Gabriela considered that the interpreter refusing to share her notes with the patient and repeat the information in Video 1 was selfish and lacking in solidarity. Similarly, Carlos saw the interpreter as falling short of her duty to convey all the information. This echoes Alfredo’s comments about the need for interpreters to “add a footnote” to stop service users from getting

lost. It would seem that, in her attempt to follow the principle of clarity of role boundaries, the interpreter in Video 1 is failing to communicate the information to the service user. In this case, a deontological understanding of the NZSTI's code of ethics (2013) resulted in a failure to fulfil what that same code recognises as every interpreter's main function: message transfer.

The third reconceptualisation involved the principle of impartiality, often used to reassure interpreting service users that they can be heard accurately and completely through an interpreter (Ozolins, 2016). During our dialogue, Carlos maintained that a successful interpretation was not the result of impartiality, but of "having close ties" with his interpreters. He believed that good interpreting is the result of having sincere and affectionate relationships. Gabriela echoed these feelings when she commented as follows: "in my experience, what I would like would be that [interpreters] show that warmth and that you can feel that they are closer to you. Like what I had". She was so satisfied with her interpreter that she wished that experience for others as well.

Alfredo stated that, in order to frame the principle of impartiality, he always asked himself "who is more interested in this [situation], the doctor or the patient?". With this, Alfredo indicated that impartiality should be understood in a context of need and utility. If the patient is the one seeking a service, Alfredo saw the interpreter as being there to help them. According to Alfredo, we can think of the interpreter as neutral, but the reality of the situation is that the interpreter is being more useful to a patient seeking help than to the doctor providing it. Alfredo also seemed to recognise the power imbalance between the patient who is seeking a service because they are in a vulnerable situation, and the doctor who is in a position to grant or deny that service and make decisions relating to the patient's life (Rudvin, 2005). Alfredo's interpretation of impartiality, then, is heavily situated in a context of necessity,



recognising the power imbalances between the parties involved in the interpreted interaction.

During my dialogue with Julie, she spoke of the interpreter staying by her side during her time at the hospital. Moreover, while waiting for her son to come out of the operating theatre, Julie and her interpreter exchanged information about their personal lives. According to the NZSTI's code, interpreters must "help their clients understand, the difference between professional and personal interactions", maintaining strict boundaries between themselves and the clients (NZSTI, 2013, p. 7). The code also establishes that interpreters must keep all participants informed of any party's "attempts to engage the interpreter in a private or any other conversation" (NZSTI, 2013, p. 12). Finally, it clarifies that conversations in waiting areas are polite but never personal (NZSTI, 2013). A deontological understanding of this code would therefore deem Julie's interpreter's actions unethical.

In spite of the code's clear guidelines discouraging the development of a personal relationship with service users in order to maintain impartiality, when I asked Julie whether she thought her interpreter had been impartial at any point, she replied that the interpreter had been "super neutral". This could indicate that this user did not believe that having a closer relationship with the interpreter would necessarily affect that interpreter's impartiality. These users' comments combined show an understanding that the principle of impartiality is flexible. According to these service users, the "professional detachment" (NZSTI, 2013, p. 6) required by the code does not seem to play a part in their interpreters' ability to convey "the full intent of the communication" (NZSTI, 2013, p. 3).

It is also important to highlight that both Julie and Alfredo openly questioned whether interpreters should be aiming for neutrality at all. When addressing

interpreting in a medical setting, Alfredo stated: “But what’s the point of neutrality there!? I honestly do not understand. I do appreciate them not disclosing what is being said (...) so that it remains confidential. Otherwise, there’s no logic behind being neutral. I don’t see the logic behind it”. Julie, for her part, explicitly stated that remaining neutral in the face of rights violations would be extremely difficult and maybe “shouldn’t happen”.

Users’ comments about some of the principles in the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013) show a flexible and context dependent understanding of the guidelines. This echoes Dean and Pollard’s (2011) call for critical and teleological thinking if interpreters are to make decisions that suit a dynamic and interactive social context. Teleological thinking is necessarily flexible, as “it occurs within complex situational dynamics in which the individual is continually evaluating potential and actual decisions with respect to the outcomes these decisions may, or are, causing” (Dean & Pollard Jr, 2011, p. 157). Users’ comments suggest that it would be impossible for interpreters to blindly adhere to pre-ordained ethical rules.

### *Examples of interpreter behaviour beyond the prescribed role*

To an extent, the dialogues with these service users corroborated anecdotal evidence that I had acquired as a practising interpreter: in the field, interpreters often do what they need to do, using their deontological code of ethics as loose guidelines. Table 1 shows some examples of interpreter behaviour that goes beyond the prescriptions imposed by the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013). These examples impinge mostly on the principles of impartiality and clarity of role boundaries, which will be discussed below.

Table 1

*Examples of interpreter behaviour per service user*

User	Interpreter behaviour
Alfredo	<p>His interpreter picked him up to drive him to the interpreted appointment.</p> <p>His interpreter mediated between him and a psychiatrist. Alfredo felt insulted by a routine question asked by the psychiatrist. The interpreter clarified that it was a standard part of the process and that it was not meant as an insult. By doing so, the interpreter successfully de-escalated a tense situation and avoided further negative consequences for Alfredo.</p>
Carlos	<p>His interpreter found clients for him to work for on a casual basis.</p> <p>He visited his interpreter's house. They saw each other outside the interpreting appointment. He knows about his interpreter's family. His interpreter's daughter visited Carlos's mother in Ecuador.</p>
Julie	<p>She had an informal conversation with her interpreter while waiting for her son to come out of theatre. They talked about their lives and things that they had in common.</p>
Gabriela	<p>Her interpreter supported Gabriela and soothed her when she was upset during her health treatment. The interpreter called Gabriela on the phone to check in on her and ask about the results of the treatment.</p>

Many of the behaviours listed would hinder the “professional detachment” that is “required for interpreting” under the principle of impartiality (NZSTI, 2013, p. 6). In spite of these examples’ seemingly unethical nature, Julie could only feel comfortable with her interpreter after having a casual conversation and finding out more about her. Alfredo referred to his interpreter’s offer of a lift in his car as “kind” and “caring”, while Carlos considered the close relationship with his interpreter as a way to give back and thank her for her help. The behaviours in Table 1 also challenge the principle of clarity of role boundaries which limits interpreters’ role to that of a facilitator of communication who must avoid getting involved in acts of advocacy, guidance or

advice (NZSTI, 2013). However, Alfredo considered that his interpreter's mediation was "very wise", while Carlos spoke about the "great satisfaction" he experienced thanks to the work his interpreter had arranged for him. Gabriela also offered a positive view of her interpreter's behaviour and added that she would choose the same interpreter if she ever needed one again.

These examples of interpreters' practice going beyond the limits imposed by codes of ethics and codes of conduct is consistent with previous interpreting research highlighting the disparity between ethical norms and actual interpreter behaviour (Drugan, 2017; Inghilleri, 2005; Marzocchi, 2005; Mikkelsen, 2000). Alfredo noticed the disparity himself when he mentioned that his interpreters consistently went "a little bit beyond what was strictly professional". Carlos identified this type of behaviour in Video 2 and stated that, even though the patient had already understood the information conveyed, the interpreter opened the floor for the patient to think outside of what was strictly necessary, "beyond the medical field". By asking the patient if he had any other questions, the interpreter created a space for the patient to reflect and speak up.

These examples of interpreters disregarding the code in their professional practice combined with users' reconceptualisation of many of the NZSTI's ethical principles (2013) points to a normative instrument which does not account for the realities and requirements that arise from situated interpreting practice. Alfredo explicitly mentioned the need to modify the NZSTI's code of ethics (2013) and criticised interpreters who "follow the protocol and nothing else. Wouldn't go beyond that. The world can end, but this is my protocol and I won't go beyond the line". According to Alfredo, going beyond "the protocol" is a matter of necessity to avoid serious consequences for interpreting service users. His call for interpreters' accountability for the impact interpreters' decision making has on the life of others is

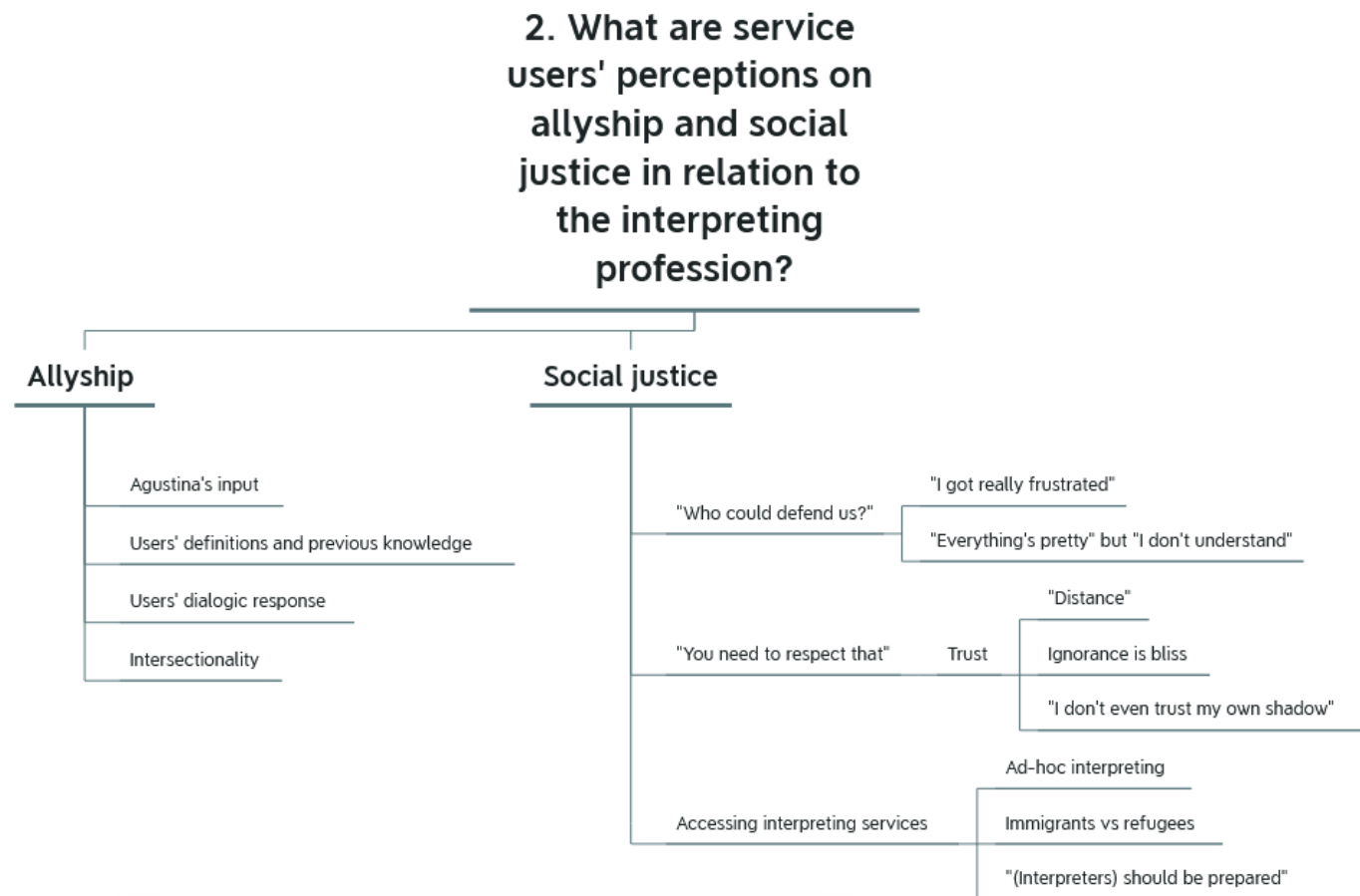
mirrored in recent international literature which argues that interpreters must reflect on ethical principles in relation to wider issues of social responsibility (Drugan, 2017). It is also in accordance with the view that, in certain circumstances, the tenets of impartiality and non-involvement placed at the heart of many codes of ethics allow interpreters to disclaim responsibility for the outcome of the interaction (Baker & Maier, 2011; Inghilleri, 2012).

### **5.2.2 What are the service users' perceptions on allyship and social justice in relation to the interpreting profession?**

To answer the second research question, I will first discuss service users' understanding of allyship. To examine the concept of social justice, I will address the social, political and economic obstacles that Latin Americans have to face in Aotearoa as members of CALD communities. I will then concentrate on the importance of interpreters respecting users' individual preferences, as these are tied to each user's background and the context of the interpreted event. Finally, I will move on to the topic of access to interpreting services as a pragmatic and political issue. Figure 4 below shows the code distribution for this section.

Figure 4

*Code distribution for Section 5.2.2*



### **“What else can you call someone who is there to help you?”: allyship**

When I first asked service users about their understanding of allyship, I received a range of responses. Alfredo said he had never heard about the ally theory before. Julie, however, because of her involvement with the feminist movement, immediately replied that she was aware of the term. Gabriela, for her part, said that she knew what the word “ally” meant, but assumed that there was more to the term in this context. Following Brown and Ostrove’s (2013) definition, I presented allyship as a path to social justice and an alternative to the implausibility of impartiality (addressed in Sections 3.2.1 Professional codes of ethics and 5.2.1 How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter?). It is worth mentioning that, in all cases, I introduced allyship to the dialogue only after we had discussed the users’ experiences with interpreting services and their understanding of the interpreter role. Even though allyship is the focus of this research, I wanted to offer an open space for dialogue, learn from service users’ knowledge independent from the constraints of the study, and negotiate the meaning of social justice together with users without prioritising academic my knowledge and definitions.

Both Alfredo and Julie clearly supported the possibility of incorporating allyship in interpreting. Alfredo was eager to adopt the term and explained that he already thought of interpreters as allies who must help service users: “Because, Agustina, what else can you call someone who is there to help you?”. Alfredo’s comment is reminiscent of the helper model in sign-language interpreting, which was prevalent throughout the majority of the 20th century, before interpreting professionalisation (Tate & Turner, 2001). Under this model, interpreting was offered by mostly untrained friends and family members who tended to act on behalf of service users, reducing users’ autonomy (Dean, 2015; Tate & Turner, 2001). Although generally well-meaning, interpreters acting as helpers often perpetuated patterns of

oppression, disregarding deaf people's right to speak for themselves and make decisions about their own lives (Tate & Turner, 2001). Instead, the ally model acknowledges the need to keep interpreters accountable to service users (Kivel, 2000) while prioritising service users' agency and independence (Witter-Merithew, 1999). Thus, the ally model could allow for the help that Alfredo is calling for, while avoiding the problems of the old helper model.

Similarly, Julie recognised the danger of an uninvolved interpreter in the face of injustice and stated that interpreters remaining neutral when facing rights violations would be "terrible". She also highlighted that the need to intervene might be greater in certain contexts and among certain groups, as a service user who is both Latin American and part of the queer community, for example, would be more likely to need an interpreter who speaks up about any violations. These comments show Julie's awareness of power asymmetries both at the individual and collective levels, as result of class, gender, ethnicity or political positioning, for example, or in relation to the position occupied by a person in the institutional or socio-political context (e.g. client vs service provider or migrant vs host country representative) (Rudvin, 2005).

Julie's knowledge is supported by international literature which sees community interpreting as a "negotiation process, a site of struggle and constant readjustment and reaffirmation of roles and identities" (Rudvin, 2005, p. 176). This negotiation process and its power differentials are often covert so that it is not immediately obvious that institutions are organised following a hierarchy (Rudvin, 2005). As a result, the oppression of members of CALD communities as well as other minorities can go unnoticed, aided by the ideals of non-involvement and neutrality in interpreting that Julie was questioning. Alternatively, the ally model "provides a multi-dimensional view of an individual's social identities in both oppressed and oppressor groups" (Gibson, 2014, p. 205). This view fosters an assessment of power



asymmetries and conscious decision-making, rather than the covert use of interpreter power encouraged by the “conspiracy of silence” around the disempowering effects of trying to act as a conduit (Tate & Turner, 2001, p. 55). Julie’s call for actions against rights violations could be better addressed by an interpreter working as an ally.

Alfredo and Julie’s explicit support for allyship in interpreting might be related to their awareness of structural inequality. After watching the videos, Alfredo concluded that “the social system is not fair in this case”. Similarly, Carlos commented that refugees are at an “abysmal” disadvantage in their host country. In the following section, inequality, othering practices and identity will be examined further, concentrating on the struggles faced by the four Latin American service users trying to navigate their new life in Aotearoa.

### **“Who could defend me?”: togetherness in otherness**

This section’s title is based on a direct quote from Alfredo who, during our one-on-one dialogue, asked “¿quién podrá defenderme?” (“who could defend me?”). The quote, which was also used in the title of this thesis, was an explicit reference to a popular Mexican television comedy series from the 1970s called *El Chapulín Colorado*, which aired in many countries all over Latin America. The main character, the parody of a superhero, was summoned whenever anyone in the show said those exact words: “and now... who could defend us?”. This cultural reference is shared amongst Latin Americans even in the diaspora. Even though Alfredo and I had met in Tāmaki Makaurau’s (Auckland) city centre, hearing that question transported me back to my childhood in Córdoba (Argentina). I recognised it immediately, having grown up watching the replays on television. This cultural reference—and the question itself—prompted my reflections on the struggles that we all shared, to a lesser or greater extent, as outsiders in our host country. In this section, I will explore the feeling of

otherness and the need to realign expectations to fit the dominant sociocultural practices of a new country.

The topic of identity is a common thread that runs through the entire research project, from the initial consultation with ALAC (Section 2.2 Consultation with ALAC) to the final group dialogue (Section 5.3 Interpretation). It also ties in my desire to work with the Latin American community to explore my own feelings of belonging. During the consultation with ALAC, Esteban Espinoza told me that, in Aotearoa, “we are the stranger, the outsider”. After 40 years in the country, Esteban is still being asked where he is from. His feelings are congruent with the perpetual foreigner stereotype which leads to the social marginalisation of members of CALD communities, identified as different and other from the point of view of the dominant society (Tankosić, 2020). During that first dialogue, Esteban and I bonded over the position that we shared as outsiders, and that feeling of togetherness in otherness resurfaced again later, in the dialogues with interpreting service users. The topics of identity, togetherness and otherness will be explored in this section, where I will present service users’ experiences of cultural difference and vulnerability, followed by a reflection on how, in such a context, inadequate interpreting services can take an emotional toll on the users.

Trying to navigate life without being able to speak the majority language in the host country can be challenging and distressing. Julie mentioned pushing herself and taking the risk of doing things on her own, without an interpreter, but getting nervous and feeling that her brain could not cope with the situation. Carlos echoed this feeling when he stated that “when someone comes and talks to you in a language that you don’t understand, you feel like running away”. Alfredo added that people can often feel nervous in situations where they need the services of an interpreter. In our dialogues, these service users identified the language barrier as challenging and stressful.

However, linguistic differences are not the only challenge that CALD communities need to face. As previously identified in the literature (Crezee & Roat, 2019), sometimes linguistic help alone is not enough to help CALD individuals navigate misunderstandings and cultural conflicts.

The difficulties faced by CALD communities often arise from the challenges posed by a new life, with new systems and institutions in the host country. Even everyday activities such as taking out the rubbish, which can become reminders of this otherness. Alfredo compared the situation experienced by a confused patient who had failed to gain clarity about his medical condition (Video 1) with his own experiences when he first arrived in Aotearoa. He recalled taking out his recycling in a cardboard box instead of using the prescribed bins, only to find that the recycling would not get picked up if he did not use the mandatory bins. Another example involved Alfredo being unable to buy petrol because he did not have the correct container. In this case, the employees at the petrol station “just looked at [him], but nobody explained anything”.

Julie spoke about being “in a country where [she] truly didn’t understand anything. Absolutely nothing. Nothing at all”. This produced feelings of frustration and disempowerment, aggravated by her dependence on her husband, who was already bilingual when they arrived in Aotearoa. Julie relied on her husband’s linguistic abilities, but found herself unable to communicate when she was on her own. Moreover, she arrived as a first-time mother with a six-month old baby. Like Alfredo, she found herself trying to understand a different immunisation schedule for her baby and a new contraceptive method for herself.

Situations such as these reinforce the inside/outside and us/them dichotomies which allow society to separate those who belong to a space from others who do

not (Armas, 2019). These dichotomies are maintained not only through institutions, mass media and education, but also through everyday practices which impose taken-for-granted, standard norms that must be followed in order to successfully inhabit a space (Haldrup et al., 2006). Dominant group members are not often reminded of social and cultural differences during their daily lives (Doane, 1997). In contrast, Alfredo and Julie were confronted with practices which reflected the dominant group's culture, which has assumed normative status and has been built into a mainstream culture unlinked from any particular ethnic group (Doane, 1997; Haldrup et al., 2006). It could be argued, then, that simply translating messages from one language into another would not be enough to help these service users navigate foreign systems which have been normalised and rendered as cultureless (Doane, 1997).

Service users' sense of helplessness can also be seen when Carlos stated that, without the interpreter, users would be "completely lost". The same feeling can be read in Julie's words when she said that, on her own, she "couldn't even order a coffee". Having to depend on the interpreter seems to aggravate users' reactions when they are met with an inadequate interpreting service. Alfredo pointed to the emotional toll which can be experienced if the interpreting service is unsatisfactory. When assessing the results of the interpreter behaviour in Video 1, he described the patient as looking disappointed and helpless. Julie spoke of a feeling of frustration, which she mentioned on several occasions throughout our dialogue. She even referred to a period of depression which she experienced because of, among other things, her inability to communicate. Julie's feelings are consistent with research which maintains that being in an unfamiliar environment without being able to speak the majority language can result in feelings of isolation, suffering, powerlessness and concern (Le Goff & Carbonel, 2020).

Users' feelings must be understood in relation to the very real consequences and risks associated with not being able to access information (Bergunde & Pöllabauer, 2019). In Carlos's words, the patient "depends on the interpreter's translation. If [the translation] is incorrect, he's affected". Julie mentioned that having doubts or not being able to elaborate on a question could have consequences for her loved ones. She explained that she needed to understand every detail during a doctor's consultation because her "son's health [was] on the line". Carlos mentioned that, if the interpreter refuses to repeat the medical information required, the patient will end up searching for information on the internet to make up for the system not being able to provide for him.

Alfredo spoke of interpreting service users asking themselves who could defend them, like characters in *El Chapulín Colorado*. As Latin Americans in Aotearoa, service users often found themselves in difficult situations, wondering whether that mock superhero is the best they can expect. Research has revealed that immigrants "face multiple sociopolitical- and economic-based obstacles because of translingual identity, embedded in their name, language, culture, and ethnicity" (Tankosić, 2020, p. 5). In such a context, the ally model would increase interpreters' awareness of these obstacles. Allies tend to have one foot in the world of the dominant and one in the world of the oppressed (Reason et al., 2005). Likewise, interpreters are in an ideal position to recognise and understand these obstacles and inequalities which are often unacknowledged by members of the dominant groups (Witter-Merithew, 1999). With their linguistic and inter-cultural knowledge, interpreters operating within the ally model could try to avoid the reproduction of these inequalities.

### **“You need to respect that”: individuality**

The lived experiences and preferences of these four interpreting service users cannot be generalised to the whole community. However, making the findings generalisable is not an aim of this study. Otherness can sometimes lead to the grouping of individuals, as “foreigners (···) are thrown into a sack of generalities and suppositions, and any individuality is often forgotten” (Armas, 2019, pp. 20–21). There is, therefore, a need to prioritise what each individual expects from their interpreters. In this section, I will address the existing differences among the four users who participated in this research, as well as some anecdotes and opinions that the service users heard from other members of their communities.

There were differences between the two users who came to Aotearoa as quota refugees and the two who came as immigrants. Alfredo’s and Carlos’s experiences with interpreters were more numerous and varied. Alfredo mentioned using interpreters in medical examinations, when speaking to Kāinga Ora<sup>21</sup> and Work and Income<sup>22</sup>, and in appointments with a psychologist. Carlos mentioned using interpreters for medical appointments, to talk to his employers and when he needed surgery. They often had interpreters who were part of their communities and with whom they worked on repeated occasions. Carlos himself made the distinction between refugees and other immigrants when he said that “immigrants must come here with some English, while refugees come to start from scratch”. The statement is true for both Julie and Gabriela, who had varying levels of English knowledge when they arrived in Aotearoa,

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<sup>21</sup> Formerly Housing New Zealand, this Crown entity is in charge of public housing in Aotearoa (Kāinga Ora, 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Work and Income is a service offered by the Ministry of Social Development to help people into work and provide income support (Work and Income, n.d.).

even though Julie realised after she migrated that her English was not enough to communicate properly.

Because of these and other differences, there will be divergences in the interpreting service each user expects. Alfredo, for example, mentioned that there are some Colombians in Aotearoa who “do not even trust [their] own shadow”. It follows that they often do not trust the interpreter either and “would rather [interpreters] do them the favour of translating, and nothing else”. Alfredo mentioned that this may have been a consequence of their own trauma, resulting from the war in Colombia and living their life in a constant state of alert. This is consistent with research that shows that some migrants are reluctant to use an interpreter because of their lack of trust and the resentment caused by a feeling of dependence (Le Goff & Carbonel, 2020; Pym, 2021). This is especially common in the case of individuals who “have had a traumatic experience linked to their exile or their migratory journey” (Le Goff & Carbonel, 2020, p. VI). Alfredo noted that, in those cases, users tend to distance themselves from the interpreter and see them as conduits, as a tool. This behaviour reflects the findings from previous research which suggest that users who have a feeling of enforced dependency tend to use interpreters instrumentally to achieve strategic goals (Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006).

A certain level of English might alter users’ feelings of trust and dependence. As mentioned in Section 5.2.1, Gabriela used an over-the-phone interpreter as a support person operating in a stand-by interpreting mode (Monteoliva-García, 2020) while answering most interview questions in English. Echoing previous findings which reveal an increased difficulty establishing rapport in remote interpreting (S. Braun, 2007; Price et al., 2012), Gabriela mentioned that it was harder to feel close to the interpreter when the interpreting was over the phone. However, in the case of Gabriela, the limited rapport did not produce any negative reactions, maybe because

at that stage she was proficient enough to communicate without the interpreter. This might have lessened the feeling of dependence that often results in resentment and mistrust towards the interpreter (Le Goff & Carbonel, 2020).

For his part, Carlos stated that his trust in his interpreters was a result of his trust in God, who blesses him and looks after him in his daily life. Similarly, when I asked Alfredo if he had ever felt that the interpreter was not conveying his exact words, he replied: “I didn’t know any English so if it happened, I didn’t notice, and I didn’t care either”. Alfredo’s and Carlos’s responses seem far from the suspicious attitude that Alfredo witnessed in other members of the Colombian community, even if they did not have Gabriela’s English proficiency. Rather, they both seem to be extending voluntary trust, defined as “a consensual absence of calculation, where we voluntarily forego calculating in a relationship” (Greener, 2003, p. 81). In interpreted events, service users may extend this type of trust based on shared identity, language and nationality, or because of their trust in institutions (Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006). Importantly, this could be related to their willingness to establish a close and familiar relationship with their interpreters, as described in Section 5.2.1.

The range of experiences shows the need to respect each user’s decision on the type of service that they require in each situation. Operating within the ally model can help interpreters prioritise users’ preferences and avoid making decisions for them. Allies must be open to the assessment and critiques of the people they are trying to support (K. E. Edwards, 2006). It would be service users, then, who would decide what is and is not working for them. Janzen and Korpiniski (2005) stated that instead of discarding any of the other models of interpreting, interpreters “should consider what is valuable from each, and depending on the circumstances of a particular situation, choose the behaviour that best fits no matter which model it might be thought of as espousing” (p. 171). Operating from within the ally model would allow for



this flexibility. However, in this case it would be service users who would be making that decision so that the users can get exactly the type of service that they prefer and need. In Alfredo's words: "it is the person who gets the interpreter's help who can decide ... depending on how they feel".

**"Good vibes are not useful to me if I can't understand": access to interpreting services**

Being able to access an interpreter may impact service users' ability to cope with their physical environment. CALD communities' inability to access mainstream services and society has "become a political, rather than a merely pragmatic, issue" (Alexander et al., 2004, p. 1). The topic of access to interpreting services is prominent in the literature (e.g. Alexander et al., 2004; Gill et al., 2009; Henning et al., 2011; MacFarlane et al., 2009) and, in this study, it featured mainly in the dialogues with Gabriela and Julie, who arrived in Aotearoa as immigrants. This affected the settings in which they used interpreting services, as well as the ways they were able to access their interpreters.

At the time of our dialogue, Gabriela had used interpreters on two different occasions. The first one was at the hospital, while she was undergoing a health treatment. In this opportunity, it was her general practitioner who offered her the interpreter. At the time, Gabriela was unaware that these services were available. During our dialogue, she stated that she would not have known to ask for an interpreter herself. Instead, she would have done without one. The second time Gabriela used an interpreter was over the phone, for an immigration appointment. In that case, it was the immigration officer who suggested an interpreter. She accepted the suggestion based on the positive experience she had had. When I asked her whether she would have requested an interpreter this time, she said she would have, even if the suggestion had not been made. This seems to indicate that knowledge of the services

available can change users' engagement with interpreting services in the first place, while positive experiences can motivate users to seek those services again.

Julie's experience accessing an interpreter was the most challenging among all the users in this research. In fact, access to interpreting services was one of the main topics of our dialogue. The first time she tried to access interpreting services was only a week after arriving in the country. She organised an interpreter before her appointment with a general practitioner, but when she arrived at the consultation, the interpreter was not there. After the stress of that experience and not being able to communicate with the general practitioner properly, she decided to go to a Spanish-speaking doctor. Unlike Gabriela, whose positive experience motivated her to use an interpreter again, Julie decided to avoid interpreting services altogether.

At the time of our dialogue, Julie did not know that, through Ezispeak<sup>23</sup>, she had access to free over-the-phone interpreting services to communicate with all government agencies (MBIE, 2021). Thus, she was unaware that she could access an over-the-phone interpreter at the hospital or the primary healthcare facility for free. Moreover, she said that it had not occurred to her to ask for an interpreter during the shock of the medical emergency, and that no one had suggested one either. Julie also mentioned that her Latin American friend, who had been living in Aotearoa for 12 years, did not know how to access an interpreter either. This lack of knowledge is consistent with research conducted on access to interpreting services in England from the service users' perspective, who reported not knowing that they could ask for a

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<sup>23</sup> Ezispeak is in charge of the national telephone interpreting service that caters for Aotearoa's public sector (Ezispeak, n.d.).

professional interpreter, how to go about it or who would meet the cost (Alexander et al., 2004).

The second experience Julie shared was in relation to an emergency, when her son was taken to hospital with a broken arm. Julie's son was first seen in North Shore Hospital and was later transferred to Starship Children's Hospital in Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland). Throughout the entire process, Julie was not offered the services of an interpreter, even after it became apparent that she needed one: "They knew that I didn't speak English. They knew already. And they didn't [offer one]. Not the doctor, not the nurse. Nobody, nobody". It was not until her son's follow-up surgery, scheduled a month in advance, that she finally managed to access interpreting services for the first time. Julie's experience mirrors that of service users who participated in a study examining interpreting services for refugee women in Aotearoa (Henderson & Kendall, 2011). In this study, service users reported that there was no provision of face-to-face professional interpreters in primary health care facilities, but that they had managed to access the service in the hospital (Shrestha-Ranjit et al., 2020). Julie's account suggest that service provision can be inconsistent even in hospitals.

Throughout her emergency hospital experience, Julie's husband, who spoke English and could have acted as an ad-hoc interpreter, was in shock and could not help her. Similarly, during that first visit with a medical practitioner, when the interpreter did not turn up, she tried calling her husband for help. When he could not pick up, she had to call her brother-in-law in Colombia instead. Relying heavily on ad-hoc interpreters sourced from service users' networks is actually an international phenomenon which places the burden of bridging the language difference on the user (MacFarlane et al., 2009).

Of note, health professionals in Shrestha–Ranjit et al.’s (2020) study also had difficulties accessing either face-to-face or phone interpreting services, particularly in primary health care settings. This information might indicate that there is a systemic issue affecting interpreting service provision. Julie highlighted that doctors and nurses often showed their willingness to help. However, she made a distinction between health professionals trying to help her “as human beings”, and the responsibilities of the “institution”. She concluded that, if she could not understand what was happening around her, even if the staff were doing their best, that still constituted a violation of her rights<sup>24</sup>. Julie’s feelings are evident when she said that “the doctor came to explain something and I feel like everyone here is very soft and very sweet, but sweetness and good vibes are not useful to me if I can’t understand”.

The problem of access to interpreting services is, in fact, systemic and well beyond any one interpreter’s performance. This is consistent with recent research on the nature of community interpreting in Aotearoa, where “provision of and access to language services (...) is both varied and scattered, with [translation and interpreting] practitioners operating in a rather small and unregulated environment” (Enríquez Raído et al., 2020, p. 19). Interpreters striving to become allies must engage in advocacy (Minges, 2016) and be actively involved in furthering the agenda of the disadvantaged communities for whom they interpret (Witter–Merithew, 1999). Service users’ lack of knowledge about how to access interpreting services could be pointing to a need for interpreters to raise awareness about users’ rights and the services to which they are entitled.

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<sup>24</sup> In fact, the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994 establishes that health care providers have a duty to enable health consumers to communicate effectively with health care providers, “including the provision of interpreters” (s. 20(d)).

To do so, however, interpreters must learn about these rights and services. Julie herself mentioned the need for interpreters to know about patients' rights in order to uphold them and avoid rights violations: "It would be easier to say 'Right, I as a patient have this right and this right and this right', so as an interpreter they're going to try to explain that those are the rights so that they are not violated". Julie's comments align with previous international research on the incorporation of social justice in interpreting education to enable interpreters to properly address the needs of the service users (Coyne & Hill, 2016). When talking to Alfredo, I explained that my interpreter education had not specifically included the topic of social justice and systemic inequality, to which he replied that "it should".

This gap in interpreter education might be related to the fact that interpreting is considered a technical profession. This means that, instead of focusing on the dynamic social context of interpreted events, interpreter education focuses on language skills and cultural knowledge which are perceived as "sufficient for occupational competence in most service environments" (Dean & Pollard, 2011, p. 156). Alfredo agreed with the need for interpreter education on topics of social justice because, for him, interpreting is a crucial service holding Aotearoa together. Acknowledging the place of the interpreting profession in society as a whole sheds light on the need for interpreter education on the topic of social justice.

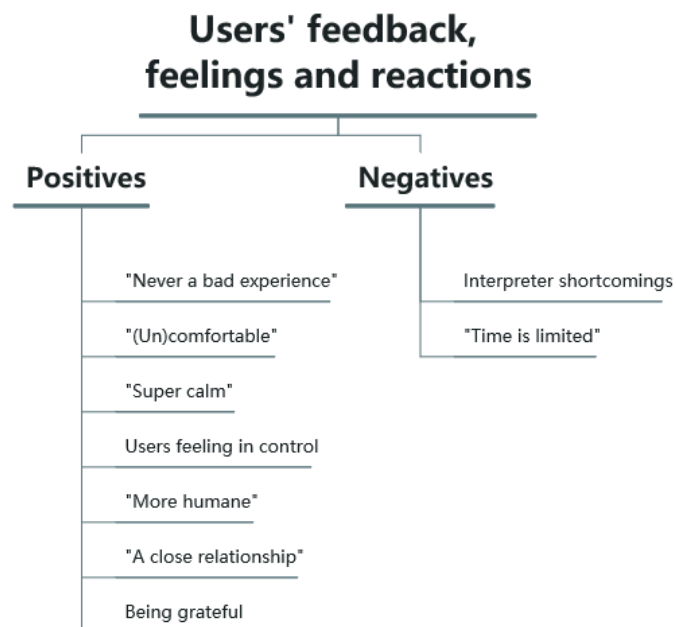
### **5.2.3 Users' feedback, feelings and reactions**

This section includes the feedback that the four interpreting service users volunteered during our one-to-one dialogues in relation to their own interpreters. It is important to note that users' feelings and experiences permeate the knowledge which has been used to answer the two previous research questions (Sections 5.2.1 How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter? and 5.2.2 What are the

service users' perceptions on allyship and social justice in relation to the interpreting profession?). Moreover, these feelings and experiences were used to guide the group dialogue that answered the third research question (How do interpreting service users think their perceptions on allyship and social justice should be incorporated into the interpreter's practice?), addressed in Section 5.3. Figure 5 below shows the code distribution for this section.

**Figure 5**

*Code distribution for Section 5.2.3*



### **“An extremely positive experience”**

These users' experiences with interpreting services were overwhelmingly positive. Alfredo stated that he had worked with interpreters in a variety of settings, both over the phone and face to face, and had never had a bad experience. Carlos mentioned that he was very grateful to everyone who had helped him with interpreting. He added that he had not faced the problems that other acquaintances had shared

with him involving interpreters who were not being accurate or transferring all the information. Gabriela said that she found the services very useful and that she could successfully communicate through her interpreters.

It is worth mentioning that all the service users narrated experiences involving interpreters going beyond the role established in the NZSTI's code of ethics (see Section 5.2.1 How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter?). Pairing the users' positive experiences with these accounts of interpreter behaviour might suggest that interpreters are doing what they need to do to meet service users' needs. These findings further reinforce previous research (e.g. Angelelli, 2004a; Krystallidou, 2014; Major & Napier, 2019; Van Herreweghe, 2002) which highlighted the tension between "what interpreters *actually* do and normative conduit-based models based on message equivalence that appear, at least on the surface, to lie closest to the interpreter's professional code of ethics" (Major & Napier, 2019, p. 185).

Users reported interpreters making them feel comfortable and at ease, especially as a result of the bond they had formed. Alfredo mentioned that he felt comfortable even during his sessions with a psychologist or when he needed to share embarrassing information with a medical professional. In his words, it was the caring and loving attitude of the interpreters which made him feel comfortable, as "one feels more comfortable if [the interpreter] is your ally". Similarly, Julie said that it was only after established rapport with her interpreter that she could feel comfortable with her presence. On the contrary, an interpreter being too "dry" and not breaking the ice made her feel uncomfortable.

Service users also saw interpreters as contributing to their peace of mind, as their services allow users to ask every question they have and obtain the information

that they need. Julie expressed feeling this way when she finally managed to access an interpreter during her son's follow-up surgery. Only then could she relax because she "had the peace of knowing that, if anything happened, [the interpreter] was there". Julie highlighted that being able to feel this way was paramount when the topic of the interpreted event was sensitive or there were high stakes. Gabriela echoed these feelings when talking about having an interpreter over the phone while giving her immigration interview mostly in English: "it made me feel calm, you know? Because what I had to do was something extremely important".

Another prominent topic throughout the different dialogues with the users was interpreters' humanity. Humane behaviour included being empathic, kind, caring, loving, affectionate, warm and having good vibes. Alfredo, for example, mentioned interpreters' kind and caring attitude, as well as their ability to put themselves in his and in the doctor's shoes. This resulted in interpreters going the extra mile, disregarding protocols and even giving him advice. Carlos mentioned interpreters "doing [their job] with love" and "a lot of affection". Carlos also highlighted that interpreters understood the need for interpreting services. Although Julie's relationship with her interpreter was not particularly close, she still appreciated her interpreter's "good vibes" and helpful attitude. Interpreters' positive attitude involved, for example, offering to find someone to repeat necessary information if the message was unclear after the interpreted event had finished. Julie saw this as a bare minimum, "basic things" that are a result of interpreters' good attitude. Gabriela spoke about having an interpreter who was "very affectionate" and warm, both during the interpreted event and afterwards, when she encountered her interpreter in church. She mentioned that she did not know whether all interpreters were like that, but she wished everyone else could have the same experience she had.



Appreciation for humane behaviour extended beyond interpreters. Alfredo used the word “humane” to describe his (our) supervisor, who showed empathy and passion for Alfredo’s work. It would seem that Alfredo appreciates others’ involvement and interest in his life. Similarly, Julie highlighted the kindness, sweetness and softness of the medical staff who tried to make communication work in spite of the language barrier and without an interpreter, even if she saw her challenging experience accessing interpreting services as a systemic problem. Together, these comments point to an appreciation of humane qualities in others. Moreover, it could mean that users see interpreters beyond their perfunctory role and see them as people, not conduits or machines.

An emphasis on the importance of interpreters’ humane qualities might help explain some of these users’ expectations. Carlos, for example, mentioned the need for a sincere and affectionate relationship with the interpreter. According to him, genuineness and affection resulted in the development of close ties which were considered essential when communicating through an interpreter. Moreover, he believed that this would, in turn, bring users closer to their interlocutor: “So the interpreter brings you closer to that person and you can find that familiarity with the interpreter and the person who is talking to you”. Establishing a bond with all the parties involved seems to be Carlos’s way of ensuring that he is understood. Julie spoke of a similar feeling when she explained that she needed to form a bond with her interpreter before she could be comfortable working with her. Gabriela considered that affinity was necessary for the fulfilment of the interpreter’s role. For her, feeling close to the interpreter is “very positive” and makes users want to work with an interpreter again.

Finally, these users’ positive experiences resulted in a feeling of gratitude, which was a recurring thread throughout every dialogue I had with the users. Users

were grateful for the job that the interpreters did and for not having to pay for their services. Alfredo was grateful to all interpreters for making multiculturalism possible within Aotearoa and all over the world. Users were also grateful when interpreters went beyond their role to help them. Carlos, for example, was grateful to his interpreter for finding him a job. Alfredo was thankful for his interpreter's intervention to help him settle down at a time when he was feeling aggressive, offended and stressed out. Ultimately, users' feelings of gratitude motivated most of them to be a part of this research.

Users' views on their interpreters' positive traits are consistent with previous research on medical providers' expectations for medical interpreters in the United States (Hsieh et al., 2013). According to this study, the following behaviours are expected from interpreters acting as a patient ally:

interpreters' ability to provide emotional support to the patient (item 8), interpreters' familiarity with the patients' needs (item 12), interpreters' ability to help the patient seek information (item 11), interpreters' willingness to assist patients outside of the medical encounter (item 10), interpreters' ability to read the patients' nonverbal behaviors (item 2), interpreters' ability to develop rapport between the provider and the patient (item 9), interpreters' ability to advocate for the patient (item 14), and interpreters' ability to help patients navigate the health care system (item 13). (Hsieh et al., 2013, p. 560)

It is also important to consider the relationship between these service users' positive experiences and their willingness to participate in this research. Service users' poor experiences might have deterred others from getting involved and sharing their opinions with me, an interpreter after all. However, further research involving a larger

number of service users would be necessary to advance any of these conjectures further.

### **“He didn’t translate properly”**

Some of the service users mentioned interpreter behaviour which can be considered unprofessional, such as arriving late to an appointment or not being familiar with terminology. Alfredo mentioned some of his interpreters having to look up words in the dictionary, stopping the flow of the interaction. He considered this a result of a linguistic deficiency, but he mentioned it light-heartedly. Even though it was considered a shortcoming, it was certainly not a major one, as it did not seem to affect his opinion of those interpreters. In relation to time management, there were some references to interpreters being late. When Julie’s interpreter arrived 10 minutes late, she thought “well, okay, it doesn’t matter”. Gabriela experienced a similar situation when she was meeting her interpreter again after an earlier appointment. The interpreter called Gabriela on the way into the hospital to tell her that she was nearby. Like Julie, her reply was “don’t worry about it”.

Although these behaviours were noted by the users and should be taken into account, it must be highlighted that they did not seem to affect users’ opinions on an interpreter’s performance. Punctuality is an important part of professionalisation. In accordance with the principle of professional conduct of the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013), interpreters must “adhere to appointment times and deadlines, or advise clients promptly of any hindrance” (p. 5). Punctuality is also a requirement imposed by most agencies on their contract with their interpreters and one of the only ways purchasers of interpreting services can assess an interpreter’s performance (Ozolins, 2007). It would seem that punctuality is less important for service users than it is for agencies. Instead, these users focused on the importance of

interpreters dedicating them time *during* the interpreted event, which made them feel accompanied and supported.

There is among the users a negative perception associated with interpreters who do not dedicate enough time to the interpreted event. This is clear in Carlos's comments about how the time with interpreters in Mangere was limited, which affected users' ability to access information: "sometimes you have doubts left that you can't clarify in that time". Gabriela commended her interpreter's presence and support throughout her hospital experience: "it's not like she did her job and left. I mean, she was there". Interpreters who left as soon as the job was over were seen as having a perfunctory role which was not appreciated. Instead, Gabriela mentioned her preference for an interpreter who would stay with her throughout the treatment and would not "abandon" her.

Apart from these negative feelings associated with a lack of dedication, there were comments about associating value judgements to outcomes. Alfredo mentioned that, sometimes, users assessing the interpreter's performance as inadequate was related to the negative outcome of the interpreted event. If the user did not manage to obtain what they needed, the blame was placed on the interpreter, who was seen as not having translated properly. However, Alfredo himself questioned these comments: "They say (...) 'He didn't translate properly, he didn't translate properly', but how do you know that he didn't if you can't speak English?". Alfredo's account is consistent with research into interpreting service users' perspectives in the United Kingdom, which maintained that "the understanding of who is a good interpreter is often based on the outcome of the situation in which they are needed" (Alexander et al., 2004, p. 59). If a person seeking asylum got rejected, they sometimes felt that the interpreter did not properly convey their case.

During the dialogues, there were comments about interpreters transferring only part of the message or misunderstanding the content. In the case of Carlos, his knowledge was second-hand. He mentioned hearing from other members of the community that their interpreters had not conveyed the message fully into the other language: “People who have been told half of the content and have been affected by it”. Even though these were not first-hand experiences, they show an understanding that interpreter performance can stop users from accessing a service or information. In this sense, there seems to be an awareness that interpreters can act as gatekeepers, as mentioned in Section 5.2.1.

Similarly, Gabriela mentioned her own experience with an interpreter who misunderstood something that she had said. When Gabriela noticed, she corrected the interpreter. When I asked her how the situation had made her feel, she said it had made her feel good about herself and her level of English. The fact that this did not generate any negative reactions for the user might indicate that the level of dependence on the interpreter can affect users’ feelings about interpreters’ competence. This competence might be seen as more crucial when users depend on it (see Section 5.2.1 How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter?). Alfredo’s and Carlos’s comments about the possibility of there being discontent among the Colombian forced migrant community point to the need for further research involving service users so that a wider range of experiences can be represented.

#### **5.2.4 Summary**

This section discussed interpreting service users’ view on the role of the interpreter, as well as their expectations in relation to note-taking, interaction management skills and the importance of confidentiality. At the same time, it examined the complexity of the role through users’ comparisons of interpreters with

other professions and roles, such as that of lawyers and mothers. The section also included an analysis of interpreter behaviour using the principles in the NZSTI's code of ethics (NZSTI, 2013), which showed multiple examples of interpreter behaviour that challenged the current deontological code of ethics. Users' support of such behaviour points to the potential need to reconceptualise certain ethical principles to better align service provision with users' expectations and needs.

This section also discussed service users' understandings of allyship and social justice in the interpreting profession. The discussion involved users' feelings of otherness as members of CALD communities in Aotearoa and the barriers they face when trying to navigate new systems in Aotearoa. Users' different needs and expectations were highlighted together with the need for an interpreting model that prioritises users' choices. Moreover, the section explored the difficulties accessing interpreting services, which were seen as a systemic problem beyond any individual interpreter.

Finally, an analysis of users' preferences with regard to interpreter behaviour was presented. Interpreters were seen as sources of solace and peace of mind, and there was a strong call for humane qualities such as kindness, care and support. Typically undesirable behaviours such as tardiness or a lack of terminological knowledge were identified but did not seem to affect users' assessment of their interpreters' abilities. There was, though, a negative perception associated with interpreters' lack of time and dedication. There were also anecdotes of service users' discontent with interpreters, but no similar first-hand experiences among the users who participated in the dialogue. In the next section, these findings will be interpreted by a diverse group of professional interpreters, service users and a community representative in a horizontal group dialogue.

### 5.3 Interpretation: “Solutions are found within diversity”

This section involves the third stage of qualitative writing: the interpretation of the data in order to incorporate meanings and contexts that go beyond the second stage of analysis (Wolcott, 1994). As mentioned in Chapter 4. Methodology, this stage was conducted in the form of a group dialogue involving two interpreting service users (Alfredo and Gabriela) who had participated in the one-on-one dialogues, a representative from ALAC (Eliana) and three professional interpreters (Valeria, Antonia and Luisa). Even though the three interpreters consented to being identified by name in this project, I have chosen to anonymise their identities to avoid any potential repercussions on their professional or personal lives.

Valeria, Antonia and Luisa are all professional interpreters. Luisa introduced herself as an experienced interpreter, as well as my friend and colleague. She indicated that we had worked together on several occasions in the past and that she respected me as a professional. Valeria introduced herself as a translator and interpreter with a master’s degree in conference interpreting. She clarified that she had limited practical interpreting experience in Aotearoa due to visa constraints, but that she was participating in the research to stay in touch with the profession. Antonia introduced herself as a certified translator with a master’s degree in translation, interpreting and intercultural communication, with limited practical experience as an interpreter. She added that she is currently a researcher, highlighting our personal and philosophical affinity, as well as her interest and involvement in the topic.

Alfredo introduced himself as a Colombian who had arrived in Aotearoa 13 years ago. He commented that he was “super interested” in the topic and that he knew me through our thesis supervisor. Gabriela introduced herself as an Argentinian chef, mentioned that she had been in Aotearoa for four years, and added that she was

participating in the group dialogue to support me, as my friend. Eliana, representing ALAC, introduced herself as a Colombian who arrived in Aotearoa three years ago. She clarified that she was not an interpreter, but rather worked to support immigrants and forced migrants during their resettlement process. She added that part of her role was to “fill existing gaps”, help participants with the language barrier and facilitate their integration.

The aim of this dialogue was to answer the third research question: How do interpreting service users think their perceptions on allyship and social justice should be incorporated into the interpreter’s practice? To do so, I presented the themes from the one-on-one dialogues with interpreting service users (Section 5.2 Analysis). I prepared a PowerPoint presentation and shared the following questions to guide the discussion:

- 1) What are the ideal characteristics of an interpreter?
- 2) What excites me about the ally model in interpreting? What worries me or stops me from implementing it?
- 3) What does the model look like in practice? What do we have to do?

As discussed in Section 5.3.1 below, after a lengthy discussion, we only had time to address the first question directly. The answers are included in Table 2, at the end of Section 5.3.2. In this sense, the horizontal group dialogue was different from a focus group, where the researcher acts as a detached facilitator who does not participate in the discussion, but rather guides the group so that it addresses the research question and objectives (Davis, 2016). As one of seven interlocutors, I had no authority over the others to constrain the group so that it would directly answer the questions I had prepared.



Instead, my main role was to try to guarantee horizontality. The proposition of horizontal methodologies is not about finding harmonious ways of incorporating the voices of others without questioning the hegemonic principles embedded in research (Corona Berkin, 2012). Rather, it seeks to establish the necessary conditions that can allow for the horizontal co-production of knowledge. In the first part of this section, then, I will analyse the dynamics of the group dialogue, as well as my own actions and emotions as I attempted to create a space that would promote equality and the autonomy of everyone's viewpoint. In the second part, I will present the transcript of the group dialogue, incorporating some post-dialogue comments and reflections to answer the research question more directly. The text and its format seek to highlight the polyphony of voices, the juxtaposition of which allows for a "silent, horizontal dialogue" (Kaltmeier, 2017, p. 57) where different stances, agreements and disagreements are visible (Pérez Daniel, 2012).

### 5.3.1 "Oh, I have so much to say": reflexivity and horizontality

In this section, I will analyse the group dialogue in relation to the three main axes of horizontal methodologies: the *generative conflict*, *discursive equality* and the *autonomy over our own viewpoint*. This process will shed light on the success of the group dialogue, as well as its shortcomings. At the same time, I will reflect on my role throughout the dialogue, my emotional reactions to it and the sense of failure that I experienced in the following weeks.

According to horizontal methodologies, *generative conflicts* arise at the intersection of different perspectives and are the starting points for the production of knowledge (Kaltmeier, 2017). I had originally explored generative conflicts together with Esteban Espinoza, who spoke of the extremely "heavy rock" that would fall upon me if I was to question interpreters' codes of ethics (Chapter 2. Research Paradigm).

The group dialogue portrayed the tension between two opposing views, represented mainly by Alfredo, on the one hand, and Luisa, on the other. Alfredo, who had participated in the one-on-one dialogues, reaffirmed his belief in the importance of interpreters' humanity and altruism, discussed in Section 5.2.3 Users' feedback, feelings and reactions. He represented a typically subordinated voice calling for change in interpreting and speaking against the limitations imposed by prescriptive ethical principles. Luisa, the interpreter with the most experience in the room, supported maintaining a considerable distance from service users. Her opinions were supported by a code of ethics which fosters impartiality and non-intervention. This conflict is elucidated by the following extract:

**Alfredo:** If they'll send someone innocent to jail and I remain silent, I'm an accomplice.

**Luisa:** No, no, no, no. It's not about complicity because you don't have neither the right nor the duty to advocate or ally yourself–

**Alfredo:** Yes, I understand that ethics say “don't get involved”, but if I see that they'll put someone in jail unfairly, I get involved.

These two different stances caused tension between them. Alfredo, offended by Luisa's position, stated that he had always had very high regard for interpreters, but meeting her had destroyed that notion for him. I myself did not find it easy to come to terms with Luisa's beliefs. For the first time in this study, I felt that I was being confronted with immovable power of the status quo. Valeria called this the “problem in our profession, which has been there for many years”. The conflict stands as the justification for the research and that which provokes the dialogue (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). I recognised this when I said: “I brought you all here today because I know that you all think differently. (...) Because you all come from different places, with different information, and you believe in different things”.

In spite of the challenging atmosphere which resulted from the confrontation of these opposing views, upon analysing the recording of the meeting, I realised that there were indications that the group was comfortable and engaged. It was my intention to address my interlocutors as peers and I felt an enormous pressure to make them feel comfortable and safe. After the introductions, Gabriela got everyone a drink, while Valeria helped me set up the television so that I could present the PowerPoint slides. When I could not make the presentation work properly, the group asked me to move on and work with what I had. Together with the jokes and laughter during the introductions, these indications suggest an awareness that recommendations could be made and that they would shape the course of the evening. However, this does not mean that the dialogue remained smooth and easy.

As I was trying to present the themes from the one-on-one dialogues, there was a considerable amount of interruption, which I struggled to manage. On the one hand, this could suggest that the group had strong feelings and a deep interest in the topic. On the other hand, it might have been caused by a lack of horizontality when planning the agenda for the group dialogue. At the beginning, I established that, after going through the presentation, “what I really want, what’s most important” is attempting to answer together the three questions that I had prepared for the meeting. It is clear to me now that the goal I conveyed was mine alone, even though I explicitly acknowledged that different groups and individuals would have different views and concerns which would be discussed after the presentation, during the second half of the meeting. Because I was aware that the group was entitled to work in their preferred way, I found it difficult to decide whether I should interrupt them. After all, “equity is based on the capacity of both, the ‘researcher’ and the ‘researched,’ to define the research process in terms of co-determination and reciprocity and to obtain mutual

benefits from the research” (Kaltmeier, 2017, p. 54). Therefore, I wanted to avoid coming across as the only person who had ownership and authority over the dialogue.

At the same time, I was aware of the need to ensure *discursive equality*. According to horizontal methodologies, for *generative conflicts* to be productive, interlocutors must be able to maintain the autonomy over their own viewpoint and experience discursive equality. As established in Chapter 2, *discursive equality* implies the ability to share goals, concerns and needs directly and transparently (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). As a researcher, it was my duty to establish that equality if I wanted the co-production of knowledge to be possible (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). My main concern was a person or group monopolising the conversation and stopping others from sharing their own view. During a heated discussion, for example, Antonia whispered “oh, I have so much to say”. She did not add anything to the conversation at that time, which I understood as an indication that she could not do so. On several occasions, I interrupted the discussion to focus again on the PowerPoint presentation, which was based on the service users’ voices. “I want you to write [your comments] down”, I said, encouraging everyone to do things “in a more organised manner so that we can all speak and we can all express our opinion”. Once I had regained the floor, I stopped to ask Eliana if she wanted to add anything to what had been said because, while the discussion was unfolding, I thought that she had wanted to speak. As the only community representative and someone with experience in social work, her input was crucial, as research must be the product of the knowledge of multiple disciplines and social groups (Corona Berkin, 2020a).

My intervention was also necessary to help maintain everyone’s *autonomy of their own viewpoint*, which implies the ability to define our own identity in front of our interlocutors, in and through the dialogue. As mentioned in Chapter 2, horizontal methodologies see dialogues as knowledge-seeking processes through which

interlocutors use their autonomy to define themselves before others and as a result of that encounter (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). This is how horizontal methodologies seek to avoid preconceptions, allow for self-identification and highlight the validity of everyone's knowledge. However, on multiple occasions during the group dialogue, Luisa challenged the validity of other knowledges, suggesting that service users should not be the ones to define the interpreter's role. In her view, "the interpreter must be respected because it is the interpreter who knows what their role is, not the user". Luisa's view that it should not be service users who define interpreting practice is reflected in interpreting research, where there is a lack of studies from interpreting service users' perspectives (R. Edwards et al., 2005; Hadziabdic et al., 2009), especially in contrast with the number of studies focusing on service providers.

Eliana confronted this challenge by saying: "the fact that I don't have your studies or haven't graduated as an interpreter does not mean that I haven't performed some advocacy or even voluntary roles for things that my community needs. That means I am immersed in that. It's not about qualifications". On a different occasion, when Luisa pointed out that she had learnt everything she knew in the practice, Eliana replied: "like myself, I have learnt things while working". In this way, Eliana defended her own viewpoint and her knowledge as equal to that of any interpreter participating in the dialogue. Therefore, the group dialogue can be understood as a place where typically subordinated voices and interests could be heard (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012).

Looking back, I believe that asking interpreters to focus on finding solutions without letting them discuss the conflict first was naïve. It was not until their views had been shared and discussed that we were able to shift the dialogue to focus on finding some answers. Valeria helped by asking the group to think about "the solution, beyond

the opinions, with [this] project in mind”. Antonia called out the “totally dichotomous” positions that were being held and proposed a “middle ground” which we should be aiming for. It is in this spirit that we created the poster shown in Figure 6 and summarised in Table 2, both included under Section 5.3.2 below.

At the same time, the fact that I could not stop the group from interrupting as I was trying to present the themes from the one-on-one dialogues can also be indicative of the need for spaces for dialogue. The meeting was around two and a half hours and we still felt that there were discussions to be had. We only had time to address the first of the three questions and almost every single attendee expressed their desire to meet again. Speaking about the group dialogue, Valeria stated: “This is amazing. Being here alone is excellent to start the conversation”. As we exited the building, Gabriela told me about how much she had learned and enjoyed the meeting. As we were finishing, Luisa expressed how much more she had to say. Eliana contacted me afterwards to tell me that she enjoyed having a space where she could hear different points of view and learn from others. It is true that, as researchers, we cannot assume that the communities involved find the co-production of knowledge with academics helpful or even wise (Jenkins et al., 2020). However, this group dialogue could be an indication that the interest and desire are there.

As a researcher, I found navigating this group dialogue to be extremely challenging. I questioned my place and my actions throughout it and left the meeting after nearly three hours feeling disappointed. We had run out of time, and I was convinced that we had not managed to engage in a productive discussion which had offered equal room for expression. These feelings are not surprising in light of the challenges of conducting qualitative fieldwork when there is conflict. Doing research in the face of conflict requires flexibility and reflexivity, as well as recognising “the emotions embedded in these experiences as a valid and productive part of the

research process” (Jenkins et al., 2020, p. 7). In order to analyse the group dialogue, I had to re-engage with the tension and conflict in the audio recording. Moreover, I felt that I had failed to guarantee a productive space of autonomy and equality.

I believe that it is important to share my emotions and the journey of turning an initially paralysing reaction into something useful because these emotions tend to be obscured and ignored, rarely making it into any publication (Jenkins et al., 2020). Moreover, I want to actively push back on the “pressured and highly individualised environment of the neoliberal academy”, where “failure is a risky business” (Jenkins et al., 2020, p. 7). I felt like I had failed and would not have made it through the audio recording without the support of my supervisor, my father and my peer researchers. They listened to me as I unpacked my emotions for two weeks until I was ready to re-engage with the material. When I did so, I understood that the confrontation of opposite stances was a necessary part of the research process.

### **5.3.2 How do interpreting service users think their perceptions on allyship and social justice should be incorporated into the interpreter’s practice?**

After critically examining the conditions of enunciation and horizontality, I am including below the transcript of the group dialogue. This transcript is interspersed with post-dialogue reflections, which I have included as an additional layer of meaning-making to respond to the third research question more directly. I have aligned these additions to the right of the text to clearly differentiate them from the transcript, which is presented using single-space. The result is a polyphonic and symmetrical text presenting the interlocutors’ positions based on their knowledge and their individual, social and historical situation (Corona Berkin, 2020a; Pérez Daniel, 2012). The aim of this polyphonic text is to shed light on the different voices around a

common interest (Pérez Daniel, 2012). These voices stand in contraposition to each other as an indication that there is no truth to unveil. Rather, there are stances that need to be understood in context (Pérez Daniel, 2012).

**Alfredo:** We were just talking about how you said that you cannot give advice. You must always interpret and nothing else. But in this case, he gave me advice. He said “easy, remain calm, easy. Look, this is what’s happening”. And then he explained it to me properly and I was like “yes, it’s true, he’s right”.

**Luisa:** Can I say something about that? You know why I disagree with mediating, even if it’s something obvious that you need to clarify quickly to continue working? Because you never know the intention of the clinician, doctor or lawyer. When I go to court, for example, and we are in the small private room with that day’s duty lawyer who will be doing recommendations– the duty lawyer doesn’t care. They want people to declare themselves guilty quickly. If it’s something small, of course. So because they [interpreting service users] don’t know anything, they declare themselves guilty quickly and I think that’s wrong, but that’s the duty lawyer’s intention. I can’t meddle and say “no, don’t declare yourself guilty at all, go to trial or talk to another dude”. Do you know what I mean? So I don’t agree with advocating for the user, the immigrant, to put it that way, because you can’t impose on them what you think needs to happen. That needs to be decided by the doctor, the nurse–

**Agustina:** Well, that’s what we’ll talk–

**Luisa:** –the lawyer, the judge, the police officer or whoever that person is.

**Agustina:** That’s what we’ll talk about– Well, but in that case– That’s what we’ll talk about now–

**Alfredo:** Hold on, one question. And if in that case the person there is your family member who’s going through that problem, your son, for example, or your daughter, what would you do?

**Luisa:** But you’re not there–

**Alfredo:** But what if you were?

**Luisa:** –because the son is there with the interpreter, and with the doctor, the lawyer, the police officer.



**Alfredo:** In the case of a relative, you would surely make that suggestion to defend them, right? So that–

**Luisa:** No, because the idea is that– Sorry, we might be getting ahead of ourselves...

**Agustina:** Yes, it's just that, no, no, no, but–

**Luisa:** The idea is that that doesn't happen. That that scenario doesn't happen.

**Valeria:** Right, you wouldn't make it to that stage.

**Luisa:** That's why you can't have, no, you can't have your cousin acting as your interpreter, because–

**Alfredo:** Yes, of course, you must be neutral. Neutral, right?

**Luisa:** –it's impossible. I mean, the job falls apart, because...

**Antonia:** [Murmuring] Oh, I have so much to say [Laughter].

**Luisa:** There's a relationship–

**Alfredo:** That's where the ethics principle is, like, distorted.

When negotiating the potential incorporation of the service users' knowledge into interpreting practice, Alfredo appealed to Luisa's empathy, asking her to view the situation from a different perspective. Luisa categorically refused to consider what Alfredo was suggesting. However, research has shown that having ad-hoc interpreters is a common occurrence, not only in Aotearoa (Enríquez Raído et al., 2020; Gray et al., 2017; Henderson & Kendall, 2011; Yang & Gray, 2008), but in many other countries in the world (R. Edwards et al., 2005; Hale et al., 2019; Nápoles et al., 2010; Pöchhacker, 2000).

**Valeria:** I think there are nuances as well, right? Between what happened to Alfredo and what Luisa is suggesting. I think both things are valid, but maybe what we're trying to get to here is to a place closer to that of an intercultural mediator that solved a communicative problem, related to intention maybe rather than language. Compared

to that other case in which you're offering legal advice, like she [Luisa] said, then absolutely: don't. But here it's less–

**Luisa:** But even with any other type of advice, even if it is a minor piece of advice. It's beyond the role–

Trying to distance herself from a categorical understanding of the interpreter role, Valeria introduced the concept of intercultural mediator as a possible way to address conflict during interpreted interactions.

However, even though Valeria set the limit when the interpreter is seen to take over other professional roles (such as that of the lawyer), intercultural mediators' role boundaries are as unclear as those of interpreters, with both professional titles often involving very similar tasks (Pokorn & Mikolič Južnič, 2020)<sup>25</sup>. It is interesting to consider Valeria's comment in light of Alfredo's comparison between interpreters and lawyers during the one-on-one dialogues (Section 5.2.1 How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter?). When he made the comparison, Alfredo was not asking the interpreter to give legal advice. Rather, I believe he was calling for a similar attitude when relating to the client. In spite of Valeria's call for a nuance, Luisa's interpreter role boundaries remained strict.

**Agustina:** Okay, okay.

**Luisa:** No, but there's something else.

**Agustina:** No, no. Because we'll write it on a card. Here, write it here.

**Alfredo:** I mean, if they're going to put someone in jail and I remain silent, I mean, I'm also complicit. I'm an accomplice.

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<sup>25</sup> The discussion about the role of intercultural mediators and the comparison to the role of interpreters can be found in Section 3.3.5.

**Agustina:** I'll distribute these among you so you can write all these things down, because we'll get to a point when I'll ask you about what we don't agree with or what scares us or what—

**Alfredo:** If they'll send someone innocent to jail and I remain silent, I'm an accomplice.

**Luisa:** No, no, no, no. It's not about complicity because you don't have neither the right nor the duty to advocate or ally yourself—

**Alfredo:** Yes, I understand that ethics say “don't get involved”, but if I see that they'll put someone in jail unfairly, I get involved.

**Luisa:** Look, when I was working with refugees we had big workshops about precisely that, whether to intervene. And once, what I told Jessica<sup>26</sup> was “look, if you're doing a job and you have to advocate and defend someone or, on the contrary, if you don't like that person and you reject them and don't help them, this job is not for you”.

**Alfredo:** Yes, it's true.

**Luisa:** You have to find a different job. In this job you can't do that. Not because the NZSTI's code of ethics says so, do you want to know how much I care about that? That's not it. It's about the description of the interpreter role and it's also about yourself. You don't have time for that. You've got your family, your things. I'm telling you—

**Agustina:** Okay.

**Alfredo:** Yes, I know, that's the system. The system is wrong, from my point of view.

**Agustina:** Okay. I don't agree with a whole bunch of things. I imagine we all have a lot to say, but I want you to write it down. I want you to write it down.

The generative conflict became clear when Alfredo and Luisa presented two sides of the argument. Alfredo highlighted systemic faults, suggesting that ethicality goes beyond the respect for a particular code of ethics. Luisa's comments represented a more individualistic view of the interpreter,

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<sup>26</sup> A pseudonym has been used for the purposes of anonymity to refer to an employee working for the Refugee Status Unit, within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

highlighting the importance of the interpreter's personal life beyond the job. Individualistic approaches to interpreting offer less room to cater for specific needs that might require interpreters to bend the principles in their code of ethics, resulting in more conduit-like behaviour (Rudvin, 2007).

Luisa's beliefs are supported by prescriptive codes and interpreter education (Baker & Maier, 2011; Boéri & de Manuel Jerez, 2011). In community interpreting, "professional ethics are guided by very specific rules, conventions and hierarchies mandated by the state" (Rudvin, 2005, p. 161). Even though Luisa disregarded the importance of the NZSTI's code of ethics, her views and opinions are reflected in and perpetuated by a deontological understanding of that code.

Therefore, in order to allow for the incorporation of users' voices and effectively move the profession from a conduit to a responsibility-based approach, there must be a change in perspective that should be reflected in the codes of ethics and institutions themselves. To address the systemic failure identified by Alfredo, changing interpreters' perceptions is not enough as it is policy—not criticism or persuasion—what drives change (Kendi, 2019). The new approach must be developed in consultation with all stakeholders, particularly interpreting service users, who are most directly impacted by interpreting services. At the same time, interpreter education on the topic of social justice would prompt the awareness of systemic inequality, which would help interpreters during decision-making and the critical evaluation of ethicality.

**Valeria:** I'm kind of scribbling it down. Or is it for you to have afterwards?

**Agustina:** We'll stick all of these on a thing—

**Valeria:** Right, bullet points.

**Agustina:** So that you can remember later and we can talk about it in the next stage, when I finish presenting this. We'll have exactly this conversation, but–

**Valeria:** [Joking] “Let me talk!”. “Let me go ahead with the presentation” [Laughter].

**Agustina:** Well, clearly, as you can see, this produces a million opinions and a million mixed reactions, with differences between what the users want, what some interpreters want, what other interpreters want... There is a great variety of opinions about it. That's why I'm doing this.

[I continued with the presentation of the themes from the one-on-one dialogues (Section 5.2 Analysis). As I was doing so, I mentioned Alfredo's opposing views on the boundaries imposed by interpreters on service users.]

**Alfredo:** To add to that... If, as a user, one wanted a really strict interpreter who very much sticks to the protocol and to the line a hundred percent, in that case it would be better to use Google Translate so we can both speak, and it translates. A machine.

**Valeria:** No, but in that case it will say gibberish.

**Alfredo:** They're making hundreds of apps to translate or something like it, but you want a human being, some human warmth.

**Gabriela:** I'd never had an interpreter ever in my life until I came here to New Zealand, because there is a different language. I had no idea about the roles of the interpreter. That was my position, I mean, they told me “do you want an interpreter?”. Yes, I do. So okay, she came, but the truth is that if someone asks me what the roles of the interpreter are... Yes, they have to translate, but beyond that, the limits and all those things–

**Luisa:** It's fine, I completely understand that, because every time I go do a job, people don't know what your role is. I understand that people won't know about the role because people in their country of origin do not use an interpreter.

**Gabriela:** Exactly.

**Luisa:** But when the interpreter educates people, that's the word we use, and explains their role, the interpreter must be respected because it is the interpreter who knows

what the role is, not the user. The user wants a friend? Well, look, the hospital has– if there's a case like Julie's, the hospital has resources to provide a person to support you, a chaperone, you can bring your friend, but that's not the interpreter. If you want a friend, find a friend.

Gabriela's knowledge is different from the one held by professional interpreters. Her participation is crucial because research must be the product of the knowledge of multiple disciplines and social groups (Corona Berkin, 2020a). However, Luisa spoke of educating the users so that they learn what to expect from their interpreters. In such a context, service users are seen to have nothing to contribute to the advancement of the interpreting field. However, the current disparity between these service users' demands and the beliefs of an interpreter providing that service could be partly associated to the interpreting field's disregard for service users' knowledge and preferences.

**Agustina:** No, well–

**Luisa:** But the interpreter is not the friend.

**Agustina:** Well, that's your view.

**Alfredo:** Now, I wonder. Have you interpreted perhaps... Well, it's not the case, because at least in Argentina, in Uruguay, in Spain, there are people who can't speak Spanish. And all those who interpret for them, we need to consider what is the protocol over there, in those countries. Because here, they have the English protocol, where things finish at whatever o'clock and, well, I leave. It's over.

Alfredo raised the possibility of there being different standards and protocols depending on the country where the interpreting is taking place. Questioning the universality of ethical guidelines elucidates the fact that these norms are culturally-bound and have often been created by those with decision-making power (Rudvin, 2007). Research suggests that “a typically Western achievement-oriented, individualist

culture” promotes an independent interpreter role where the interpreters do not side with any party (Rudvin, 2007, p. 62). On the other hand, “cultures which advocate a more holistic approach to personhood” do not separate the professional and private life to the same extent, resulting in interpreters tending to adopt a facilitator role on behalf of the group (Rudvin, 2007, p. 64). In the case of professional interpreter ethics, a universal approach would lead to a Euro-centric or Western-centric bias, as well as a focus on the knowledge of the “academic community and/or a community of practitioners isolated from the public institutions which provide them with their *raison d’être*” (Rudvin, 2007, p. 48). The preamble of the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013), for example, states the goal of making the code “as universal, relevant, and up-to-date as possible” (p. 1), obscuring the bias that shaped its content. Recent studies have called for the development of additional community interpreting training which is specific to the Aotearoa context (Enríquez Raído et al., 2020). Given that the NZSTI’s code of ethics (2013) “is an almost verbatim copy of the code developed by the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators” (Enríquez Raído et al., 2020, p. 23), a revision of the code in line with Aotearoa’s multicultural nation and indigenous identity might be warranted to incorporate service users’ understanding of social justice in interpreting practice.

**Luisa:** But they pay you until whatever o’clock.

**Agustina:** Which brings me to this slide that says–

**Alfredo:** Aha! Because the point is not to work for the money. It’s about vocation. Only for money– Not only for the money, for the vocation.

**Luisa:** No, it's not about vocation. When you need to put food on the table for your children, it's not about vocation. It doesn't mean that I don't love my job. I love it, you [Agustina] know it. I love my job–

**Alfredo:** I've had like 12 interpreters, and they have all been wonderful, but in your case I wouldn't like to have you as my interpreter, so–

**Luisa:** –but it's my job. But it's a job. It's a job and it won't stop being a job.

**Agustina:** That's fine. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay [Pause]. Now, in relation to what Alfredo was saying about the system being strict, that sometimes in New Zealand the system is strict. It is what it is, not a millimetre beyond it, not a millimetre short of that, so–

**Alfredo:** They contradict themselves, because they also speak about giving a little extra, about the extra mile. It's a contradiction of the system.

**Agustina:** Going the extra mile. So... [Pause]. I don't know, um, Eliana I thought you wanted to say something just now.

**Eliana:** No, it's okay.

**Agustina:** No? Cool. So, if users– because... We can have all the opinions we want about interpreting, but if we look at interpreting as a service we are offering to someone who needs that service, why do we still see the role of the interpreter in terms that do not align with the expectations of the users?

**Luisa:** Because... One of the reasons could be that it's a profession which is not new, but using interpreters at the scale they are being used now is relatively new. And for us who come from a country where, when I was growing up, we were all Argentinian. Having someone who wasn't was uncommon. And then you come here and you need interpreters because there are so many different languages and there are so many different origins that people have to use or learn about interpreters for the first time. You go to the hospital, you are sick, they tell you “do you want one?”, you say yes, and it's the first time and people don't know.

**Agustina:** Yes, but... You are still a user who needs something and there's a person who needs to provide the service, and having a gap between what the user wants and the service that's being offered is complicated.

**Antonia:** But we are assuming that we are providing the service exclusively for one of the parties and what I understand, and that's my personal opinion, is that the service is offered to all the parties we are interpreting for. We don't interpret for only one



person. Except, well, maybe during a conference, obviously. That's a different context. But in the context of public services, we are facilitating communication between two parties. We need to somehow equalise the needs of both parties and well... Maybe I'm going off a tangent.

**Luisa:** I disagree with going to a hospital, for example, which is where people are so vulnerable. Well, in the court as well. In the tribunal. It's for both parties. And that's also hard because they want you to be a different way. Both parties are asking you to be something different. And you can be, be... professional. If you remain within your role, you're in your role.

In order to encourage the adaptation of the NZSTI's code of ethics to reflect Aotearoa's multiculturalism, interpreter education and research must emphasise that professionalism is not a universal concept. Rather, it is subjective and socially-constructed, and "this culture-boundness affects interpreters' codes of ethics, their understanding of their own role, recruitment and quality factors, and consequently interpreting strategies" (Rudvin, 2007, p. 48). If interpreters are not taught how to critically assess concepts such as neutrality and professionalism, how these concepts were developed and who they are benefitting, interpreters may not develop the skills to acknowledge or realise that they are holding ethnocentric views or perpetuating oppression (Elliott, 2016).

**Agustina:** When you remain within your role, what you're doing is choosing one of the parties, and the party that you're choosing is the one which is not the user. I mean, that's what the codes of ethics demand of you. So why do we still see the role of the interpreter in terms that are not aligned with the expectations of the users? Alfredo answered that question by saying that, in New Zealand, the system is strict and that, even if users supported an expansion of the interpreter role, the system, codes and institutions hinder any expansion of our role. So you're adopting the professional stance which is defined by people who are not service users.

**Luisa:** But there's something else. That user who is sick or needs to go to court knows one interpreter. And that's their interpreter. But the interpreter is with you at the

tribunal today, at two they need to go to the hospital, at three– Imagine being mentor, lawyer, social worker, nurse, mother, what other roles were there? Of all those people! The mental workload. I remember, and you must remember as well, the– Plus, people are sick, have problems, don't have money, don't have a house. Thousands of problems. I'm telling you, thousands. They are accused of rape. Well, the whole range. If you get involved in each one of those issues, you end up–

**Valeria:** It wouldn't be sustainable for the interpreter.

**Luisa:** The interpreter needs to look after themselves. It's very hard. I've had really hard cases. And then getting home, being overwhelmed, not being able to focus because of everything I'd been experiencing at work.

**Agustina:** Well, but we could also say that that's the interpreter's job, right?

**Luisa:** Totally, that's the job, but the interpreter needs to handle it in a way that doesn't affect them, and if you do all those–

**Agustina:** But that doesn't mean that the only option to deal with that is–

**Alfredo:** That's English propaganda.

**Agustina:** I also think so.

**Alfredo:** Be a machine and don't have feelings. That's the English mentality.

Luisa and Valeria's concerns about emotional overload are supported by studies on the considerable psychological and emotional stress that interpreters in Aotearoa are exposed to (Crezee et al., 2011; González Campanella, 2022). This emotional impact can be addressed by offering access to professional supervision, counselling, briefing and debriefing sessions, and refugee-specific training (Crezee et al., 2011). The need to develop wellbeing practices to cope with the emotional impact of interpreting work is one of the main principles underpinning trauma-informed interpreting, which integrates research on trauma into interpreters' professional practice (Bancroft, 2017). However, recent studies conducted in Aotearoa have found that interpreters have limited

training on culturally responsive and trauma-informed practice to work with vulnerable populations, as well as limited access to professional support (González Campanella, 2022). Interestingly, trauma informed care focuses on empowering survivors and supporting their autonomy, which is in keeping with the concept of allyship for social justice (Minges, 2016).

**Antonia:** I think you're holding totally dichotomous positions.

**Valeria:** Yes.

**Antonia:** I think that, in my opinion, your points of view are extremely radical and I believe there's a middle ground which we should be working on and aiming for.

**Valeria:** Definitely.

**Antonia:** I think that we can be empathic because we are, because I think that the majority of those who do this are coming from a place of empathy and interest in the other, beyond our love for the language and whatever, while still having certain professional protections because we are still human beings and we have to live with that afterwards. And having a clear limit for the help we offer, because the user also needs to understand not only that we are human beings, but also that they're offloading on a professional who, in 99% of the cases, is not qualified for that, so it's even a risk for the user to expect that from a person who doesn't have-

**Valeria:** and is not in the interest of the user to be advised without knowing. To be advised by someone who is not prepared, right? I think that- I agree with Antonia. I- my vision in life and in relation to the profession and to everything I do tends to be about mediating, right? And about trying to get everyone to understand each other. Maybe that's also why I'm an interpreter. I think this is great, the fact that we are here is excellent to start the conversation about the fact that, I think, it's valid and necessary perhaps to redefine those limits a bit, avoiding the extremes because I think it's in the doctor's and the patient's interest, or in the lawyer's and the defendant's interest, whatever, for the communication to flow. Any redefinition of the limits that encourages the user to speak and prevents them from closing up because they are facing a rock (the interpreter), and that allows for the communication to happen, is valid in itself. If the clarification he [Alfredo] was given at the hospital because he was offended allowed him to open up and not say "bye, I'm leaving, this is a joke", then

that's cultural mediation. He [the interpreter] explained that it was cultural, but nothing else. He didn't say "um, don't say that to the doctor-". No. He only went so far. So maybe it is about redefining those limits a little without going against the codes of ethics, of course, which are there for a reason.

**Agustina:** So that's what I want us to achieve today. But we won't get there at all if we continue to discuss things like this. I brought you all here today because I know that you all think something different. I mean, that's exactly why I brought you all here. Because you come from different places, with different information and you believe in different things. But this section is about the users. It was the users who- all of them, well, there were only four users, but they all commented very positively on the closeness with the interpreter, the lack of impartiality, interpreters' humanity, etc. In fact, the next point about their perceptions on the ally theory and social justice in relation to interpreting- not everyone knew what the ally theory is, which is what we'll cover at the end.

The presentation of the themes from the one-on-one dialogues was interrupted on several occasions. Even though the interruptions meant that there was not enough time to address the three pre-prepared questions at the end of the meeting, they could be considered an indication that the parties were interested in the research and craved spaces for dialogue. The majority of the attendees expressed their desire to continue the conversation at a subsequent meeting, which would have been a possibility were it not for the time constraints imposed by university deadlines, as well as the COVID-19 lockdown of August 2021 in Aotearoa, which began the day after the meeting took place (Unite against COVID-19, 2021). However, the interest in the topic and the keen participation of the parties involved could be considered indicative of the need to create more spaces for dialogue and expand on the current research. Moreover, the situation could be indicative of the need to engage with communities in relevant and

culturally-affirming ways instead of defaulting to foreign and external research practices (Nakhid & Farrugia, 2021).

[I continued with the presentation mostly uninterrupted until I made the following comment.]

**Agustina:** I'm a professional interpreter, a full member of NZSTI, and I've never had a single workshop on inequality, social justice, systemic problems–

**Luisa:** But because it's not–

**Eliana:** But some can be inherent to human beings. What you're saying about inequality, social justice. My view is that– I can't be here as an interpreter because I'm not an interpreter, because even though I play that role, social work is also a thing, which is what we do. So I find it very hard to see this as something you go to and you say what is being said and if I see that rights are being violated or if I see that the person doesn't understand or is very vulnerable... I can't remain silent. I couldn't do it. I'll share an experience that I had with a participant during a medical appointment. I was going as her support worker. And when we got to the appointment, they told us there was no interpreter. And I said, "but we booked one". And they said, "oh, sorry–

**Agustina:** They're not here.

**Eliana:** "They're not here, *you* can be the interpreter". And I said "no, I'm not her interpreter". And we need to avoid that, because it happens a lot. It happens to us in ALAC. It's a classic, coming from the participant, or the doctor, or the agency in general. So, of course, well, so when I saw the participant, I obviously told her I'd do it. So we started talking and one of the questions– the doctor knew a little bit about her background and about her refugee status, etc. And she said, "ask her if she has had to face violence in her life". And I was like "oh, wow. I can't believe she's asking this". And so [the doctor asked], "what did she say?". And so what I did was say "look, she asked me this, if you don't want to answer, you don't have to".

**Luisa:** Yeah but that, that, that– you can do that because you are a social worker, so it's okay for you to do that because it is within your role.

**Eliana:** But as a good interpreter, I'd do it also.

**Luisa:** No, you can't. You can't because you, as an interpreter, you are nobody to decide if the person has to answer or not. No.

**Agustina:** As an interpreter, I would do it as well.

**Luisa:** No.

**Eliana:** I would do it. Because it's something obvious. She's here suffering because of the violence in Colombia.

**Luisa:** Those questions get asked all the time. I interpreted– I interpreted that a thousand times. Questions like “have you been raped?”, “have you experienced violence?”. All the time. Agustina, you haven't?

**Agustina:** Yes, but–

**Luisa:** All the time.

**Agustina:** But it's a matter–

**Luisa:** It's not once in a while. “Oh, so don't answer”. And the doctor will ask me “are they replying?”. “No, because I told them not to answer the question that you have just made”. I won't get a job ever again.

**Eliana:** No. I would say it because– no. I clearly respect your position. I'm sorry, but I don't share it at all.

**Luisa:** Well, but you're not an interpreter.

**Agustina:** No, but I don't share it either.

**Eliana:** No, look. The fact that I don't have your studies or haven't graduated as an interpreter does not mean that I haven't performed some advocacy or even voluntary roles for things that my community needs. That means I am immersed in that. It's not about qualifications–

**Luisa:** But that's not the interpreter's role.

**Eliana:** For you, Luisa.

**Luisa:** No, not just for me. It is– that's the interpreter's role.

Luisa's resistance when confronted with different scenarios can be interpreted in relation to previous research which found that

interpreters tend to prefer a “maintaining norms schema” (Dean, 2015, p. 207). Diverging from the status quo and its normative behaviours has a high cost which comes with fear of blame and criticism, or as in Luisa’s case, the fear of “never getting a job again”. This, in turn, tends to increase the likelihood of decision avoidance, defined as the behaviour through which individuals try to circumvent decision-making by delaying or choosing an option which is perceived as a nondecision (Dean, 2015). To assess the possibility of incorporating users’ views to interpreting practice, professional interpreters must be capable of engaging in a critical analysis of the context of each interpreted event, shifting the focus outwards beyond the interpreter and the field of translation studies as a discipline (Drugan & Tipton, 2017). In this sense, a research methodology fostering horizontality could offer a space of equality and autonomy for members of CALD communities to voice their needs, preferences and concerns.

**Eliana:** It’s okay and I can very much respect that. But let’s discuss that from a place of respect.

**Luisa:** I’ll give you a silly example. It’s like me selling a dress in a shop, and you buy it and then I go and say “and what are you going to wear it with? Oh, but how are you going to wear it with those shoes? It’s terrible” or “wear it with this”.

**Agustina:** No, it’s not the same.

**Eliana:** No, it’s not the same.

**Agustina:** It’s not the same because the consequences of having a vulnerable person face a situation which re-traumatises them is not the same. I mean, we’re talking about people.

**Luisa:** I understand.

**Agustina:** We are talking about people.

**Luisa:** I understand and I agree, but the psychologist, psychiatrist, doctor, GP, nurse who asks the question, they are responsible, not me.

**Agustina:** Yes, they are responsible, but you are also making the decision to transmit any action–

**Luisa:** I have to transmit it.

In several instances throughout the group dialogue, Luisa distanced herself from the potential consequences of her decisions, such as the re-traumatisation of vulnerable interpreting service users or the possibility of CALD defendants declaring themselves guilty without enough information or an understanding of the situation. This could be seen to reflect the principles of non-intervention, objectivity and invisibility typical of a conduit model of interpreting (Witter-Merithew, 1999). However, translation and interpreting can be considered a “caring” profession (Drugan & Tipton, 2017, p. 120). Education for other caring professions such as social work and medicine tends to focus on social responsibility. In the context of interpreting, an emphasis on social responsibility would make it possible to move past self-interest to “questions about how translation can support better living together as an ethical goal” (Drugan & Tipton, 2017, p. 121). A shared sense of social responsibility would support interpreters’ ability to move past the concept of neutrality, which “often blinds them to the consequences of their actions” (Baker & Maier, 2011b, p. 3).

**Alfredo:** I have the following question. We know that doctors handle a vocabulary that us here don’t understand. Same goes for systems engineers and lawyers in court.

**Luisa:** Excuse me, who doesn’t understand it?

**Alfredo:** Well, us.



**Luisa:** Us who?

**Alfredo:** Those who are not specialised in lawyers' language.

**Luisa:** Us who?

**Alfredo:** Do you understand lawyers' and doctors' language?

**Luisa:** Absolutely.

**Alfredo:** So you studied law.

**Luisa:** I didn't study law but I studied at university. But not only that, because I took the university course which we do here for legal and medical settings, but that's not how I learnt it. I learnt it in the streets, working in the court, jury trials, with charges that, if found guilty, you spend 20 years in jail, in operating theatres, with people in intensive care, that's how I learnt.

**Agustina:** Yes, I mean, it is a part of the role of the interpreter.

**Luisa:** And I can perfectly understand what the lawyers and judges are talking about when I work because otherwise I couldn't do my job. Because it's not "cow, *vaca*", as I sometimes joke with my husband. He asks, "how was work?" and I say, "oh, easy, cow, *vaca*", like saying "it was a verbatim job". That's not what the court is like.

**Alfredo:** I'm really sorry, but I've had like 12 interpreters and I had a very high regard for them, but meeting you destroys every concept I had of interpreters.

**Luisa:** You've had 12 interpreters. I've had two thousand people to–

**Alfredo:** And I wouldn't like to ever, ever have you interpreting for a friend of mine or someone else because, honestly, you are a machine, not a human being. I say this with all due respect.

**Luisa:** Very well.

At this stage of the dialogue, the tension in the room peaked. Upon Alfredo's request for empathy and humanity, Luisa responded with an individualistic and practical approach which distanced her practice as a professional interpreter from the service users even further. Luisa did not seem to conceptualise interpreting as a service, but rather saw

interpreting as a technical profession. Her view is supported by interpreter education, which tends to focus on skills such as students' terminological command and fluency (Dean & Pollard, 2011).

As the only person with a refugee background in the room, Alfredo had first-hand, practical experience relying on interpreters to communicate.

Horizontal methodologies understand that academic specialised knowledge is not the only nor the most relevant kind of knowledge (Corona Berkin, 2020a). However, colonial attitudes towards academia and Eurocentric views on knowledge production continue to silence voices such as Alfredo's (Dotson, 2011).

Upon analysis, I understood Alfredo's reaction, anger and frustration in the context of epistemic violence which stops minority groups from being heard (Dotson, 2011). Silencing attempts are reflected in the interruptions and overlaps throughout the dialogue, as turn-taking can be used to openly challenge or demonstrate control (Rudvin, 2005). After this exchange, Alfredo grew progressively quiet and, later, he was the first to leave. Gabriela, the other service user in the room, said very little during this group dialogue. Users' silencing suggests the need for more research which seeks to prioritise service users' voices. This project sought to create a horizontal space for dialogue and the co-creating of knowledge through the one-on-one dialogues, the regular consultation with the Latin American community and the use of horizontal methodologies as a culturally affirming way for Latin American service users to co-produce knowledge.

**Agustina:** Okay. Well. Well. Let's be civilised.

**Luisa:** Absolutely.

**Agustina:** No, you two, both sides. Um, clearly, clearly your position and the... Opposite position, because I also believe in some of what Alfredo is saying—this is the problem that we need to solve. I mean, it is the problem that we need to solve as a community. It's the problem that we have, because the fact that you, Lau, think about the interpreter role the way you do comes from the way in which interpreting is taught, what we are told about the interpreter's role.

**Luisa:** Not at university so much—

**Agustina:** And where did you get this—

**Luisa:** Working.

**Agustina:** How do you justify the—

**Luisa:** Everything I've learnt, I learnt it at work, mostly. The training was the obligatory training.

**Agustina:** But—

**Eliana:** Like me, I've been learning through my work.

**Luisa:** Of course, it is in the streets that you learn how things really are.

**Agustina:** No, because I also have experience as an interpreter and I don't share the same views.

**Luisa:** Well, there are differences—

**Valeria:** It's also about interests, right? About what you want to do with your profession and what Lau wants and seeks as well—

**Alfredo:** This is called common sense. It's called common sense.

**Valeria:** — her position is that maybe she has a profile which focuses more on the language, only and exclusively, and maybe what you [Agustina] are looking for, what I believe is your project, if you identify a problem in the profession—which has been there for many years, and a lot has changed since interpreting first started—you identify a problem and you have an interest in solving that problem, as you say. And maybe you're not only seeking to have people understand each other, but also, if there's something preventing communication because people are uncomfortable, feel vulnerable, don't want to disclose information, like in the case of this girl who was

being asked something really intimidating, it is ultimately a bit related, because it's like she won't want to communicate and she won't want the help if the first thing the doctor asks is "hey, were you raped?". So...

**Luisa:** But the doctor doesn't ask "hey, were you raped?".

**Valeria:** I know, I know. I'm exaggerating, of course, but I mean that, clearly, there is a problem because if the intimidating feeling or that problem exists, at the end of the day, that person won't be helped how they could be helped by the professionals.

**Eliana:** Or they lie, they simply lie.

**Gabriela:** Of course, they close up.

**Valeria:** So the problem is there, so maybe in this case maybe what Agus is looking for is to say "yes, I understand what interpreting has been up until now, but maybe it's not working how it should. And if we have the opportunity to improve it a little–

**Gabriela:** to add like a bit more humanity.

**Alfredo:** That's the point, that's what I'm saying. It's what I'm saying. That's the matter.

**Gabriela:** Human warmth.

Valeria made the connection that if something is stopping a vulnerable person from feeling comfortable enough to speak, the interpreter cannot fulfil their communicative role. Her comment suggests that there is a relationship between the way we address vulnerability and our role as interpreters. At the same time, on one of the few occasions that Gabriela did speak, she reasserted the importance of interpreters' humane behaviour. This once again indicates a need for interpreter education that focuses on situated practice, where very complex power dynamics are at play. Being able to recognise these dynamics would help the interpreter solve practical issues where a deontological understanding of a written code of ethics is not enough to address a

particular dilemma (Bergunde & Pöllabauer, 2019; Dean & Pollard, 2018).

**Agustina:** Because apart from that, I think that the reason why we do our job, I mean, why do you [Luisa] work as an interpreter, beyond what you get paid? Because if it is about the pay–

**Luisa:** No, it's not about what I get paid.

**Agustina:** If it is about the pay, then honestly you should be doing something else, right? [Laughs].

**Luisa:** No, it's because I find it fascinating, I don't know, I love it. It's a very interesting job.

**Eliana:** In the case that Agustina mentioned, Julie's case, who was in the hospital with her son, where nobody helped her and you know that she's alone, would you have supported her a little or simply kept to your limit of "I interpret and leave"?

**Luisa:** That happens all the time, it's not Julie. It happens all the time. And it happens more in the refugee centre. I'm not going there nowadays, but it happens all the time. And you need to make a decision, what do you do? Do you become a social worker and you focus on that, or do you remain within your role? In the refugee centre and in Julie's hospital there are doctors, nurses, there are... As I said, there's help to deal with trauma, palliative care–

**Eliana:** no, no, I just–

**Luisa:** –but the interpreter has a different role.

**Eliana:** I respect that.

**Antonia:** What I'm wondering, actually, I believe that you have the right to act the way you act because the reality is that the profession is conceived within those boundaries, and what you do is fine and within the professional boundaries. Nobody can argue with that.

**Alfredo:** I agree, that's correct. Correct.

**Antonia:** And if you understand that that's the best way forward, you are in all your right, of course. And if you are at peace acting that way, that's perfect. What I would question is, for example, your stance is perfect, it's how you feel it. Have you

experienced at any point during your extensive career the feeling or need to intervene in a way that goes beyond this quasi-machine interpretation which you describe? Has it happened to you and why did it make you–

**Luisa:** No, it's not quasi-machine. Yes, it has happened.

[The group proceeded to discuss examples of situations that would require interpreter intervention, questioning Luisa about what her actions would be in those cases.]

**Luisa:** Yes, yes, no, no, no. In extreme cases, I don't only need to transfer from A to B, *vaca*, cow. I obviously need to make sure that the person has understood what I've transferred. Otherwise my work is useless.

**Antonia:** Exactly.

**Luisa:** Otherwise my work is no use. And then I stop and I always say– I need to make sure, especially if I've signed something, of course, but even when I haven't signed anything, I need to make sure that they are understanding because otherwise why am I even there. Not to transfer words, that's for sure.

**Antonia:** Of course, that's a type of intervention.

After a considerable amount of resistance, Luisa accepted that, in some cases, an interpreter does need to ensure that the user is understanding what is being said. Her comments are reminiscent of the one Alfredo made during the one-on-one dialogues about interpreters needing to “add footnotes” to explain information, the same way researchers do when writing their theses. It would seem that Luisa might be intervening in more ways than she realizes, but has not been able to acknowledge it because, theoretically, she is against those interventions. According to the literature, interpreters must be able to “[accommodate] necessary shifts and changes in their own roles”, but this “stands in stark contrast at times to what researchers and

practitioners think the role of a health interpreter should be” (Major & Napier, 2019, pp. 184–185). Reading through the transcript, I got a feeling that, at this stage of the dialogue, the meeting was turning into the education session on inequality, social justice and systemic problems that I was calling for earlier in the dialogue.

**Luisa:** To ensure that they are understanding, a hundred percent. But, but, intervene in a way in what is happening so as to change the direction of it, absolutely not.

**Antonia:** No, I understand–

**Valeria:** No, I think that we agree on that, at least those of us who have interpreted at some point, that’s clear. I think that’s for sure, for sure, because we didn’t study to be a lawyer, we didn’t study to be anything, anything that is not interpreting. I think, I think that where you’re heading is, for example, I was thinking about the example of the doctor– oh, in the example of the girl who was being asked if she had experienced domestic violence, or sexual violence, or gender violence, whatever. If at that moment maybe to pre-empt that situation, as an interpreter you can, at the beginning, when you introduce yourself, knowing the– like having a safety net, when you introduce yourself you can explain to the person answering or who is in that vulnerable situation “this interpretation will happen as follows, I will perform my services this way, I want it to be clear to both parties that neither of you has the obligation to answer–” or I don’t know, have a series of guidelines or previous rules so that nothing can surprise us and catch us offside when we need to make the decision– I say this because I’ve never had to interpret– First of all, I trained as a conference interpreter and afterwards, through my translator training and other stuff, I have studied to be [a community interpreter], but I don’t have a master’s in public services. I started with conferences. So the jobs I’ve done in public services have never included a question of that kind. So I have never had to face the moment in which I’ve had to make a decision, which I imagine many of you have, especially you [Luisa], as you’ve been in all those situations which you have to solve in the moment. I wonder if the solution, focusing more on the solution rather than the opinions now also– with the project in mind, if maybe the solution is to seek and take a step back, knowing that these situations can happen, where someone is vulnerable, see if I can take that precaution, somehow.

**Luisa:** Do you want me to answer?

**Valeria:** Yes.

**Luisa:** My experience at least. That happens a lot. In– I’ve done a lot of this work, which is horrible, but when I was starting, it was what I did so that I could start somewhere. Jobs of–

**Alfredo:** Patience...

**Luisa:** –psychotherapy with refugees. People who have just arrived. And it’s really bad. And that happens at the beginning. There is like an introduction which you need to interpret completely to break the ice with that person, and confidentiality is explained, and that there will be stuff which will be very private, that you don’t need to answer everything, that what you don’t want to answer you don’t answer, that– the usual. That’s what happens. It’s rare to have a psychotherapy or psychology consultation, it’s rare if there’s no such preface.

**Antonia:** But the problem, in my experience, is that it only happens in that field and that, in general, those introductions are given by the service providers, and I–

**Luisa:** Yes, no, not you. The service providers.

**Antonia:** –believe and, this was my training, and I’m also here to improve the service and with my study I promote an improvement in interpreter training, and one of the principles I promote is that the interpreter’s introduction is key, I think, and must be a part of all services and must be in the hands of the interpreter. Not the provider. The interpreter has to go in, talk to the user first and explain the rules–

**Valeria:** Right.

**Antonia:** –and immediately after they have to transfer that same knowledge to the provider and allow for the parties to communicate knowing the rules. And the other thing that I think would help solve this situation and how I promote that we address it is what is known as strategic mediation. I don’t think that the interpreter has to be an advisor nor give the information nor help as an interpreter.

**Alfredo:** I don’t either, I don’t either.

**Antonia:** Cool. What I understand is that the interpreter, when faced with a situation, whether that is an uncomfortable, violent, out of place question or there’s information missing, the interpreter must step out of the interpretation and, in the third person say that they are detecting that there might be a certain disconnection in the communication, that such a question might be sensitive, whatever, and immediately transfer the information to the other party. So that both parties know what is happening, and avoid offering solutions. Allow for the parties to solve it because,



ultimately, I understand that we need to empower the users. It's part of my study. And that each one of them has the information and are able to solve what they need to solve. And you simply alert the parties in the third person that something might be happening. And then it's on them. If it is actually a problem or not, they'll solve it.

**Luisa:** But that is if it's something that the interpreter can contribute, but if it is within the limits of the person's job, you can't intervene, because that's how they've envisaged the consultation.

**Antonia:** I understand that you can't go to an asylum interview and tell the asylum officer "I think that this question will make the user uncomfortable", because obviously that's what they're looking for there. It is about understanding the field that you are working in, but if you're in an interview with a doctor and you have a patient who has a-

**Luisa:** I understand.

**Antonia:** -who comes from a refugee and asylum context and you know that there is a high prevalence of trauma, of many types of vulnerabilities, and the person makes a question which is so out of place that it could re-traumatise and a whole bunch of things, yes, as a minimum, giving a warning and saying "the interpreter would like to add that...", after that, if the doctor still wants to delve into it, you have to transmit the information and the patient will have the authority and the power to decide whether they want to answer.

**Agustina:** Okay, speaking of which-

**Luisa:** Oh, I wanted to add one more thing.

**Agustina:** No, no. Speaking of which, we'll move on to the solutions to all of these problems that we have, which are clearly very hard to solve. So in my research I'm looking for the possibility of interpreting from the point of view of an ally. Much of what was said has to do with how we stand as interpreters and from which model. With what understanding of what we do. And what we are allowed to do and say, and what we are not. And any model we use, I think, needs to have a degree of flexibility so that we can adapt to all of these things we said. The setting. If we are talking about a refugee interview or if we're talking about a doctor's appointment. If we're talking about a courtroom or if we're talking about a business meeting. They're all things that the interpretation model, that is, how we stand as interpreters, must take into account.

[After this comment, I presented the theory on allyship and we moved on to the pre-prepared questions

The entire dialogue above took place as I was trying to present the themes from Section 5.2. This limited the time that we had to go through the three questions I had planned, so we could only address the first one: “What are the ideal characteristics of an interpreter?”. Participants wrote their answers on a piece of paper which was then stuck on a poster on the wall. We discussed each contribution one by one until we agreed on its content, adding clarifications if necessary. Figure 6 shows the result of this process, which was then transcribed and translated to create Table 2. This table also includes a summary of the group’s comments as we discussed each contribution.

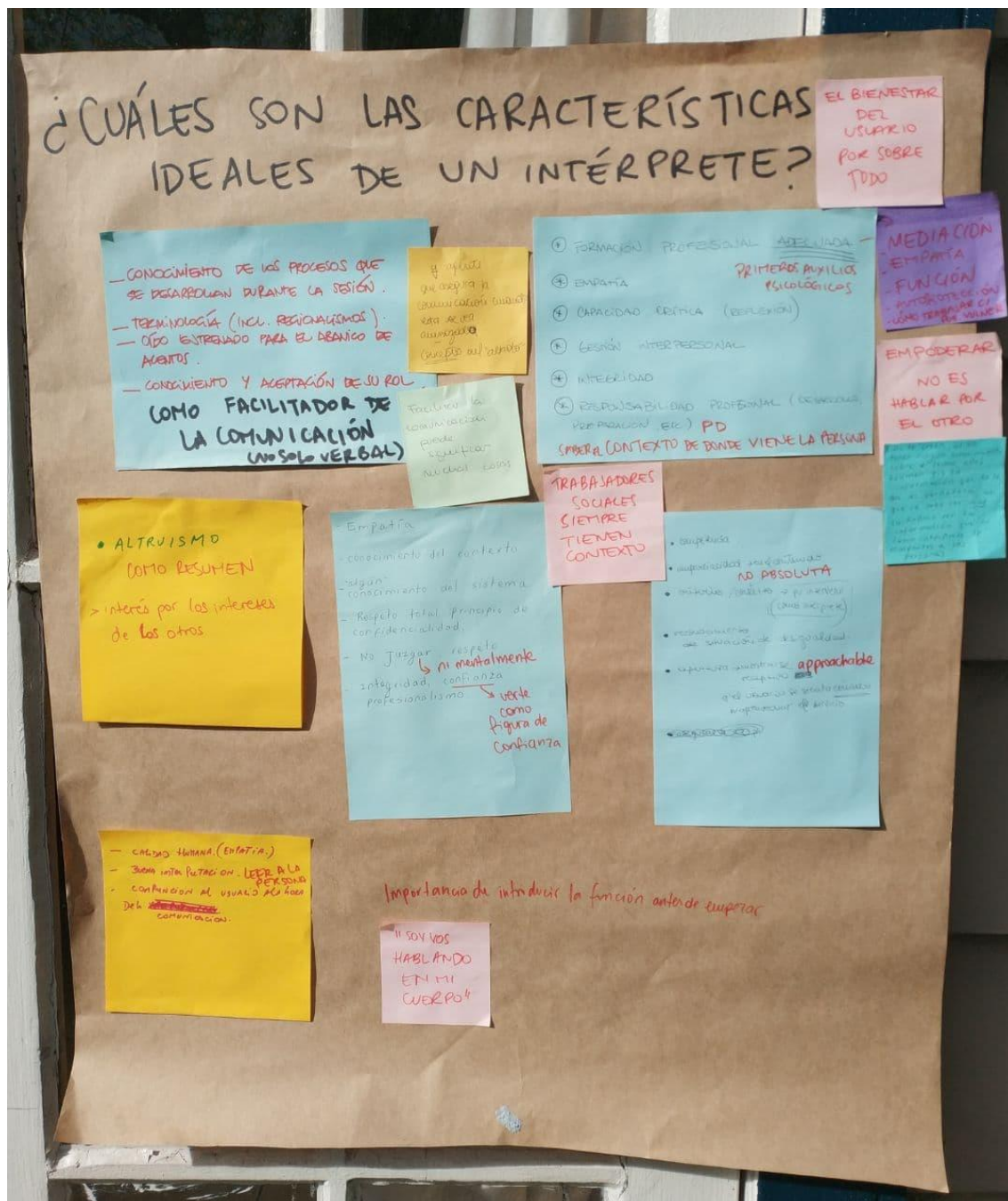


Table 2

*Translation of the contributions on Figure 6, with a summary of the group comments and discussions*

Interpreters	
Ideal characteristics of an interpreter	Group comments and discussions
Knowledge of the processes that take place during the session	
Terminology (including regionalisms)	
Ear trained to understand the range of accents	
Knowledge and acceptance of their role as facilitator of communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– To facilitate communication can mean many things. Interpreters can understand the term in different ways</li> <li>– Communication is not only verbal</li> <li>– “Communication” must be defined according to the context</li> <li>– Communication must be ensured</li> <li>– Allyship is necessary in some contexts to ensure communication</li> </ul>
Appropriate professional training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Beyond linguistic abilities</li> <li>– Need to expand interpreter education: to further develop the understanding of the role, mediation, interpreter self-care, how to work with vulnerable populations, psychological first aid</li> <li>– Need to stop interpreters from hurting service users while trying to help</li> </ul>
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Empathy is not the same as compassion</li> <li>– Listed by at least one member in each group (service users, community representative and interpreters)</li> </ul>

The wellbeing of the service user above all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Being very careful with information offered because service users trust interpreters</li> <li>– Learn about empowerment, which does not mean speaking for others</li> <li>– Avoid taking over other professional roles</li> <li>– Ensuring that the person has understood before finalising the job</li> <li>– Acknowledge the shortcomings of the systems</li> <li>– Elevating problems and ensuring a response is actioned to comply with duty of care</li> <li>– There are situations that force interpreters to question how much they can intervene</li> </ul>
Critical capacity (reflection)	
Interpersonal management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Being able to deal with different parties</li> <li>– Turn-taking</li> </ul>
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Listed by interpreters and the community representative</li> </ul>
Professional responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Continuous professional development</li> <li>– Preparation</li> <li>– Up to date with current affairs to know about the contexts that people come from</li> <li>– Knowledge about the assignment before going in, like in the case of social workers, who always go in knowing the context</li> </ul>
Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– As a summary</li> <li>– Includes linguistic and contextual, but also new things that came up during the dialogue</li> </ul>
Impartiality in terms of content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Not an absolute</li> <li>– Including the nuances discussed during the dialogue</li> <li>– Flexible understanding of impartiality when needed to facilitate communication</li> </ul>
Being able to judge when to intervene as an interpreter	

Acknowledgement of inequalities	– Might seem obvious, but is not inherent to every person
Approachability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Making the user feel comfortable so they can benefit from the service</li> <li>– Can be achieved without violating any standards</li> <li>– Even through body language</li> </ul>
Knowing about the importance of introducing the interpreter's role at the beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– In order to establish certain guidelines, like the fact that absolutely everything will be interpreted</li> <li>– “I am you speaking through my body”</li> </ul>

### Service users

Ideal characteristics of an interpreter	Group comments and discussions
Altruism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– As a guiding principle</li> <li>– Being interested in the other person's interests</li> </ul>
Good understanding of the service user	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Being able to read the user</li> <li>– Understand the situation that the users find themselves in</li> </ul>
Humanity	
Understanding the user	
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Empathy is not the same as compassion</li> <li>– Listed by at least one member in each group (service users, community representative and interpreters)</li> </ul>

### Community representative

Ideal characteristics of an interpreter	Group comments and discussions
Knowledge of the user's personal context	
“Some” knowledge of the New Zealand system	
Full respect for the principle of confidentiality	
No judgement	– Not even in the mind

Respect	
Trustworthiness	
Professionalism	
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Empathy is not the same as compassion</li> <li>– Listed by at least one member in each group (service users, community representative and interpreters)</li> </ul>
Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Listed by interpreters and the community representative</li> </ul>

The information in Table 2 highlights the importance of interpreters focusing on communication to avoid encroaching on other professional roles, such as adopting the role of the lawyer and giving service users legal advice. The idea of interpreters acting as communication facilitators gained traction in the early 1980s, when interpreters began to be considered language and communication-mode experts (Dean & Pollard, 2018; Roy, 1993). However, Angelelli (2004a) found that “interpreters are often portrayed as *invisible* language facilitators” (p. 7). This means that the concept of communication facilitation is not necessarily at odds with the unattainable idea of invisible interpreters. According to Roy (1993), many of the labels that emerged as a response to empirical research proving interpreters’ visibility and intervention in every interpreted event continue to convey the same conduit approach. Therefore, this study suggests that, for the advancement of the interpreting profession, it is not enough to find new labels with which to name models that are not altering deep-seated notions such as that of neutrality and non-intervention. Instead, the focus must be on self-reflection, critical thinking and responsibility in relation to situated interpreted events (Baker & Maier, 2011; Dean & Pollard, 2018).

This view of the profession has implications for interpreting ethicality. In community interpreting, the contextualisation of interpreted events fosters a reconsideration of “notions of neutrality, non-partisanship or invisibility, because the context is often one of power asymmetry” (Cronin & Luchner, 2021, p. 94). During the group dialogue, the principle of impartiality, for example, was seen as secondary to the primary goal of communication. This turns impartiality into a flexible concept tied to other factors such as the need for interpreters’ approachability, distancing it from the unaccommodating definition of impartiality in the code of ethics (NZSTI, 2013). The principle of confidentiality, on the other hand, was considered an overriding principle during the group dialogue, as was the case during the one-on-one dialogues with service users. This complex understanding of interpreter ethicality echoes interpreting literature which fosters a teleological understanding of ethics with a “contextual, complex and hierarchical” application of ethical principles, understood as “interacting components” of a broader framework (Delgado Luchner & Kherbiche, 2019, pp. 256–257).

At the same time, while linguistic abilities such as knowledge of specific terminology and turn management were considered necessary, there is a general understanding that these abilities are not enough. This points to the need to expand interpreter education in Aotearoa to include information about the setting, as well as the broader context of inequality and systemic shortcomings. Interpreter education must include and foster mediation and critical thinking, and focus on the empowerment of service users. The group dialogue highlighted the role of interpreter education in developing interpreters’ care, both for themselves and others. This would help interpreters avoid negatively impacting vulnerable populations by accident and would offer tools for interpreters to process the complexities of their job, related trauma and stress. There is also a call for professional responsibility, which requires



constant professional development and preparation for each job. Finally, the group dialogue highlighted the significance of interpersonal skills and the need for approachability, respect, humanity, empathy, trustworthiness, understanding and altruism as core aspects of the interpreting profession.

### 5.3.3 Summary

This section discussed the third stage of knowledge creation, i.e. the stage of interpretation, which was conducted through the group dialogue. First, I presented an analysis of the *generative conflict*, *discursive equality* and the *autonomy over our own viewpoint* in relation to the group dialogue. This analysis highlighted the strengths and challenges of operationalising horizontal methodologies, particularly in the context of a master's thesis and in the midst of a pandemic. Secondly, I included the transcript of the group dialogue. My own reflections—aligned to the right of the page—spoke to that transcript, creating a horizontal, polyphonic text combining different knowledges which must be validated and understood in context. The section also included a picture of the poster created during the group dialogue (Figure 6) about the ideal characteristics of an interpreter. The picture was followed by a transcript of the contributions translated into English (Table 2), with a final reflection on the ways to incorporate allyship and social justice into spoken language interpreting.

## 5.4 Incorporating allyship and social justice into spoken-language interpreting

The current project was designed to address three research questions:

- 1) How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter? (RQ#1)
- 2) What are service users' perceptions on allyship and social justice in relation to the interpreting profession? (RQ#2)
- 3) How do interpreting service users think their perceptions on allyship and social justice should be incorporated into the interpreter's practice? (RQ#3)

These questions have been answered horizontally through the three complex stages of knowledge creation described above (Sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3). In keeping with horizontal methodologies, the analysis and interpretation of the data have not been separated from the dialogues themselves (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012). This section structures the knowledge presented above in a way that answers the research questions more directly, in lieu of a discussion section. However, it is simply a condensed version of the knowledge created through the dialogues, which has already been expressed throughout this chapter.

With regard to the first question, this research found that the service users involved in this study preferred a humane interpreter, rather than a conduit or machine. Users made clear and explicit calls for empathic, kind, caring, helpful and even affectionate services from their interpreters. Similarly, the findings suggested that users were prepared to overlook their interpreters' terminological or comprehension mistakes as long as the interpreters were seen to be dedicating enough time and attention to the users. In this sense, interpreters' accuracy and message transfer abilities, prioritised by the NZSTI's code (2013) of ethics and many

interpreter training programmes (Bergunde & Pöllabauer, 2019; Boéri & de Manuel Jerez, 2011; Liu & Hale, 2018), were considered secondary, or at least not explicitly mentioned or acknowledged by the users as a priority. In contrast, the findings suggested that caring attitudes are required to make users feel comfortable and trust their interpreters. Breaking the ice, establishing rapport, having close ties, and developing a familiarity with the interpreter were seen to improve communication.

In relation to ethics, service users favoured a flexible and context-dependent understanding of the ethical principles in the NZSTI's code of ethics (2013), which aligns with calls for teleological perspectives in interpreting practice and training (Dean & Pollard, 2018; Enríquez Raído et al., 2020). Service users portrayed the principle of impartiality as contingent on users' vulnerability and revealed negative attitudes towards the principle of clarity of role boundaries, which in many cases was seen to reflect coldness, selfishness, remiss or a lack of solidarity. Finally, even though the primacy awarded to the principle of confidentiality is in accordance with academic literature (Brisset et al., 2013; Gartley & Due, 2017; Jeffery & Salt, 2021; Paone & Malott, 2008), the findings of this research advance previous knowledge by presenting respect for confidentiality as a path to establishing closer relationships between interpreters and service users.

These findings mostly contradict previous research in Aotearoa (MBIE, 2016) which found an alignment between users' expectations of their interpreters and the guidelines in the NZSTI's code of ethics (NZSTI, 2013). It is possible that horizontally engaging with service users in a culturally affirming way made it viable for this research to access a different kind of knowledge regarding users' views on the interpreter role, as the manner research is conducted affects its capacity to represent marginalised populations (Fernández Santana et al., 2019). Nevertheless, more research is needed to expand on this understanding, especially considering the limited

number of service users involved in this project. Moreover, users' disagreements with the limitations imposed by the code of ethics (NZSTI, 2013) might be particular to the Latin American community. Therefore, to find more information about the needs and preferences of users from other CALD backgrounds, comparable culturally affirming research must be conducted so that the questions asked and the solutions that are sought emanate from what each community affirms and embraces as theirs (Nakhid, 2021).

In relation to the second research question about service users' perceptions on allyship and social justice, users showed limited previous knowledge of ally theory, but a readiness to adopt the concept. These findings advance Minges's (2016) conclusion that American Sign Language interpreters' positive views on allyship and social justice reveal a potential for the expansion of allyship within professional interpreting. Although Minges's (2016) research was conducted within the field of signed-languages, the current study reinforces and compliments her conclusion by revealing similarly positive views, in this case from the perspective of interpreting service users. Users' positive views might be attributable to their general understanding of, and first-hand experience with, social injustices in Aotearoa and Latin America. In agreement with existing local and international research (Crezee & Roat, 2019; Henderson & Kendall, 2011), this study underscored that, in some cases, linguistic aid alone might not be enough to guarantee access to services and information for members of CALD communities. Moreover, inadequate interpreting services were found to take an emotional toll on the users, reinforcing feelings of frustration, helplessness, disappointment and even depression. Furthermore, service users considered that inadequate services could have serious consequences for an individual's life, aggravating users' vulnerability, as well as affecting their own or their family's health, for example. By building on local research exposing the negative

impact of inadequate interpreting services on CALD service users (González Campanella, 2022; Henderson & Kendall, 2011), the findings encourage further research into interpreting practice and training in Aotearoa.

While other studies have called for community navigators to address immigrants' and forced immigrants' sociocultural needs (Henderson & Kendall, 2011), this project argues for an expansion and modification of the interpreter role in order to better accommodate users' demands. The findings stressed the significance of allowing interpreters to operate within a flexible model, where decision-making is subjected to each user's preferences. A series of factors were seen to affect these preferences, including previous trauma, the level of English proficiency, users' feelings of dependence on the interpreter, their religious faith, and a sense of shared identity or closeness with the interpreter.

Beyond individual users' preferences, the findings also highlighted the systemic nature of many of the issues mentioned by these users. In that sense, this study supports previous research in Aotearoa which found that many service users do not know how to access an interpreter (Henderson & Kendall, 2011). Consequently, ad-hoc interpreters are still being used, and service users are sometimes responsible for finding ways to bridge the communication gap. Even though having difficulties accessing professional interpreters is consistent with previous local and international literature (Enríquez Raído et al., 2020; MacFarlane et al., 2009), it must be noted that only one of the four service users shared this experience. This might be related to that user's immigrant background, which meant that she could not access the support offered to quota refugees when they first arrive in Aotearoa. It could also be related to the urgent and unplanned nature of her experiences in hospital. Therefore, Aotearoa would benefit from more research into the way immigrants—as opposed to quota refugees—with no or limited English proficiency access interpreting services. Such

research would shed light on the channels which can be used to share information about available services.

In spite of finding some problems with users' access to services and institutions, the study also offered indications that public servants in Aotearoa are doing their best to offer effective government services and considering alternatives to traditional ways of service provision, as recommended in MBIE's summary report on the use of interpreters in Aotearoa (2016). Doctors, for example, were considered to be kind and respectful, and their efforts to communicate with service users—even finding untrained bilinguals from their own networks to remedy the absence of professional interpreters—were broadly appreciated. However, service users maintained that cursory solutions do not resolve the problem. The lack of access to professional interpreting services was still considered a violation of their rights. In relation to this issue, the findings suggest that knowledge about the services available is conducive to a better engagement with professional interpreting services, while positive experiences with interpreters create a desire to re-engage with those services in the future.

Regarding the incorporation of users' perceptions on allyship and social justice into interpreting practice, the findings pointed to the importance of interpreters' empathy and flexibility, which some interpreting guidelines consider crucial when working with vulnerable populations (Bambarén-Call et al., 2012; Bergunde et al., 2018). The findings also called attention to what Valeria termed “nuance” among professional interpreters, as well as a conjoint call for a middle ground when making decisions. Previous research has considered that “a happy medium” is necessary to avoid both the over-intrusions arising from a helper role, and the rigidity of a stringent message-transfer role (Bancroft, 2015, p. 226). In this study, interpreters' empathy, self-reflection, critical thinking, responsibility and flexibility were considered

conducive to a better understanding of situated problems and needs, which would in turn allow for the incorporation of social justice and allyship concepts in interpreting. This view stands in contrast to an insistence on ideal interpreting scenarios and strict guidelines, supporting stances from scholars such as Pym (2017), who maintains the need to work on solutions for real issues arising on the ground.

The study also argues that the incorporation of allyship and social justice into spoken language interpreting requires the protection of people and spaces. On the one hand, the findings highlighted the need to create spaces where CALD service users' can share their knowledge as equals. In this sense, the findings address the urgent need to centre marginalised voices in the research process, particularly in countries such as Aotearoa, where the multicultural nature of its population has still not been reflected in research practices (Nakhid & Farrugia, 2021). On the other hand, the group dialogue indicated that interpreters' own mental health must also be protected, especially considering the additional expectations that would result from an emphasis on interpreters' professional responsibility (cf. Bancroft, 2015). The creation of space for interpreters' mental hygiene can be achieved through the implementation of measures such as peer review, supervision, and training on trauma and crisis intervention (Bergunde et al., 2018).

The professional interpreters involved in this project used the term "facilitator of communication" to refer to considerably different kinds of behaviour, which supports Roy's (1993) argument that finding new names for interpreting models is not enough of an advancement if these continue to reinforce the same conduit notions which have been prevalent since the beginning of interpreting professionalisation. Therefore, the incorporation of allyship and social justice must go beyond finding new labels for the interpreter role and bring about true change in the interpreting field by accompanying any discussions about new roles and models with a sharp focus on the

consequences of interpreters' actions. In that sense, the findings are consistent with previous calls for professional responsibility, which occupies a central position in other caring professions such as medicine, teaching and social work (Baker & Maier, 2011; Drugan & Tipton, 2017). Similarly, the findings support academic literature arguing for the consolidation of interpreting as a practice profession which requires a combination of technical, interpersonal and judgement skills (Dean & Pollard, 2018). Because of this, like Dean and Pollard (2018) suggest, discussions about the interpreter role within an ally model of interpreting cannot be the only factor guiding interpreters' decision-making, as deliberations over role must be complemented by a teleological understanding of ethics.

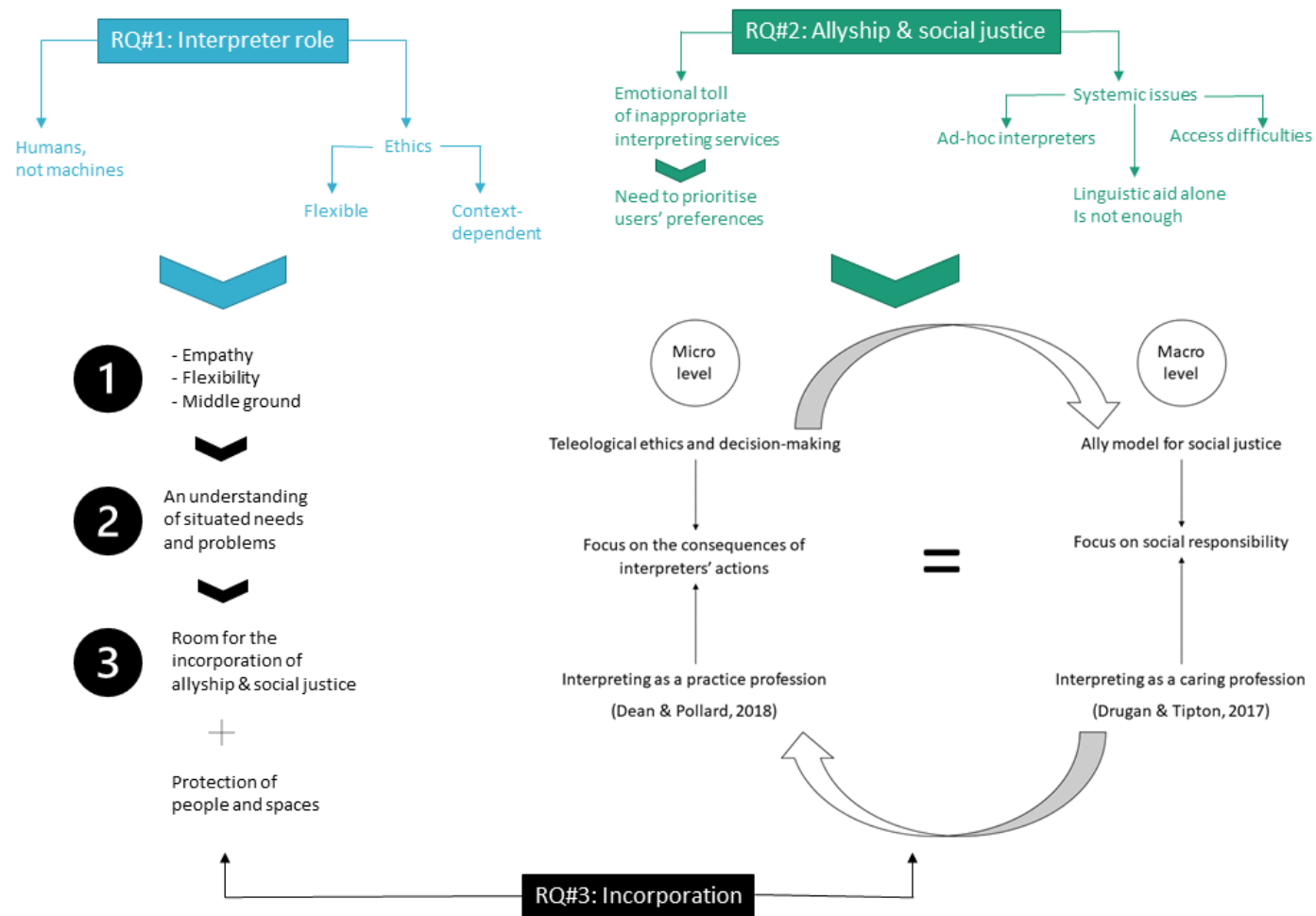
There is a mutually reinforcing relationship between an ally model of interpreting and social justice training, on the one hand, and a teleological understanding of ethics, on the other, as shown in Figure 7 below. The former offers a focus on the macro-level factors and systems affecting interpreting practice. Without it, interpreters run the risk of using ethical principles in oppressive ways because, as Alfredo maintained, ethicality goes beyond merely respecting the code. Without information about how codes are constructed, these can be easily understood as objective instead of culturally determined, resulting in a categorical use of ethical principles, rather than a critical and situated one (Dean & Pollard, 2011; Rudvin, 2007). To add the flexibility and reflexivity that service users are demanding, professionalism and ethical decision-making must be taught as culture-dependent, critically evaluating the status quo, and its systems and institutions.



The conclusions related to the first two research questions feed into the conclusions related to the third research question as shown in Figure 7 below. Figure 7 is a schematic representation of the answers to these questions and the relationships between them. Each question has been colour-coded, with the answers to first question appearing in blue, to the second one in green, and to the third one in black. Together, these answers indicate a path for the incorporation of allyship and social justice into spoken-language interpreting from the service users' perspective.

Figure 7

*Incorporating allyship and social justice into spoken-language interpreting*



## Chapter 6. Conclusion

Chapter 6 includes this project's limitations, as well as its original contributions to knowledge. It also makes a series of recommendations, both at the macro- and micro-levels, as it seeks to avoid simplistic solutions. At the macro-level, these recommendations involve interpreter training, future research, and policy and guideline development. At the micro-level, they are aimed at practising interpreters and interpreting students, with a more practical focus.

### 6.1 Contributions to knowledge

In spite of recent calls for research into how CALD individuals experience use of interpreters in Aotearoa (Britz, 2017), there is a dearth of local and international literature on spoken language interpreting from the perspective of service users (R. Edwards et al., 2005; Henderson & Kendall, 2011; Hlavac, 2011). Therefore, this study makes a significant contribution to knowledge about service users' experiences with spoken language interpreters. Moreover, in Aotearoa, no other interpreting research project has focused on the Latin American population in particular. This contribution is crucial because of the importance of providing adequate interpreting services for vulnerable CALD communities for whom the language barrier is only one of the many challenges posed by re-settlement (Henderson & Kendall, 2011). By focusing on CALD service users, Alexander et al. (2004) found a "different notion of professional practice than that currently being pursued" (p. 63). This research supports those findings and advances the knowledge about service users' preferences and needs. Furthermore, this knowledge addresses calls for clarity for community interpreters, trainers and stakeholders around the issues of paternalism, incorrect assumptions, users' silencing, self-examination and unconscious bias (Bancroft, 2015). This research also

advances the understanding of interpreting as a social practice, because horizontal methodologies, which understand dialogue as a process of identity formation and knowledge construction with the other (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012), were themselves conducive to the self-reflexivity needed for the development of a sociology of interpreting (Wolf & Fukari, 2007).

Methodologically, this project makes a novel contribution through its use of horizontal methodologies in interpreting studies, contributing to the field of decolonial and culturally affirming research. Like Fernández Santana's (2020) research using liming as a research methodology, this study argues that using horizontal methodologies was conducive to the active participation of the different Latin American parties involved in the research project. This stands in contrast to previous research experiences which have identified a difficulty securing CALD users' participation (e.g. R. Edwards et al., 2005; Major & Zielinski, 2016; Zimányi, 2010).

In contrast, horizontal methodologies maintain that research can be easily sustained over time when there is reciprocity and all sides are gaining knowledge (Corona Berkin, 2020a). During this project, an interest in the topic, a desire to contribute to the creation of new knowledge, the feeling of fraternity among Latin Americans, and sisterhood among women were some of the drivers of participation identified by the users. Shrestha-Ranjit et al. (2020) argued that the linguistic, cultural and religious background that one of the researchers shared with the participants became one of the main strengths of their study. This research furthers that argument, suggesting that the interest and desire for the co-production of knowledge are there if we engage with communities in relevant and culturally-affirming ways instead of defaulting to foreign and external research practices.

## 6.2 Research limitations

Kaltmeier (2012) argued that the requests imposed by public and private research institutions are often prioritised over stakeholders in the field of study when shaping research projects. In terms of institutional constraints, it was my intention to present the transcripts of every dialogue as whole and complete as possible following the horizontal understanding of dialogue as the place where knowledge is constructed (Corona Berkin, 2020a). However, the length of the raw transcripts and the word limits imposed on this thesis made that impossible. As a compromise, without taking away from each user's main contributions, narratives and voices, I presented summarised versions of the transcripts in the body of this thesis to foreground interpreting service users' voices. Moreover, to create spaces for horizontal dialogue and connection among Latin American service users, interpreters and community representatives, a group dialogue was included after the one-on-one dialogues. As a consequence, only four service users were involved in this research in order to keep it within the scope of this master's thesis. While these service users provided some anecdotal evidence of other members of the community having trust issues or quality concerns about their interpreters, they themselves had had broadly positive experiences. Although users' positive feedback was entirely fortuitous, the small number of users limited the variety of experiences involved in this research.

It is also worth highlighting the potential for further horizontalisation that this project presented. Firstly, even though I wrote the scripts of the videos used for data collection, I would like to acknowledge that the production, ownership and use of "digital dialogue tools" together with the community would have offered another level of horizontal meaning making to this project (Mitchell et al., 2018, p. 122). Horizontalising the production of the visual artefacts used for data collection to use them as tools for dialogue and engagement would contribute to the creation of

material which is culturally-relevant and draws from service users' own ways of knowing.

Secondly, I was the one who decided what parts of the transcripts were to be included in the body of this thesis, I conducted the thematic analysis and I determined the agenda for the group dialogue. Moreover, for the interpretation stage (Section 5.3 Interpretation), the group dialogue participants received only a summary of the themes (Section 5.2 Analysis) and did not have access to the full transcripts of the one-on-one dialogues with the service users. It is possible that this lack of horizontality had repercussions on the way the group dialogue developed, as discussed in Section 5.3.1. However, I tried to address these limitations by having two of the original four service users present in the group dialogue so that they could offer their knowledge directly and speak for themselves.

Finally, even though horizontal methodologies question the academic field's understanding of authorship as a way to accumulate prestige, encouraging co-authorship (Kaltmeier, 2017), I abided by institutional requirements that established that my contribution to the manuscript had to be of at least 80%. I also wrote this thesis in academic English, even though the whole research was conducted in my native Spanish language. Given that the use of academic rhetoric and of English as the academic lingua franca are considered limitations imposed by the academic field (Kaltmeier & Corona Berkin, 2012), I will be translating the findings into Spanish and sharing the knowledge through Latin American community organisation in Aotearoa such as ALAC.

## 6.3 Further recommendations

During an online seminar entitled *Translating refugees: conducting empirical research on the intersection of language and social justice* (Centre for Translation

[HKBU], 2021), K. Maryns commented on the difficulty of offering a list of recommendations based on a research project (personal communication, 9 December 2021). Findings are often extremely nuanced and complex, so presenting succinct bullet points that can be easily actioned risks simplification. She compared this process to the imposition of deontological rules that research and practice communities in interpreting studies have been trying to deconstruct (Dean & Pollard, 2018). During that same seminar, J. Boéri spoke of the difficulty of combining short-term action with the need for systemic change (personal communication, 9 December 2021). Therefore, this section will attempt to address change at the micro- and macro-levels to avoid simplistic solutions.

### **6.3.1 At the micro-level**

At the micro-level, professional interpreters and interpreting students are encouraged to engage with recent research on ethical decision-making (Dean & Pollard, 2018), trauma-informed interpreting (Bancroft, 2017) and social responsibility (Baker & Maier, 2011; Drugan & Tipton, 2017). This recommendation is in line with NAATI professional development requirements (NAATI, n.d.), mandatory as of 2024 for all interpreters working in the Aotearoa public sector (MBIE, 2021). It is also recommended that current and future interpreters get involved in practices of self-reflection and critical thinking to examine their own values, especially in relation to the broader societal context.

In line with the findings of this study, deemphasis of the conceptualisation of interpreters as an impartial and detached party would contribute to interpreters' embodiment of a more professionally responsible role. In turn, professional responsibility would encourage timely interpreter intervention which can help avert extreme ethical dilemmas (Dean & Pollard, 2018). In order to achieve this, interpreters

are encouraged to consider the ally model of interpreting as a flexible and critical option for behavioural guidance which can be used in combination with teleological decision-making tools.

Additionally, operating within the ally model would bring interpreters closer to the humane qualities preferred by service users, fostering respect for individual preferences and the empowerment practices suggested throughout the group dialogue. In more practical terms, the group dialogue also recommended that interpreters engage in an initial introduction to clarify expectations and establish interpreting guidelines together with the other parties involved in the exchange. The need to ensure understanding before finalising a job was also highlighted, together with the importance of escalating any problems—linguistic or otherwise—so that they can be addressed by a competent authority.

### **6.3.2 At the macro-level**

The ally model of interpreting is recommended as an alternative that would help cater to CALD communities' need for navigators who can offer more than linguistic support. However, at the macro-level and in line with the findings, further and broader interpreter training is needed to enable interpreters to fulfil this role responsibly. Cronin recently called for an ethical shift to help interpreters become embodied spokespersons for a translingual, participative, mediatory value system that can contribute to the creation of a different kind of world (Cronin & Luchner, 2021). For this to happen, training should cement a teleological view of ethics, focusing on professional and social responsibility, social justice, power differentials, mediation, racism, systemic inequality and work with vulnerable populations. Such training could foster interpreters' self-reflection on culture, identity and the consequences of



interpreters' decisions, which can help avoid unconscious personal and cultural bias (Baker & Maier, 2011; Bancroft, 2015).

Secondly, the Summary Report on the Use of Interpreters and Other Language Assistance in New Zealand (MBIE, 2016) suggested the need to disseminate information about the availability of interpreter services, their benefits and how to request them through existing government websites, language services portals, emails from Immigration New Zealand when visas are granted, and the refugee reception programme. This study has indicated a need to continue developing and reinforcing effective information campaigns, particularly for immigrants with limited English proficiency. For these purposes, the participation of CALD communities and the use of their own traditions and ways of knowing are crucial for success.

Thirdly, it is recommended that the NZSTI's code of ethics is modified to better fit teleological decision-making. The new code should be specific to the Aotearoa context, reflecting the multicultural nature of its people and conveying the values that underpin it with more clarity. Any modification should be conducted in consultation with stakeholders rather than imposed by representatives of traditional areas of interpreting practice or research, ensuring the horizontal participation of service users and respecting their knowledge. For this purpose, the creation of culturally-specific spaces for equal dialogue is presented as beneficial for participation and discussion. The development of teleological decision-making should be accompanied by the incorporation of networks and tools to relieve interpreters' psychological and emotional needs. These should include professional supervision, debriefing sessions, access to counselling, and an emphasis on wellbeing practices, both during training and at the professional level (Bancroft, 2017; Crezee et al., 2011; González Campanella, 2022).

Finally, future research focusing on service users' voices is warranted to further explore users' preferences and needs in relation to professional interpreting services. Policymakers and training programmes in Aotearoa would particularly benefit from the involvement of other CALD communities, especially considering that the current project was focused solely on the Latin American group. Moreover, anecdotal evidence of some Latin American service users' mistrust and negative feelings towards their interpreters indicates the need for further research involving a larger number of service users to access a broader pool of knowledge and experiences.

## 6.4 Closing remarks

After A gap was identified in the academic literature pertaining CALD service users' knowledge of community interpreting. Consequently, this project was designed together with the Latin American community in Aotearoa to explore service users' perspectives. The research focused on the interpreter role, particularly in relation to allyship and social justice. The study found that service users favoured humane and dedicated interpreters, which is incompatible with the strict deontological ethical principles contained in the NZSTI's code of ethics (2013). In contrast to the precepts perpetuated by the conduit metaphor in interpreting, users' understanding of ethical principles such as impartiality and clarity of role boundaries was considerably flexible and situated. These views seemed permeated by users' strong grasp of social injustice, othering practices and vulnerability, often experienced first-hand.

This study presents the ally model of interpreting as a way to address users' needs and expectations, either as an alternative or a complement to intercultural mediators and patient navigators. However, operating within such a model demands further interpreter training on systemic power differences, and working with vulnerable and traumatised populations. Moreover, it requires the incorporation of teleological

ethical approaches to policy and education, as well as the creation of support and supervision networks that can protect interpreters' mental health. These measures would further establish interpreting as a practice and caring profession, closer in nature to that of nurses and lawyers.

To put the findings into perspective, this research argues in favour of culturally affirming methodologies, which are presented as a way to access and create new knowledge which is relevant to the particular community involved. In this case, horizontal methodologies were applied as a culturally affirming research methodology to be used with the Latin American diaspora, but more research is needed to cater for the needs and preferences of other culturally and linguistically diverse groups in Aotearoa. Only then will interpreting practice, policy and education be able to truly cater for the multicultural community in need of interpreting services.

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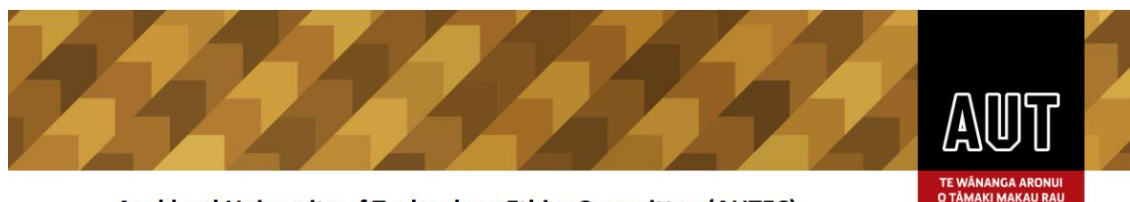
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# Appendices

## Appendix A. *Ethics Approval*



### Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology  
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ  
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316  
E: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)  
[www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics](http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics)

12 November 2020

Camille Nakhid  
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Camille

Re Ethics Application: **20/325 Exploring the application of the ally model in interpreting from a user perspective**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 12 November 2023.

#### Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz). The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat  
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: [amarianacci@aut.ac.nz](mailto:amarianacci@aut.ac.nz); Ineke Crezee

## Appendix B. *Tools*

### Participant information sheets



### Participant Information Sheet

*For interview participants*

**Date Information Sheet Produced:**

22 September 2020

**Project Title**

Exploring the application of the ally model in interpreting from a user perspective

**An Invitation**

My name is Agustina Marianacci and I am an Argentinian translator and interpreter who is currently doing a Master of Language and Culture in the Auckland University of Technology. For my thesis, I'm researching the role of the interpreter and the possibility of seeing interpreters as allies of the more disempowered parties in the interpreted interaction.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research as an interviewee because I'm interested in your opinions and experiences as a Spanish speaker who has used interpreting services in the past.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of the research is to find out whether I can incorporate the ally theory to help me expand and modify typical understandings of the role of the interpreter.

An ally is a person who wants to actively support social justice and non-dominant groups in their pursuit of equality. Considering interpreters as allies can be seen to contradict some of the current understandings of what interpreters do, as it is often considered that they should be absolutely objective and impartial, and that they should not intervene in communication beyond the transfer of messages from one language to the other.

Research on the role of the interpreter tends to concentrate on the opinions of interpreters themselves or professionals such as doctors and lawyers who speak the majority language. I would like to know the opinion of those who need (or have needed) these interpreting services to communicate.

This research will be used in the course of, and lead towards, the completion of my master's degree. In the future, with this information I would like to create an interpreter training programme focusing on social justice, which will hopefully help interpreters such as myself act according to the expectations of the users. The findings of this research may also be used for future academic publications and presentations.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You might have read the advertisement posted on Facebook or might have been contacted by other members of the Latin American community in New Zealand. The reason why you are being invited to participate is that you are a Latin American immigrant or refugee in Aotearoa New Zealand, your mother tongue is Spanish and you have used interpreting services in the past. It doesn't matter if you can speak English now.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you would like to participate in this research, all you need to do is let me know through the contact details you can find at the end of this information sheet.

You will also need to complete a consent form. I have also attached that document in this email for you to go over it if you'd like. On the date of the interview, we will go over it together and we will sign two copies of it, one for you and one for me.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

#### **What will happen in this research?**

For my research, I will interview you and three other Spanish-speaking members of the refugee and immigrant community in Aotearoa New Zealand who have previous experience using interpreting services. The interviews will be one to one and, as an interviewee, you will have to answer open-ended questions about your experience with interpreters and share your opinion about the interpreter role. After this first round of questions, I will show you previously recorded videos, after which you will be asked to provide comments on the interpreter behaviour shown in these videos.

You get to choose where the interviews take place. This can be at your home, my office in AUT's city campus, a library or a café of your choice. Wherever you feel the most comfortable. This interview will last between one and two hours, depending on your availability and the amount of information that you would like to share. It will be recorded on my phone, and I might also take notes while we are talking. Once I transcribe these recordings, I will send you the transcript and you will be able to delete or modify any of your answers, as well as check for accuracy. The aim of this process is to ensure that the data is as faithful to your beliefs and opinions as possible.

#### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

I will do everything I can to avoid any discomforts or risks. You will be able to choose if you would like to be de-identified and have your information remain confidential or if you would like to be acknowledged by name for your contribution in the interviews.

I do not anticipate any major instances of discomforts or risks, as our conversation will be focused on the interpreting services you have accessed. You only need to share with me information which you feel comfortable talking about and no other element of your past needs to be addressed. If you feel any discomfort or risk at any given time, you can stop the interview and you can withdraw from the research at any time. You will not be disadvantaged in any way if you choose not to participate in this research anymore.

#### **What are the benefits?**

The potential benefits of this research to the participants lie on the possibility of helping shape a service that you use and have a right to. This research will help shape the way in which I and, hopefully, other professional interpreters do our jobs so that we are more closely aligned to the expectations of clients such as yourself. Changing my profession and becoming a better interpreter can directly translate into greater equity of access for thousands of immigrants in Aotearoa, and could indirectly affect the power dynamics at play on a greater scale.

Beyond enabling me to finish my degree, for me, the potential benefits of this research include the ability to access information that will help me make decisions when working as an interpreter and that will clarify, expand and/or limit the boundaries of my role. This research will also help me have a clearer understanding of my clients' expectations and desires when they need interpreting services, which will help with my decision-making. The research could also help change interpreting education, so that the next generations of interpreters are more prepared to deal with the challenges of the profession, which mirror the difficulties in communication and relationships all over the world. Ultimately, the research could change the way interpreters see ourselves, so that we can be of better service to those who need us.

In terms of the wider community, this research could lead to better intercultural understanding, as well as to the empowerment of typically disempowered groups. By challenging the status quo, as well as the institutions and codes of ethics enforcing it, this research might help interpreters and those who are communicating through them have the freedom to redefine what is meant by "ethical".

#### **How will my privacy be protected?**

If you decide that you would like your information to remain confidential, I will assign a code name to you and all other participants who would also like to be de-identified. In that case, your real identity will only be known to me and my two supervisors. One of my supervisors will keep this information in a locked filing cabinet in her office at the university.

#### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There should be no monetary cost to you during the research. However, participating in it will involve a commitment of your time. The interview will be around an hour long, and you will also need some time to go through the transcript to check if you would like to change or delete any of the information. You will receive koha to thank you for your time.

#### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You will have two weeks to think whether you would like to participate in this research. You can contact me at any time if you have any questions about it or if you need further information. Even if you accept to be interviewed,



your participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from it at any time without any adverse consequences.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes, I will write a summary of my findings and send it to you via email.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Camille Nakhid, [camille.nakhid@aut.ac.nz](mailto:camille.nakhid@aut.ac.nz), +64-9-9219999 ext. 8401.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

***Researcher Contact Details***

Agustina Marianacci, [amarianacci@aut.ac.nz](mailto:amarianacci@aut.ac.nz), +64-9-9219999 ext. 7963

***Project Supervisors Contact Details***

Dr Camille Nakhid, [camille.nakhid@aut.ac.nz](mailto:camille.nakhid@aut.ac.nz), +64-9-9219999 ext. 8401

Dr Ineke Crezee, [icrezee@aut.ac.nz](mailto:icrezee@aut.ac.nz), +64-9-9219999 ext. 7851



## Participant Information Sheet

*For focus group participants*

### Date Information Sheet Produced:

22 September 2020

### Project Title

Exploring the application of the ally model in interpreting from a user perspective

### An Invitation

My name is Agustina Marianacci and I am an Argentinian translator and interpreter who is currently doing a Master of Language and Culture in the Auckland University of Technology. For my thesis, I'm researching the role of the interpreter and the possibility of seeing interpreters as allies of the more disempowered parties in the interpreted interaction.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research because I'm interested in your opinions and experiences using, providing or facilitating interpreting services.

### What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of the research is to find out whether I can incorporate the ally theory to help me expand and modify typical understandings of the role of the interpreter.

An ally is a person who wants to actively support social justice and non-dominant groups in their pursuit of equality. Considering interpreters as allies can be seen to contradict some of the current understandings of what interpreters do, as it is often considered that they should be absolutely objective and impartial, and that they should not intervene in communication beyond the transfer of messages from one language to the other.

Research on the role of the interpreter tends to concentrate on the opinions of interpreters themselves or professionals such as doctors and lawyers who speak the majority language. I would like to know the opinion of those who need (or have needed) these interpreting services to communicate and how this interacts with the opinions of service providers and facilitators.

This research will be used in the course of, and lead towards, the completion of my master's degree. In the future, with this information I would like to create an interpreter training programme focusing on social justice, which will hopefully help interpreters such as myself act according to the expectations of the users. The findings of this research may also be used for future academic publications and presentations.

### How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You might have been invited because you are a Latin American immigrant or refugee in Aotearoa New Zealand, your mother tongue is Spanish and you have used interpreting services in the past. In this case, I might have invited you to participate in this group after I interviewed you, you might have read the advertisement posted on Facebook or you might have been contacted by other members of the Latin American community in New Zealand.

Otherwise, you might have been invited because you have been a professional English-Spanish interpreter for at least one year, or because you have a social services background and work within a community organisation that represents the Latin American immigrant and refugee communities. In this case, I might have contacted you via email through existing networks.

### How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you would like to participate in this research, all you need to do is let me know through the contact details you can find at the end of this information sheet.

You will also need to complete a consent form. I have also attached that document in this email for you to go over it if you'd like. On the date of the meeting, we will go over it together and we will sign two copies of it, one for you and one for me.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice), and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as

belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

#### **What will happen in this research?**

For my research, I will set up a meeting including two Spanish-speaking members of the refugee and immigrant community in Aotearoa New Zealand who have previous experience using interpreting services, two English-Spanish interpreters and one member of a community-based organisation representing the Latin American community in Aotearoa. The aim of this meeting will be to facilitate dialogue and provide a space where you can exchange opinions about the interpreter role and its relationship with social justice.

This meeting will take place either at the community organisation offices or at the AUT library. The meeting will be recorded on my phone, and I might also take notes while we are talking. The meeting is expected to last between one and two hours, depending on your availability and the amount of information that all the participants would like to share.

#### **What are the discomforts and risks?**

I will do everything I can to avoid any discomforts or risks. You will be able to choose if you would like to be de-identified and have your information remain confidential or if you would like to be acknowledged by name for your contributions.

I do not anticipate any major instances of discomforts or risks, as our conversation will be focused on the interpreting services. You only need to share information which you feel comfortable talking about and no other element of your past needs to be addressed. If you feel any discomfort or risk at any given time, you can stop the interview and you can withdraw from the research at any time. You will not be disadvantaged in any way if you choose not to participate in this research anymore.

#### **What are the benefits?**

The potential benefits of this research to the participants lie on the possibility of helping shape a service that they use, provide or facilitate. This research will help shape the way in which I and, hopefully, other professional interpreters do our jobs so that we are more closely aligned to the expectations of clients such as yourself. Changing my profession and becoming a better interpreter can directly translate into greater equity of access for thousands of immigrants in Aotearoa, and could indirectly affect the power dynamics at play on a greater scale.

Beyond enabling me to finish my degree, for me, the potential benefits of this research include the ability to access information that will help me make decisions when working as an interpreter and that will clarify, expand and/or limit the boundaries of my role. This research will also help me have a clearer understanding of my clients' expectations and desires when they need interpreting services, which will help with my decision-making. The research could also help change interpreting education, so that the next generations of interpreters are more prepared to deal with the challenges of the profession, which mirror the difficulties in communication and relationships all over the world. Ultimately, the research could change the way interpreters see ourselves, so that we can be of better service to those who need us.

In terms of the wider community, this research could lead to better intercultural understanding, as well as to the empowerment of typically disempowered groups. By challenging the status quo, as well as the institutions and codes of ethics enforcing it, this research might help interpreters and those who are communicating through them have the freedom to redefine what is meant by "ethical".

#### **How will my privacy be protected?**

If you decide that you would like your information to remain confidential, I will assign a code name to you and all other participants who would also like to be de-identified. In that case, your real identity will only be known to me and my two supervisors. One of my supervisors will keep this information in a locked filing cabinet in her office at the university.

#### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There should be no monetary cost to you during the research. However, participating in it will involve a commitment of your time. You will receive koha to thank you for your time.

#### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You will have two weeks to think whether you would like to participate in this research. You can contact me at any time if you have any questions about it or if you need further information. Even if you accept to join the group, your participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from it at any time without any adverse consequences.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Yes, I will write a summary of my findings and send it to you via email.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Camille Nakhid, [camille.nakhid@aut.ac.nz](mailto:camille.nakhid@aut.ac.nz), +64-9-9219999 ext. 8401.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

***Researcher Contact Details***

Agustina Marianacci, [amarianacci@aut.ac.nz](mailto:amarianacci@aut.ac.nz), +64-9-9219999 ext. 7963

***Project Supervisors Contact Details***

Dr Camille Nakhid, [camille.nakhid@aut.ac.nz](mailto:camille.nakhid@aut.ac.nz), +64-9-9219999 ext. 8401

Dr Ineke Crezee, [icrezee@aut.ac.nz](mailto:icrezee@aut.ac.nz), +64-9-9219999 ext. 7851

## Consent forms



### Consent Form

*For interview participants*

**Project title:** *Exploring the application of the ally model in interpreting from a user perspective*

**Project Supervisor:** *Camille Nakhid*

**Researcher:** *Agustina Marianacci*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 22 September 2020.
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to be identified by name for my contributions to this research: Yes ☐ No ☐
- ☐ I wish to be contacted to discuss my possible participation in the subsequent focus group: Yes ☐ No ☐
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐  
If you ticked "Yes", please provide a contact email address below.

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Date:

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 12 November 2020, AUTEK Reference number 20/325.*



## Consent Form

*For focus group participants*

**Project title:** *Exploring the application of the ally model in interpreting from a user perspective*

**Project Supervisor:** *Camille Nakhid*

**Researcher:** *Agustina Marianacci*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 22 September 2020.
  - ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
  - ☐ I understand that identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
  - ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group and that it will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
  - ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
  - ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then, while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
  - ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
  - ☐ I wish to be identified by name for my contributions to this research: Yes ☐ No ☐
  - ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐
- If you ticked "Yes", please provide a contact email address below.

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 12 November 2020, AUTEK Reference number 20/325.**



## Summary distributed and presented during the group dialogue

### Spanish version

#### Resultados de los diálogos individuales con los usuarios

##### 1. ¿Cómo ven los usuarios de servicios de interpretación la función del intérprete?

###### 1.1. Dentro de la función estipulada

En esta sección: comentarios que se alinean con el modelo del intérprete máquina/conducto y con la función estipulada en el código de ética de la Sociedad de Traductores e Intérpretes de Nueva Zelanda (NZSTI, por sus siglas en inglés).

El modelo del intérprete máquina/conducto prioriza la exactitud, objetividad e invisibilidad, y cuenta con el respaldo de la mayoría de los códigos de ética. (Angelelli, 2004) (Witter-Merithew, 1999)(Tate & Turner, 2001)

El código de la NZSTI tiene 9 principios: de conducta profesional, confidencialidad, competencia, imparcialidad, exactitud, claridad de los límites de su función, mantenimiento de relaciones profesionales, desarrollo profesional y solidaridad profesional.

Sin embargo, no todos los principios éticos son igual de controversiales para los usuarios.

Principio de claridad de los límites de su función: los intérpretes deben concentrarse en la transferencia del mensaje sin participar de otras tareas como la incidencia (advocacy), orientación o asesoramiento.

Algunos de los comentarios obtenidos durante los diálogos (**Carlos:** *los “intérpretes oficiales” no tienen permitido que los usuarios los visiten en su casa*) indican que los intérpretes educan a los usuarios y les explican sus funciones y limitaciones de acuerdo con lo establecido en el código de ética. ¿Pero se están respetando estos límites en la práctica?

Principio de confidencialidad: los intérpretes no pueden divulgar información adquirida durante su trabajo.

**Alfredo:** *parece creer que este principio es más importante que los conceptos de neutralidad e imparcialidad, que para él no tienen sentido.*

Estudios indican que, a diferencia de otros principios, la confidencialidad aparece en la mayoría de los códigos de ética de asociaciones internacionales, regionales y nacionales. (Phelan et al., 2019)

###### 1.2 Interpretar “no es fácil”

Antes de desarrollar las opiniones de los usuarios sobre la expansión de la función del intérprete, esta sección desarrollará el reconocimiento de su complejidad.

**Carlos:** *“No anhelo ser intérprete algún día porque sé que es difícil”.*

**Alfredo:** *las responsabilidades del intérprete son un “compromiso muy serio”, por lo que “la ética del intérprete es una ética bastante alta”.*

**Julie:** *“si tú tienes información, tienes el poder de cualquier cosa, entonces es poder”.*

La complejidad de la función del intérprete se ve reflejada en las comparaciones hechas por los usuarios:

1) Intérpretes como asistentes

**Gabriela:** *Habló de su intérprete como una ayudante que podía asesorarla en cuanto a terminología, la estructura de las oraciones y la conjugación de los verbos durante la entrevista que dio en inglés.*

Este modo de interpretación suele conocerse como “interpretación en stand-by”. Los intérpretes en este caso participan de manera intermitente y de lo contrario se limitan a monitorear la interacción cuando los usuarios cuentan con competencias emergentes en un segundo idioma. (Monteoliva-García, 2020)

La interpretación en stand-by se encuentra dentro de los límites establecidos por el código de ética de la NZSTI, que limita la función del intérprete a la de un facilitador de comunicación.

2) Intérpretes como madres

**Gabriela:** *comparó a su intérprete con su mamá y habló sobre el apoyo y la calma que le transmitió la relación que entablaron mientras atravesaba un problema de salud complicado en un país en el que era relativamente nueva.*

Esta función va más allá de los límites establecidos en la mayoría de los códigos de ética.

3) Intérpretes como abogados

**Alfredo:** *comparó al intérprete con un abogado que “está allí para ayudarte”.*

Esta comparación insinúa una función de incidencia (advocacy) que no está contemplada en el código de ética de la NZSTI. De hecho, este código dice explícitamente que los intérpretes no deben involucrarse en este tipo de actividades cuando se desempeñan como intérpretes.

4) Intérpretes como trabajadores sociales

**Alfredo:** *considera que la interpretación es un “servicio humanitario”.*

El trabajo social promueve el cambio y el desarrollo social, la cohesión social, y el empoderamiento y la liberación de las personas. Está basado en la justicia social, los derechos humanos, la responsabilidad colectiva y el respeto por las diversidades. (IFSW, 2014)

Si consideramos la definición de trabajo social, esta comparación es particularmente relevante para esta investigación, que se concentra en la teoría del aliado y en la justicia social en la interpretación.

Las comparaciones con abogados y trabajadores sociales extienden la función estipulada de los intérpretes, que debería ser exclusivamente comunicativa.

5) Intérpretes como amigos

**Alfredo:** *se mostró decepcionado y frustrado como resultado de los obstáculos que le impidieron establecer amistades reales con sus intérpretes. Cuestiona también los motivos:*



*“¿en qué afectaría en este caso que de pronto hubiese una relación de amistad entre el intérprete y al que está ayudando?”.*

Estas comparaciones son una introducción a las posibles funciones, que se seguirán desarrollando en la próxima sección.

Una discrepancia importante entre las funciones y la sobrecarga de funciones que los intérpretes tienen que soportar sugieren que es posible que los códigos de ética tradicionales sean válidos solo en papel. (Pöllabauer, 2004)

### 1.3 Más allá de la función estipulada

En la primera parte de esta sección: comentarios de los usuarios sobre la reconceptualización de los principios de confidencialidad, claridad de los límites de su función e imparcialidad.

En la segunda parte: ejemplos mencionados por los usuarios de ciertos comportamientos de sus intérpretes y las formas en las que estos cuestionan la imparcialidad y la claridad de los límites de su función según están establecidos en el código de la NZSTI.

#### 1.3.1 Reconceptualización de los principios

Los comentarios de los usuarios sobre los principios del código de la NZSTI muestran una comprensión flexible y contextual de sus pautas. Los comentarios sugieren que sería imposible para los intérpretes atenerse ciegamente a normas éticas predeterminadas.

#### Principio de confidencialidad

Las investigaciones indican que se suele preferir el uso de intérpretes profesionales en lugar de intérpretes informales (amigos o familiares) por el valor de la confidencialidad que ofrecen los profesionales.

Sin embargo:

**Alfredo:** *utilizó este principio para justificar la posibilidad de hacerse amigo de sus intérpretes. Según él, que los intérpretes cumplan con el principio de confidencialidad respaldaría y mejoraría la amistad. “Y tú puedes ser amigo pero ya de ahí tu no vas a revelar nada y hasta es bonito saber eso que tú le cuentas algo y que él no lo va a decir porque es un código de ética”.*

#### Principio de claridad de los límites de su función

Todos los usuarios involucrados en esta investigación cuestionaron este principio, aunque algunos fueron más explícitos que otros.

**Alfredo:** *se mostró insatisfecho y descontento por la forma en la que las limitaciones de la función de los intérpretes afectaron su libertad para relacionarse con ellos. Dijo explícitamente que “no está bien la línea” y que la situación es “injusta”. Añadió también que la situación “es triste porque es como si le dieras un caramelo a un niño”: los usuarios esperan de sus intérpretes la misma relación tanto durante como después del momento de la interpretación. Sin embargo, luego de finalizada la interpretación, mantienen lejos a los usuarios, lo cual genera desilusión.*

**Julie:** *dijo que, inicialmente, su intérprete “fue como muy seca” y estaba “muy en su papel”, cuando de hecho lo que Julie necesitaba era que su intérprete rompiera el hielo. Estos sentimientos crearon un conflicto interno para ella: necesitaba a la intérprete, pero no la quería allí.*

Este sentimiento es común entre usuarios, quienes suelen conceptualizar a los intérpretes como un mal necesario. (Napier et al., 2006) (O'Donnell, 2020).

Si la intérprete de Julie se hubiese negado a ir más allá de los límites de su función para establecer una conexión a través de una charla informal, hubiese sido difícil que Julie confiara en ella y pudiera comunicarse.

Investigaciones anteriores en el Reino Unido sugieren que la falta de confianza en los intérpretes está asociada con una percepción de frialdad u hostilidad interpersonal. (Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006)

#### Principio de imparcialidad

Los comentarios de los usuarios indican que estos consideran que el principio de imparcialidad es flexible. Según estos usuarios, el “desapego profesional” requerido por el código no pareciera ser necesario a la hora de transmitir “la intención comunicativa completa”.

**Carlos:** *dijo que una buena interpretación es el resultado de contar con una relación sincera y afectuosa con sus intérpretes, de “tener lazos estrechos” con ellos.*

**Gabriela:** *“yo creo que, para mi experiencia, y en lo que a mí me gustaría, es que tengan esa calidez de sentirte más apegado a vos. Como a mí me pasó”.*

**Alfredo:** *para enmarcar el principio de imparcialidad, “siempre me empezaba a hacer la pregunta: ¿quién es el más interesado? ¿El médico o el paciente?” Podemos pensar que el intérprete es neutral, pero la realidad de la situación es que el intérprete le es más útil a un paciente que busca ayuda que a un doctor que ofrece ese servicio.*

Alfredo parece reconocer el desequilibrio de poderes entre el paciente que busca un servicio porque se encuentra en una situación de vulnerabilidad, y el doctor que se encuentra en la posición de ofrecer o negar un servicio, así como de tomar decisiones que afectan la vida de su paciente.

**Julie:** *dijo que su intérprete había sido “super neutral”. Sin embargo, también mencionó que su intérprete había estado charlando con ella sobre su vida personal mientras esperaban en el hospital.*

Esto podría indicar que, para Julie, tener una relación cercana con su intérprete no afecta necesariamente la imparcialidad de esa intérprete.

También es importante resaltar que tanto Julie como Alfredo cuestionaron abiertamente si los intérpretes deberían estar tratando de ser neutrales.

**Alfredo:** *“¿cuál es el sentido de neutralidad ahí?! Yo sinceramente no entiendo. Sí creo que percibo de que no se delate lo que se está diciendo allí, que lo que se habló en esa conversación no se vaya a hacer público. Que eso es confidencial. De otra forma, no tiene lógica el ser neutral. O sea, no, no le veo lógica”.*

*1.3.2 Ejemplos de comportamiento que va más allá de la función estipulada*

Usuario	Comportamiento del intérprete	Principio desacadado
Alfredo	Su intérprete lo pasó a buscar por su casa para llevarlo a una consulta.	Imparcialidad
	Su intérprete medió entre Alfredo y un médico. Alfredo se sintió insultado por una pregunta rutinaria. El intérprete le aclaró que era una parte estándar del proceso y que la intención no era insultarlo. Con esto, logró apaciguar una situación tensa y evitar consecuencias negativas para Alfredo.	Claridad de los límites de su función
Carlos	Su intérprete le consiguió clientes para quienes trabajar de forma casual.	Claridad de los límites de su función
	Visitó en varias ocasiones la casa de su intérprete. Se veían incluso por fuera de las asignaciones. Conoce a su familia. La hija de la intérprete visitó a la madre de Carlos en Ecuador.	Imparcialidad
Julie	Conversó con su intérprete mientras esperaba a que su hijo saliera de una cirugía. Hablaron de sus vidas y de lo que tenían en común.	Imparcialidad
Gabriela	Su intérprete la contuvo y la tranquilizó cuando estaba disgustada durante un tratamiento médico. La intérprete luego la llamó por teléfono para ver cómo estaba y cómo había dado el resultado del tratamiento.	Claridad de los límites de su función

Los usuarios apreciaron estas acciones y las catalogaron como “bondadosas”, “cariñosas”, “sabias”, “satisfactorias” y “afectuosas”.

La práctica profesional de estos intérpretes parece ir más allá de los límites impuestos por el código, lo cual coincide con investigaciones anteriores que muestran una brecha entre el comportamiento informado por los intérpretes y lo que realmente sucede en la práctica.

**Alfredo:**  *mencionó que el patrón de comportamiento de todos sus intérpretes suponía ir “un poquito más allá de lo profesional”.*

**Carlos:**  *mencionó que la intérprete del Video 2 ayudó al paciente a expandir sus expectativas al preguntarle si había algo más que quisiera preguntar mientras ella se encontraba allí, incluso después de que la intérprete ya había cumplido con el objetivo principal de la interpretación (la transferencia del mensaje).*

Alfredo pidió explícitamente la modificación del código de ética y apoyó la necesidad de que los intérpretes asuman responsabilidad por las consecuencias de sus decisiones.

**Alfredo:**  *criticó el comportamiento de la intérprete en el Video 1 y dijo que “la intérprete fue como que seguía el protocolo y nada más, de ahí no me salgo, que se acabe el mundo, que se acabe, pero este es mi protocolo y de ahí de la línea no me salgo. Y me parece que no está bien porque- ¡Dios mío! Es ridículo”.*

Pero entonces ¿por qué se sigue viendo a la función del intérprete en términos que no están alineados con las expectativas de los usuarios?

**Alfredo:** *dirigió mi atención hacia un sistema inflexible: “a veces en Nueva Zelanda el sistema es estricto, si es así, es así. Ni un poquito, ni un milímetro más, ni un milímetro menos”.*

Aunque los usuarios apoyaron una expansión de la función del intérprete, el sistema, junto con los códigos y las instituciones que controlan esos sistemas, obstaculizan esa expansión.

Esto podría estar relacionado con el hecho de que los usuarios de interpretación en contextos comunitarios en Aotearoa están en desventaja porque suelen estar solicitando un servicio de una institución que puede ofrecerlo o negarlo. Además, a diferencia de los usuarios, estas instituciones y los individuos que las representan son quienes tienen el conocimiento especializado. También hay una asimetría de poder en términos de identidad: la cultura dominante se prioriza por sobre las concepciones culturales de los usuarios.

Por lo tanto, los intereses de los usuarios no son los que definen la teoría y la práctica de la interpretación. A esto lo define la clase dominante a través de las instituciones de la sociedad civil, que proyectan los intereses de esta clase como si fueran intereses generales. (Maglaras, 2013) (Rudvin, 2005).

## 2. ¿Cuáles son sus percepciones sobre la teoría del aliado y la justicia social en relación con la interpretación?

Los usuarios contaban con conocimientos previos variados sobre la teoría del aliado. **Julie** sabía de esta teoría por su participación en el movimiento feminista latinoamericano. Sin embargo, los usuarios mostraron su apoyo ante la posibilidad de incorporar la teoría del aliado a la interpretación.

**Alfredo:** *se mostró muy dispuesto a adoptar el término. Dijo que ya pensaba en los intérpretes como aliados: “porque Agustina, cómo se puede llamar a alguien que va a ayudarte”.*

La palabra “ayuda” evoca al modelo del ayudante que solía predominar en el área de la interpretación de señas para personas sordas. Con este modelo, los intérpretes actuaban en nombre de los usuarios, lo que generaba una reducción de su autonomía y perpetuaba los patrones de opresión (de las personas que podían escuchar hacia las personas sordas). Así se ignoraba el derecho que las personas sordas tienen para comunicarse y tomar decisiones sobre sus propias vidas. (Tate & Turner, 2001)

En su lugar, el modelo del aliado reconoce la necesidad de mantener a los intérpretes responsables ante los usuarios, al tiempo que se prioriza la independencia y el sentido de agencia de estos usuarios. (Kivel, 2000) (Witter-Merithew, 1999)

**Julie:** *se mostró más cautelosa. Consideró la incorporación de la teoría del aliado para enfrentar situaciones de injusticia. "Aparte que si como intérprete te vas dando cuenta que están vulnerando derechos y sigues neutral, entonces es como... qué terrible, ¿no?"*

También tuvo en cuenta que se pueden superponer los motivos por los cuales alguien es desfavorecido: reflexionó que es más probable que una persona latinoamericana y LGBT+ necesite un intérprete que denuncie violaciones de derechos.

La teoría del aliado apoya esta reflexión porque entiende que no hay una fuente única y original de toda opresión. Una persona puede sentirse oprimida por diferentes motivos en diferentes situaciones. La relación entre privilegio y opresión requiere un análisis complejo que sería admisible e incluso se vería fomentado por un modelo del aliado en la interpretación. (Reynolds, 2010)

El apoyo explícito de la teoría del aliado podría estar relacionada con la concientización de los usuarios en temas de desigualdad estructural.

**Alfredo:** *"yo pienso que no es justo el sistema social en este caso".*

**Carlos:** *los refugiados se encuentran en una situación de desventaja "abismal" in su país de acogida.*

## 2.1 "¿Quién podrá defenderme?": juntos en la alteridad

Esta sección incluye:

- la sensación de desempoderamiento
- la falta de recursos
- la falta de información

entre los usuarios por ser miembros de una comunidad cultural y lingüísticamente diversa.

Todos los latinoamericanos en Aotearoa comparten, en menor o mayor medida, un sentimiento de alteridad y una necesidad de reacomodar sus expectativas para ajustarse al nuevo país.

**Esteban:** *"tú eres el extraño, el outsider".*

Tratar de navegar una vida nueva sin poder hablar el idioma mayoritario en el país de acogida puede ser desafiante y angustiante.

**Carlos:** *"Cuando una persona viene y te habla en un idioma que tu no entiendes, te dan ganas de salir corriendo".*

**Alfredo:** *recordó cuando sacó el reciclaje en una caja de cartón en lugar de utilizar el contenedor reglamentario hasta que se dio cuenta de que así no se llevarían el reciclaje. Alfredo también mencionó el ejemplo de no poder comprar gasolina porque no tenía el contenedor correcto.*

Estas situaciones afianzan la dicotomía de nosotros vs ellos que permite que la sociedad separe a quienes pertenecen a un espacio del resto. También señala un sistema que favorece al grupo mayoritario a través de las instituciones y las prácticas diarias. (Said, 1995) (Haldrup et al., 2006) (Armas, 2019)



En este caso, los obstáculos no son solo lingüísticos. Hay otras cosas que hacen que los usuarios se sientan vulnerables:

**Julie:** *habló sobre llegar a Aotearoa como madre primeriza “con un bebé de 6 meses en un país donde en verdad no entendía nada. Nada de nada, nada de nada de nada”. Sintió la falta de independencia de su marido, que era ya bilingüe al llegar. Hizo comentarios sobre la dificultad de comprender un sistema de vacunación nuevo y controlar su método anticonceptivo.*

**Carlos:** *sin el intérprete, los usuarios estarían “completamente perdidos”.*

**Julie:** *sin ayuda “ni siquiera podía pedir un café”.*

Solo traducir palabras no sería suficiente para enfrentar las expectativas de los usuarios y su falta de comprensión. Estos sentimientos de dependencia en el intérprete agravan las reacciones de los usuarios ante un servicio de interpretación inadecuado.

Desgaste emocional: decepción, impotencia, frustración, depresión.

Los sentimientos de los usuarios se deben entender en relación con las consecuencias y los riesgos reales asociados con la imposibilidad de acceder a información o servicios.

**Carlos:** *si el intérprete se niega a repetir la información médica requerida, el paciente lo buscará en Google y esto podría afectar su salud.*

**Julie:** *necesitaba comprender cada detalle durante la consulta con el médico “porque resulta que está la salud de mi hijo de por medio”.*

Los aliados tienden a tener un pie en el mundo del grupo dominante y un pie en el mundo del grupo oprimido (Reason, 2005). Con el pie que tienen en la comunidad cultural y lingüísticamente diversa, los intérpretes podrían reconocer y comprender estos obstáculos y desigualdades que suelen pasar inadvertidos para los miembros de los grupos dominantes. Con el otro pie, su conocimiento lingüístico e intercultural, podrían intentar evitar cualquier reproducción de esas desigualdades.

## 2.2 “Hay que respetar eso”: individualidad

A pesar de esta alteridad en común, sigue siendo crucial evitar la generalización de las preferencias de estos usuarios.

Se suele tirar a los extranjeros en una bolsa de generalidades y suposiciones, y se olvida cualquier individualidad. (Armas, 2019)

**Alfredo:** *hay algunos colombianos en Aotearoa quienes, como consecuencia de la guerra y el trauma “no confían en nadie, pero en nadie. Hasta lo dicen, yo no confío ni en mi sombra”.*

Investigaciones anteriores han indicado que algunos migrantes se muestran reacios a utilizar un intérprete por su falta de confianza y el rencor causado por un sentimiento de dependencia. Esto es común particularmente en casos de individuos que tuvieron una experiencia traumática relacionada con su exilio o viaje migratorio. Un sentimiento de dependencia forzada tiende a fomentar un uso instrumental de los

intérpretes para alcanzar objetivos estratégicos. (Le Goff & Carbonel, 2020, p. VI) (Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006)

Por el contrario:

**Alfredo:** *"Yo nunca pensé en eso porque como no sabía nada de inglés así que si pasó o no pasó, yo no me di cuenta. Tampoco me interesaba".*

**Carlos:** *la confianza en sus intérpretes es un resultado de su confianza en Dios, que lo bendice y lo cuida en su vida diaria.*

Alfredo y Carlos parecen estar ofreciendo una confianza voluntaria a sus intérpretes. En situaciones que requieren interpretación, los usuarios pueden extender este tipo de confianza como resultado de una identidad, lenguaje o nacionalidad en común, o porque confían en las instituciones.

Es importante resaltar que esto podría estar relacionado con su predisposición para establecer una relación cercana y familiar con sus intérpretes. (Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006) (Greener, 2003).

**Gabriela:** *"no puedo decirte que tuve una conexión con la intérprete porque... no, o sea, era por teléfono, no, no la sentí".*

Sin embargo, esto no le produjo reacciones negativas, lo cual podría estar relacionado con el hecho de que Gabriela ya podía comunicarse sin un intérprete. Menos dependencia = menos desconfianza.

Ubicarse dentro del modelo del aliado puede ayudar a los intérpretes a priorizar las preferencias de los usuarios y evitar tomar decisiones por ellos.

Los aliados deben estar abiertos a la evaluación y las críticas de las personas a quienes están tratando de dignificar. (K. E. Edwards, 2006)

El modelo del aliado ofrecer esta flexibilidad al tiempo que prioriza las elecciones de los usuarios.

**Alfredo:** *"la persona que recibe la ayuda del intérprete es la que puede decidir si entabla una amistad con el intérprete o no. Es cuestión de cómo se sienta".*

### 2.3 "No me sirve la dulzura ni la buena onda si no entiendo": el acceso a los servicios de interpretación

La capacidad de acceder a un intérprete puede impactar las habilidades de los usuarios de afrontar el entorno físico y acceder a ciertos servicios o información.

**Gabriela:**

1) *Para su tratamiento en el hospital, su GP le ofreció un intérprete. Ella no sabía que podía acceder a este servicio.*

Los usuarios suelen sentir que no pueden controlar cómo se gestionará una barrera lingüística durante una consulta. (MacFarlane et al., 2009)

2) *Para su entrevista, la funcionaria de migraciones le ofreció un intérprete. Ya sí sabía que podía acceder a este servicio y lo hubiera pedido si no se lo hubiesen ofrecido.*

Esto pareciera indicar que saber de la disponibilidad de un servicio puede determinar si los usuarios utilizan este servicio en un primer lugar, mientras que una experiencia positiva puede motivar a los usuarios a buscar ese servicio nuevamente.

**Julie:** el ejemplo más problemático en cuanto acceso a los servicios de interpretación.

*1) Reservó un intérprete para una consulta con un GP y el intérprete no apareció. Decidió entonces buscar a un doctor hispanoparlante para sus próximas consultas para evitar tener que tratar con servicios de interpretación.*

A diferencia de Gabriela, cuya experiencia positiva la motivó a utilizar un intérprete de nuevo, Julie decidió evitarlos. Tampoco sabía que, a través de Ezispeak, tiene acceso a servicios de interpretación gratuitos por teléfono para comunicarse con cualquier agencia del gobierno. Su amiga latinoamericana (que vive en Aotearoa hace 12 años) tampoco sabía cómo acceder a un intérprete.

Algunas investigaciones han indicado que los usuarios suelen no saber que pueden pedir un intérprete profesional, cómo hacerlo o quién cubrirá el costo. (Alexander et al., 2004)

*2) Emergencia en el hospital: A lo largo del proceso, no le ofrecieron un intérprete, incluso luego de que resultó evidente que lo necesitaba.*

Algunas investigaciones han indicado que los usuarios creen que la provisión de servicios de interpretación está controlada por los proveedores de servicios, como los doctores. (Alexander et al., 2004)

Es importante mencionar que los profesionales de salud también pueden tener dificultades para acceder a servicios de interpretación por teléfono o cara a cara, sobre todo en la atención primaria. (Shrestha-Ranjit et al., 2020)

En lugar de una falta de cooperación, hay un problema sistémico que afecta la provisión de este servicio.

**Julie:** *distinguió entre los profesionales de salud que trataron de ayudarla “como seres humanos” y las responsabilidades de la “institución”.*

*“Se acercó la doctora a explicar- siento que aquí todo el mundo es muy suave, es muy dulce, pero a mí no me sirve la dulzura ni la buena onda si no entiendo”.*

Que los usuarios no sepan cómo acceder a los servicios de interpretación podría estar indicando que es necesario que los intérpretes creen conciencia e informen a los usuarios sobre sus derechos y los servicios disponibles.

En el modelo del aliado, se alienta a los intérpretes a reconocer y reflexionar sobre los desequilibrios de poderes entre las partes para que esto pueda orientar su práctica.

Los intérpretes que buscan actuar como aliados deben participar activamente en actividades de incidencia (advocacy) y promoción de los intereses de las comunidades desfavorecidas para las que interpretan. (Minges, 2016) (Witter-Merithew, 1999).



La necesidad de saber cuáles son los derechos de los usuarios trae a colación el asunto de la educación de los intérpretes en cuanto a temas de justicia social. Sin embargo, la educación de los intérpretes en Aotearoa no incluye específicamente el tema de la justicia social y la desigualdad sistémica.

**Julie:** *los intérpretes deben saber sobre los derechos de los pacientes para defenderlos y evitar violaciones de derechos.*

La interpretación se considera una profesión técnica, donde los conocimientos técnicos están separados de la interacción social con los usuarios. Se percibe que los conocimientos lingüísticos y culturales son suficientes para garantizar la competencia profesional de los intérpretes en la mayoría de los contextos. (Dean & Pollard, 2011)

**Alfredo:** *apoyó la necesidad de una educación para intérpretes que incluya el tema de la justicia social. Posicionó esa necesidad en un entorno mucho más amplio: la interpretación es un servicio crucial que mantiene a Aotearoa unida.*

Si decidimos reconocer esto, la necesidad de la educación para intérpretes que incluya el tema de la justicia social pareciera aclararse.

### 3. ¿Cómo creen que deberían incorporarse estas percepciones en la práctica de la interpretación?

Esta es la pregunta principal que trataremos de contestar a través del diálogo grupal. Sin embargo, incluyo a continuación una lista de comentarios y reacciones positivas y negativas de los usuarios, que pueden utilizarse para guiar nuestra discusión.

#### 3.1 Lo positivo

Las experiencias de estos usuarios con los servicios de interpretación fueron muy positivas en general. Estas experiencias positivas, junto con las historias de las acciones que van más allá de los límites de la función, parecerían sugerir que los intérpretes suelen hacer lo necesario para mantener a los usuarios felices.

Los usuarios dijeron sentirse cómodos y a gusto con sus intérpretes. También consideraron que sus servicios les ofrecen la tranquilidad de saber que podrán hacer todas las preguntas que tengan y obtener la información que necesitan.

**Julie:** *“simplemente te hace tener una sensación de que por más de que yo esta vez ya entendía porque tenía mucha información ya en mi cabeza, me sentí tranquila por si pasaba cualquier cosa”.*

**Gabriela:** *“me hizo sentir tranquila, ¿viste? Era algo sumamente importante que tenía que hacer”.*

Los usuarios también elogiaron el comportamiento humano de los intérpretes, que incluía las cualidades de ser empático, amable, cariñoso, bondadoso, afectuoso, cálido y buena onda.

**Carlos:** *dijo que los intérpretes hacen su trabajo “con amor” y “mucho afecto”, y dijo que los intérpretes entendían las necesidades de la gente.*

Los usuarios extendieron el reconocimiento de ese comportamiento más humano más allá de los intérpretes, ya que también hicieron referencia a supervisores de tesis y personal médico que cumplía con estas características. Esto podría indicar que los usuarios aprecian este atributo en cualquier persona con quien tengan que interactuar. Además, podría significar que los usuarios ven a los intérpretes más allá de su función superficial. En su lugar, los ven como personas.

Ver a los intérpretes como personas podría explicar algunas de las expectativas de los usuarios.

**Carlos:** *habló sobre la necesidad de establecer relaciones sinceras y afectuosas con los intérpretes. Dijo que esto genera lazos estrechos que Carlos considera esenciales a la hora de comunicarse a través de un intérprete. Además, dijo creer que esto lo acercaría también a su interlocutor: “Entonces el intérprete te acerca a la persona y encuentras la familiaridad con el intérprete y la persona que te habla”.*

Finalmente, todas estas experiencias positivas de los usuarios generan gratitud. Los usuarios agradecen:

- que los intérpretes hagan su trabajo
- que no tengan que pagar por estos servicios
- que los intérpretes mantengan a Aotearoa unida
- que los intérpretes les permitan acceder a los sistemas
- que los intérpretes vayan más allá de sus funciones para ayudarlos

De hecho, la gratitud de estos usuarios motivó su participación en esta investigación.

### 3.2 Lo negativo

Algunos usuarios mencionaron ciertos comportamientos que suelen considerarse poco profesionales, como llegar tarde a una consulta o no saber la terminología específica. Sin embargo, esto no pareció afectar la opinión que tenían de sus intérpretes. Parecería que la puntualidad es menos importante para los usuarios que para los códigos de ética y las agencias de interpretación.

En lugar de eso, los usuarios se concentraron en la importancia de que los intérpretes les dedicaran tiempo durante la interpretación, lo cual los hace sentir acompañados y apoyados.

**Carlos:** *dijo que el tiempo con los intérpretes en el Centro de Refugiados de Mangere era limitado, lo cual afectaba la capacidad de los usuarios de acceder a la información: “[en Mangere] a veces se quedan dudas que no se alcanzan a resolver”.*

**Gabriela:** *elogió la presencia y el apoyo de su intérprete a lo largo de su experiencia en el hospital. “Se quedó conmigo hasta que yo me recuperara, o sea, no es que terminó el trabajo y se fue. O sea, la señora se dedicó a quedarse conmigo en ese tiempo y a traducirme si necesitaba algo, o si venía una enfermera, ella estaba ahí, ¿entendés? No me abandonó”.*

Otros comentarios negativos provinieron de usuarios de la comunidad (mencionados por Carlos y Esteban). Sin embargo, estas apreciaciones estaban relacionados con usuarios que no habían podido obtener lo que querían.

**Alfredo:** *dijo que, muchas veces, los usuarios establecen que el desempeño de un intérprete es inadecuado cuando el resultado de la interpretación es negativo.*

Una investigación realizada en el Reino Unido sobre las perspectivas de los usuarios sostuvo que la definición de quién es un buen intérprete suele basarse en el resultado de la situación en la que se necesita la interpretación. (Alexander et al., 2004)

Los usuarios parecen comprender que el desempeño del intérprete puede impedir su acceso a servicios o información. En este sentido, podría ser importante tener en cuenta el principio de competencia (los intérpretes solo toman los trabajos para los que cuentan con las competencias necesarias).

A su vez, este principio está relacionado con el principio de exactitud, ya que contar con la competencia para interpretar facilita que el intérprete transmita el contenido y la intención del mensaje original sin omisiones ni distorsiones.

Sin embargo:

**Gabriela:** *tuvo una experiencia en la que su intérprete malinterpretó algo que ella había dicho y Gabriela tuvo que corregirla. Esto la hizo sentir bien consigo misma y su nivel de inglés.*

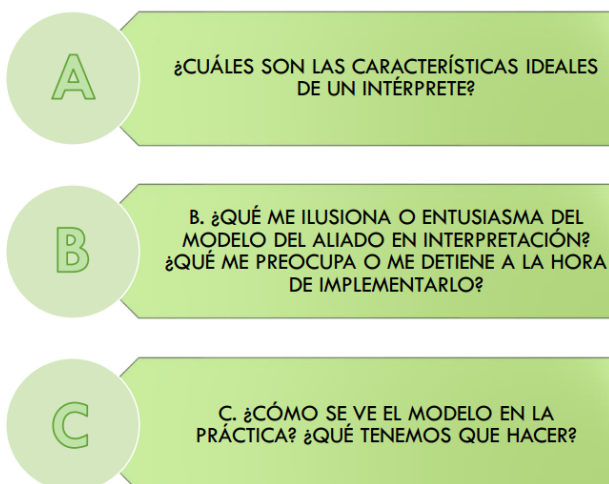
La situación podría indicar que el nivel de dependencia del usuario podría afectar los sentimientos relacionados con la competencia del intérprete. Esta competencia podría considerarse más importante cuando el usuario depende de ella.

## El modelo del aliado

- Se concentra en los usuarios de los servicios de interpretación.
- Intérpretes:
  - 1) reconocen el desequilibrio de poder entre los hablantes de la lengua mayoritaria y los miembros de la comunidad cultural y lingüísticamente diversa
  - 2) eligen de forma consciente actuar de una manera que ayude a empoderar a estos miembros de la comunidad diversa y ofrezca igualdad en el acceso
- Tiene en cuenta el poder del intérprete + otras desigualdades relacionadas con cada contexto en particular (funcionario de migraciones vs solicitante de asilo, médico vs paciente, empleados públicos vs el público general)
- Surgió junto con el movimiento de los derechos civiles de las personas sordas en Estados Unidos. La mayoría de las investigaciones sobre este modelo están relacionadas con el campo del lenguaje de señas, donde los desequilibrios de poder son más fáciles de identificar porque la sordera suele considerarse una discapacidad.
- Sin embargo, los intérpretes de lenguajes hablados: suelen ser miembros de la misma comunidad no dominante que los usuarios para los que interpretan. Sin embargo, tienen privilegios que los usuarios no tienen (pueden hablar el idioma mayoritario + están familiarizados con la nueva cultura, sus sistemas y sus instituciones). Si los intérpretes no comprenden la desigualdad sistémica, corren el riesgo de ayudar a fomentar esa opresión.
- Aliado = concientización + acción
  - 1) se compromete en participar lo menos posible en los prejuicios
  - 2) elige conscientemente luchar por la justicia social (rol activo)
  - 3) debe estar abierto a las críticas de quienes están tratando de dignificar
  - 4) debe desarrollar sus propios sistemas y estructuras que lo mantengan responsable por sus acciones
  - 5) no debe utilizar el término como una denominación autoimpuesta; se trata de manejarse dentro de este marco sin acaparar el término para la gratificación personal o como señal de virtud
  - 6) debe evitar ser el centro de atención (que es más fácil de conseguir para aquellos que pueden aprovechar sus privilegios)
  - 7) en su lugar, debe concentrarse en potenciar las voces marginadas
  - 8) debe ser consciente de sí mismo para evitar volver al modelo del ayudante/cuidador (paternalista).
  - 9) no es un salvador ni un líder que toma el control
- Todo trabajo contra la opresión
  - o requiere una dedicación de tiempo
  - o dedicación de trabajo
  - o largo plazo
  - o relacional
- La relación entre el aliado y los miembros del grupo no dominante
  - o debe ser cercana y significativa

- hace que sea más fácil evitar hablar por los oprimidos
- ayuda a garantizar la responsabilidad del aliado ante los miembros del grupo no dominante
- Por lo tanto, el modelo del aliado debe entenderse como un reposicionamiento del intérprete basado en el reconocimiento de:
  - su propia parcialidad
  - su poder
  - las consecuencias de sus acciones
  - los sistemas generales de opresión
- Es importante recordar que los modelos son utópicos. Esto es coherente con la teoría del aliado, ya que se trata de una práctica que se desarrolla todos los días.
- Se necesita más investigación para poder traducir la concientización a la práctica (una parte clave de la teoría del aliado) y determinar cómo llevar a cabo es acción.

#### PARA HOY:



## Findings

### 1. How do interpreting service users view the role of the interpreter?

#### 1.1. Within the prescribed role

In this section: users' comments which align with a conduit model of interpreting and with the role prescribed by the code of ethics of the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters.

The conduit model of interpreting prioritises accuracy, objectivity and invisibility and is supported by most codes of ethics. (Angelelli, 2004)(Witter-Merithew, 1999)(Tate & Turner, 2001)

NZSTI code has 9 principles: professional conduct, confidentiality, competence, impartiality, accuracy, clarity of role boundaries, maintaining professional relationships, professional development, professional solidarity.

However, not all ethical principles are equally controversial among service users.

Principle of clarity of role boundaries: interpreters must focus on message transfer without engaging in other tasks such as "advocacy, guidance or advice"

Users' comments (**Carlos**: *"official interpreters" are not allowed to have service users visit them at their house*) indicate that interpreters have been educating service users, explaining their role and its limitations in line with their code of ethics, but are these role boundaries upheld in practice?

Principle of confidentiality: interpreters are not to "disclose information acquired in the course of their work".

**Alfredo**: *believed that this principle is more important than neutrality/impartiality, which made no sense to him.*

Research has shown that, unlike other principles, confidentiality features in most codes of ethics of international, regional and national associations. (Phelan et al., 2019)

#### 1.2 Interpreting "isn't easy"

Before discussing users' views on the expansion of the interpreter role, this section will discuss their acknowledgement of the role's complexity.

**Carlos**: *"I don't wish to be an interpreter one day because I know it's hard"*

**Alfredo**: *interpreters' duty is "a very serious commitment" to be undertaken by highly ethical people.*

**Julie**: *"if you have information, you have the power, so [information] is power"*

The complexity of the interpreter's role can be discerned based on the comparisons that the users drew on to discuss it: interpreters as aides, as mothers, as lawyers, as social workers and as friends.



#### 1) Interpreters as aides

**Gabriela:** *spoke of her interpreter as an aide who assisted her with terminology, sentence structure and verb conjugation during the interview she was doing in English.*

This mode of interpreting is often known as “stand-by interpreting”, in which interpreters participate intermittently and otherwise monitor interaction when service users have emerging competencies in a second language. (Monteoliva-García, 2020)

Stand-by interpreting would still fall within the boundaries established by the NZSTI's code, which limits interpreters' role to that of “facilitators of communication”.

#### 2) Interpreters as mothers

**Gabriela:** *made the comparison and talked about the support and soothing nature of the relationship they established while she was going through a stressful health problem in a country where she was relatively new.*

Unlike the previous function of interpreters as aides, this function goes well beyond the boundaries established by most codes of ethics (principles of impartiality and clarity of role boundaries).

#### 3) Interpreters as lawyers

**Alfredo:** *compared interpreters to lawyers who are “there to help you”.*

This comparison, then, hints at an advocacy function that is not contemplated within the NZSTI's code, which explicitly states that interpreters must not engage in advocacy while performing their duties.

#### 4) Interpreters as social workers

**Alfredo:** *Alfredo views interpreting as a “humanitarian service”.*

Social work promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people based on principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities. (IFSW, 2014)

If we consider this definition of social work, Alfredo's second comparison is particularly relevant to this study, which focuses on allyship and social justice in interpreting.

However, comparisons to lawyers and social workers go beyond interpreters' prescribed role, which is supposed to be exclusively focused on communication.

#### 5) Interpreters as friends

**Alfredo:** *expressed disappointment and frustration at the impediments to establishing a true friendship with his interpreters, questioning the reasons behind it: “how would it affect the situation in this case if there was a friendship between the interpreter and the person he's helping?”*

The comparisons explored above serve as an introduction to potential functions, which will be further discussed in the following section.

Highly discrepant roles, and the role overload that interpreters have to bear, suggest that traditional codes of ethics may only be valid on paper. (Pöllabauer, 2004)

### 1.3 Beyond the prescribed role

In the first half of this section: users' comments relating to the reconceptualization of the principles of confidentiality, clarity of role boundaries and impartiality.

In the second half: examples of interpreter behaviour mentioned in the dialogues with the users and how this behaviour challenges mainly the principles of impartiality and clarity of role boundaries established in the NZSTI's code.

#### 1.3.1 Reconceptualization of the principles

Users' comments about some of the principles in the NZSTI's code of ethics show a flexible and context-dependent understanding of the guidelines. The comments suggest that it would be impossible for interpreters to blindly adhere to pre-ordained ethical rules.

#### Principle of confidentiality

Professional interpreters might be chosen over ad-hoc interpreters (friends and family members) because they value the confidentiality offered by professionals.

However:

**Alfredo:** *used this principle to justify the possibility of befriending his interpreters. In his opinion, interpreters abiding by the principle of confidentiality would support and enhance the friendship: an interpreter "can be a friend, but [they] won't disclose anything. And it's even nice to know that you can tell [the interpreter] something and that he won't say anything because of his code of ethics".*

#### Principle of clarity of role boundaries

All service users involved in this research questioned this principle, some more explicitly than others.

**Alfredo:** *actively displeased about how the limitations to the interpreter role affected his freedom to relate to his interpreters. He explicitly stated that "the line is not right" and referred to the situation as "unfair". Conceptualised the situation as "giving candy to a child": users expect from their interpreters the same relationship both during and after the interpreted event. However, after the event, users are kept at a distance, which results in disappointment.*

**Julie:** *described her interpreter as being initially "very dry" and "very much playing her part", when in fact what Julie needed was for the interpreter to break the ice. These feelings created an inner conflict for her: she needed an interpreter, but she did not want her there.*

This is a common feeling among interpreting service users, who often conceptualise interpreters as a "necessary intrusion" or a "necessary evil". (Napier et al., 2006) (O'Donnell, 2020).

If Julie's interpreter had refused to go beyond these boundaries to establish rapport through a more personal exchange, it would have been difficult for Julie to trust the interpreter and communicate through her.



Previous research in the United Kingdom suggested that service users' lack of trust in interpreters was related to a perception of coldness or interpersonal hostility (Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006).

#### Principle of impartiality

Users' comments show that there is among them an understanding that the principle of impartiality is flexible. According to these service users, the "professional detachment" required by the code does not seem to play a part in their interpreters' ability to convey "the full intent of the communication".

**Carlos:** *good interpreting is the result of having a sincere and affectionate relationship with his interpreters, of "having close ties" with them.*

**Gabriela:** *"in my experience, what I would like would be that [interpreters] show that warmth and that you can feel that they are closer to you. Like what I had".*

**Alfredo:** *in order to frame the principle of impartiality, he always asked himself "who is more interested in this [situation], the doctor or the patient?". We can think of the interpreter as neutral, but the reality of the situation is that the interpreter is being more useful to a patient seeking help than to the doctor providing it.*

Alfredo also seems to be recognising the power imbalance between the patient who is seeking a service because they are in a vulnerable situation, and the doctor who is in a position to grant or deny that service and make decisions relating to the patient's life.

**Julie:** *said that the interpreter had been "super neutral". However, she also mentioned the interpreter chatting to her about her personal life while waiting around in the hospital.*

This could indicate that Julie did not believe that having a closer relationship with the interpreter would necessarily affect that interpreter's impartiality.

It is also important to highlight that both Julie and Alfredo openly questioned whether interpreters should be aiming for neutrality at all.

**Alfredo:** *"But what's the point of neutrality there!? I honestly do not understand. I do appreciate them not disclosing what is being said (...) so that it remains confidential. Otherwise, there's no logic behind being neutral. I don't see the logic behind it".*

#### *1.3.2 Examples of interpreter behaviour beyond the role*

Service user	Interpreter behaviour	Main principles dismissed
Alfredo	His interpreter picked him up to take him to the interpreted appointment.	Impartiality
	His interpreter mediated between him and a psychiatrist. Alfredo felt insulted by a routine question asked by the psychiatrist. The interpreter clarified that it was a standard part of the process and that it was not meant as an insult. By doing so, the interpreter successfully de-escalated a tense situation and avoided further negative consequences for Alfredo.	Clarity of role boundaries

Carlos	His interpreter found clients for him to work for on a casual basis.	Clarity of role boundaries
	He visited his interpreter's house. They saw each other outside the interpreting appointment. He knows about his interpreter's family. His interpreter's daughter visited Carlos's mother in Ecuador.	Impartiality
Julie	She had a chat with her interpreter while waiting for her son to come out of theatre. They talked about their lives and things that they had in common.	Impartiality
Gabriela	Her interpreter contained her and soothed her when she was upset during her health treatment. She later called her on the phone to check in on her and ask about the results of the treatment.	Clarity of role boundaries

Service users appreciated interpreters' actions above, classifying them as "kind", "caring", "wise", "satisfactory" and "affectionate".

These interpreters' practice seems to go beyond the limits imposed by the code, which is consistent with previous interpreting research.

**Alfredo:** *mentioned that his interpreters consistently went "a little bit beyond what was strictly professional".*

**Carlos:** *mentioned that the interpreter in Video 2 helped the patient expand his expectations by asking him if there was anything else that he would like to ask while they were still there, even after the interpreter's main goal of message transfer had already been achieved.*

Alfredo made an explicit call for a modification of the code and supports the need for interpreters to take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions.

**Alfredo:** *criticised the behaviour of the interpreter in Video 1, saying that she was "following the protocol and nothing else. Wouldn't go beyond that. The world can end, but this is my protocol and I won't go beyond the line. And I think that's not right. It's ridiculous".*

Why is it, then, that the interpreter's role is still viewed in terms that do not align with users' expectations?

**Alfredo:** *pointed my attention to an inflexible system: "sometimes the system in New Zealand is strict. It is what it is, not even a little bit more than that, not a millimetre beyond it, not a millimetre short of that".*

Even though users support an expansion of the interpreter role, the system in place and the codes and institutions policing those systems hinder that expansion.

This might be related to the fact that community interpreting service users in Aotearoa are members of the oppressed group because they are generally seeking a service from an institution who can grant or deny it. Moreover, these institutions and the individuals representing them hold the expert or technical knowledge, from which the service users are generally excluded. There is also a power asymmetry in terms

of ethnic identity: the dominant culture is prioritised over service users' cultural understandings. It follows that service users' interests are not the ones defining interpreting theory and practice. It is the ruling classes who, via the institutions of civil society, are projecting their own interests as if they were general interests. (Maglaras, 2013) (Rudvin, 2005).

## 2. What are their perceptions on allyship and social justice in relation to the interpreting profession?

Users had a varied background knowledge about the ally theory. **Julie** knew about it because of her involvement with the feminist movement. However, there was support for the incorporation of allyship to interpreting.

**Alfredo:** *eager to adopt the term. Explained that he already thought of interpreters as allies. "Because, Agustina, what else can you call someone who is there to help you?"*

The word "help" is reminiscent of the helper model in sign-language interpreting. Under this model, interpreters acted on behalf of service users, reducing their autonomy and perpetuating patterns of oppression, disregarding people's right to speak for themselves and make decisions about their own lives. (Tate & Turner, 2001)

The ally model, instead, acknowledges the need to keep interpreters accountable to service users while prioritising service users' agency and independence. (Kivel, 2000) (Witter-Merithew, 1999)

**Julie:** *more cautious. Thought of the incorporation of allyship in the face of injustice. Said that remaining neutral when facing rights violations is "terrible".*

She mentioned intersectionality: someone who is Latin American and queer would be more likely to need an interpreter who speaks up about rights violations.

Allyship encourages the acknowledgment of privileges and intersectionality because there is no unique, original source of all oppression. The relationship between privilege and oppression requires a complex analysis which would be fostered and permissible under an ally model of interpreting. (Reynolds, 2010)

This explicit support for allyship might be related to users' awareness of structural inequality.

**Alfredo:** *"the social system is not fair in this case".*

**Carlos:** *refugees are at an "abysmal" disadvantage in their host country*

### 2.1 "¿Quién podrá defenderme?" (who could defend me?): togetherness in otherness

This section includes:

- being disempowered
- feeling resourceless
- lacking information

as a consequence of being members of a culturally and linguistically diverse community.

All Latin Americans in Aotearoa share, to a lesser or greater extent, a feeling of otherness and a need to reaccommodate their expectations to fit the practices of a new country.

**Esteban:** *"we are the stranger, the outsider".*

Trying to navigate life without being able to speak the majority language in the host country can be challenging and distressing.

**Carlos:** *"when someone comes and talks to you in a language that you don't understand, you feel like running away".*

**Alfredo:** *recalls taking out his recycling in a cardboard box instead of using the prescribed bins, only to find that the recycling would not get picked up that way. Another example involves Alfredo failing to buy petrol because he did not have the correct container.*

The situation reinforces the inside/outside and us/them dichotomies which allow society to separate those who belong to a space from the others who do not. It also points to a system which favours the majority group through institutions and everyday practices. (Said, 1995)  
(Haldrup et al., 2006) (Armas, 2019)

The barriers in these cases are not only linguistic. There are other things that make users feel vulnerable:

**Julie:** *spoke about being "in a country where [she] truly didn't understand anything. Absolutely nothing. Nothing at all". She felt that she had no independence from her husband, who is bilingual. Moreover, she arrived in Aotearoa as a first-time mother with a six-month-old baby and found herself trying to understand a new immunisation schedule and to monitor her contraceptive method.*

**Carlos:** *without the interpreter, users would be "completely lost".*

**Julie:** *on her own, she "couldn't even order a coffee".*

Translating words would not be enough to address users' expectations and lack of understanding.

These feelings of dependence on the interpreter exacerbate users' reactions when they are met with an inadequate service. Emotional toll: disappointment, helplessness, frustration, depression.

Users' feelings must be understood in relation to the very real consequences and risks associated with not being able to access information or adequate interpreting services.

**Carlos:** *if the interpreter refuses to repeat the medical information required, the patient will end up googling it and this could, in turn, affect that person's health.*

**Julie:** *explained that she needed to understand every detail in a doctor's consultation because her "son's health [was] on the line".*

Allies tend to have one foot in the world of the dominant and one in the world of the oppressed (Reason, 2005). With one foot in the culturally and linguistically diverse community, interpreters operating within the ally model would be able to recognise and understand these obstacles

and inequalities which are often unacknowledged by members of the dominant groups. With their other foot, their linguistic and inter-cultural knowledge, they could try to avoid the reproduction of these inequalities.

## 2.2 “Hay que respetar eso” (you need to respect that): individuality

There is still a need to avoid generalising these users’ preferences to every member of the community.

Foreigners tend to be thrown into a sack of generalities and suppositions, and any individuality is often forgotten. (Armas, 2019)

**Alfredo:** *there are some Colombians in Aotearoa who, as a consequence of war and trauma, “do not even trust [their] own shadow” and “would rather [interpreters] do them the favour of translating, and nothing else”.*

Research shows that some migrants are reluctant to use an interpreter because of their lack of trust and the resentment caused by a feeling of dependence. This is especially common in the case of individuals who have had a traumatic experience linked to their exile or their migratory journey. A feeling of enforced dependency tends to foster an instrumental use of interpreters to achieve strategic goals (Le Goff & Carbonel, 2020, p. VI) (Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006).

On the contrary:

**Alfredo:** *never doubted whether the interpreters were saying what he wanted to say. “I didn’t know any English so if it happened, I didn’t notice, and I didn’t care either”.*

**Carlos:** *trust in his interpreters was a result of his trust in God, who blesses him and looks after him in his daily life.*

Alfredo and Carlos seem to be extending voluntary trust on their interpreters. In interpreted events, service users may extend this type of trust based on shared identity, language and nationality, or because of their trust in institutions. Importantly, this could be related to their willingness to establish a close and familiar relationship with their interpreters. (Robb & Greenhalgh, 2006) (Greener, 2003).

**Gabriela:** *“[the interpreter] was very polite, but you don’t feel that connection as much over the phone”.*

This did not produce any negative reactions, maybe because at that stage Gabriela was proficient enough to communicate without the interpreter. Lower dependence = lower mistrust.

Operating within the ally model can help interpreters prioritise users’ preferences and avoid making decisions for them.

Allies must be open to the assessment and critiques of the people they are trying to uplift. (K. E. Edwards, 2006)

The ally model allows for this flexibility while prioritising users’ choices.

**Alfredo:** *"it is the person who gets the interpreter's help who can decide whether they build a friendship with the interpreter depending on how they feel".*

### 2.3 "Good vibes are not useful to me if I can't understand": access to interpreting services

Interpreting service users' ability to access an interpreter may impact their ability to cope with the physical environment and to access information and services.

#### **Gabriela:**

*1) For her hospital treatment, the interpreter was offered by the GP. She did not know she could access an interpreter.*

Service users often feel that they cannot control how a language barrier will be managed during a consultation. (MacFarlane et al., 2009)

*2) For immigration interview, the interpreter was offered by officer. She did know about it and would have asked for one if it had not been offered.*

This seems to indicate that knowledge of the services available can change users' engagement with interpreting services in the first place, while positive experiences can motivate users to seek those services again.

#### **Julie:** most problematic access experience.

*1) Booked an interpreter for a GP appointment and the interpreter did not show up. She decided to go to a Spanish-speaking doctor to avoid interpreting services altogether.*

Unlike Gabriela, whose positive experience motivated her to use an interpreter again, Julie decided to avoid interpreting services. She did not know that, through Ezispeak, she has access to free over-the-phone interpreting services to communicate with all government agencies. Her Latin American friend (in Aotearoa for 12 years) did not know how to access an interpreter either.

Research has argued that users often do not know that they can ask for a professional interpreter, how to go about it or who would meet the cost. (Alexander et al., 2004)

*2) Hospital emergency: son with a broken arm. Throughout the entire process, Julie was not offered an interpreter, even after it became apparent that she needed one.*

Research has argued that users believe that interpreting service provision is controlled by service providers such as doctors. (Alexander et al., 2004)

Health professionals can have difficulties accessing either face-to-face or phone interpreting services, particularly in primary health care settings. (Shrestha-Ranjit et al., 2020)

Rather than a lack of cooperation, there is a systemic issue affecting interpreting service provision.

**Julie:** *made a distinction between health professionals trying to help her "as human beings", and the responsibilities of the "institution".*



*"The doctor came to explain something and I feel like everyone here is very soft and very sweet, but sweetness and good vibes are not useful to me if I can't understand".*

Within the ally model, interpreters are encouraged to recognise and reflect on the power imbalance between the parties so that this can inform their practice. Interpreters striving to become allies must engage in advocacy and be actively involved in furthering the agenda of the disadvantaged communities they interpret for. (Minges, 2016) (Witter-Merithew, 1999).

Service users' lack of knowledge about how to access interpreting services could be pointing to a need for interpreters to raise awareness about users' rights and the services they are entitled to. This brings into question the issue of interpreter education on topics of social justice.

**Julie:** *interpreters need to know about patient's rights in order to uphold them and avoid right violations.*

Interpreter education in Aotearoa does not specifically include the topic of social justice and systemic inequality.

Interpreting is often considered a technical profession, where technical skills are removed from the social interaction with service users. Language skills and cultural knowledge are perceived as sufficient for occupational competence in most service environments. (Dean & Pollard, 2011)

**Alfredo:** *supported the need for interpreter education on topics of social justice. He placed that need in a much broader context: interpreting is a crucial service holding Aotearoa together.*

If we acknowledge that, the need for interpreter education on the topic of social justice seems clearer.

### 3. How do they think these perceptions should be incorporated into the interpreter's practice?

This is the main question we will be trying to answer today. However, I have included below a list of positive and negative feedback and reactions volunteered by the users, which can guide our discussions.

#### 3.1 Positives

These users' experiences with interpreting services were overwhelmingly positive. These positive experiences paired with users' accounts of interpreters going beyond the role as established in the NZSTI's code of ethics might suggest that interpreters are often doing what they need to do to keep service users happy.

Users reported interpreters making them feel comfortable and at ease. Interpreters were also considered to offer the peace of mind that comes with knowing that you will be able to ask all the questions you have and obtain the information that you need.

**Julie:** *"simply having the feeling that, even though this time I understood because I had a lot of information in my head, I had the peace of knowing that, if anything happened, [the interpreter] was there".*

**Gabriela:** *"it made me feel calmed, you know? Because what I had to do was something extremely important"*.

Users also praised humane behaviour, which included being empathic, kind, caring, loving, affectionate, warm and having good vibes.

**Alfredo:** *interpreters' kind and caring attitude resulted in them going the extra mile for him, disregarding protocols and even giving him advice.*

**Carlos:** *mentioned interpreters "doing [their job] with love" and "a lot of affection", and said that interpreters understood the need there was for their services.*

**Julie:** *appreciated her interpreter's "good vibes" and helpful attitude.*

Appreciation for humane behaviour extended beyond interpreters, as it was also appreciated in thesis supervisors and medical staff. This could indicate that users appreciate this quality in anyone they have to interact with. Moreover, it could mean that users see interpreters beyond their perfunctory role. Instead, they are seeing them as people.

Seeing interpreters as people might help explain some of these users' expectations.

**Carlos:** *need of having a sincere and affectionate relationship with the interpreter. This resulted in the development of close ties which were considered essential when communicating through an interpreter. Moreover, he believed that this would, in turn, bring users closer to their interlocutor: "So the interpreter brings you closer to that person and you can find that familiarity with the interpreter and the person who is talking to you".*

Finally, all of these users' positive experiences resulted in a feeling of gratefulness. Users were grateful for:

- interpreters doing their job
- not having to pay for their services
- holding Aotearoa together and enabling the systems to operate
- going beyond their role to help them

Users' feelings of gratefulness motivated most of them to be a part of this research.

### 3.2 Negatives

Some users mentioned interpreter behaviour which is sometimes considered unprofessional, such as arriving late to an appointment or not knowing the terminology. However, they did not seem to affect their opinion of the interpreter. It would seem that punctuality is less important for service users than it is for interpreting and translation agencies.

Instead, these users focused on the importance of interpreters dedicating them time during the interpreted event, which made them feel accompanied and supported.

**Carlos:** *the time with interpreters in Mangere was limited, which affected users' ability to access information: "sometimes you have doubts left that you can't clarify in that time".*

**Gabriela:** *commended her interpreter's presence and support throughout her hospital experience: "I mean, it's not like she did her job and left. I mean, she was there". Gabriela preferred an interpreter who would stay with her throughout the treatment, until she recovered from anaesthesia; someone who would not "abandon" her.*

Other negative comments were related to users not getting what they needed.



**Alfredo:** *users assessing the interpreter's performance as inadequate was related to the negative outcome of the interpreted event*

Research into interpreting service user perspectives in the United Kingdom maintained that "the understanding of who is a good interpreter is often based on the outcome of the situation in which they are needed". (Alexander et al., 2004)

Users seem to understand that interpreter performance can stop them from accessing a service or information. If users highlighted that interpreters' linguistic abilities affect the amount of information that they can receive, it is then important to keep the principle of competence in mind (interpreters should only undertake work they are competent to perform).

This principle is, in turn, related to the principle of accuracy, as being competent would allow for the interpreter to convey the content and intent of the source message or text without omission or distortion.

However:

**Gabriela:** *her interpreter misunderstood something that she said and Gabriela had to correct her. made her feel good about herself and her level of English.*

This might indicate that the level of dependence on the interpreter might affect users' feelings about interpreters' competence. This competence might be seen as more crucial when users depend on it.

## The Ally Model

- Focuses on users of interpreting services.
- Interpreters:
  - 1) recognise the power imbalance between majority language speaker and member of culturally and linguistically diverse community
  - 2) consciously choose to act in ways that will help empower the latter and offer equality of access
- Takes into account the interpreter's power + further inequalities tied to each particular context: (immigration officer vs asylum seeker, physician vs patient, public service representative vs member of the general public)
- Spoken language interpreters: often members of the same non-dominant community as the users they interpret for. However, they enjoy privileges that users don't have: can speak majority language + are familiar with new culture, systems and institutions. If they don't understand systemic inequality, they run the risk of furthering oppression themselves.
- Ally = awareness + action
  - 1) commits to engaging in as little prejudice as possible
  - 2) intentionally chooses to fight for social justice (active role)
  - 3) must be open to critiques from those they are trying to uplift
  - 4) should develop their own systems and structures to hold themselves accountable
  - 5) should not be a self-applied label; it is about striving to operate within this framework without co-opting the term for self-gratification purposes or virtue signalling
  - 6) must avoid the spotlight (more accessible to those who can harness privilege)
  - 7) instead, they can focus on amplifying marginalised voices
- Anti-oppression work
  - o time-intensive
  - o labour-intensive
  - o long-term
  - o relational
- Relationship between the ally and the members of the non-dominant group
  - o must be close and meaningful
  - o make it easier to avoid speaking for the oppressed
  - o help ensure the ally's accountability
- Therefore, the ally model should be understood as a repositioning of the interpreter based on the acknowledgement of:
  - o their own partiality
  - o their power
  - o the consequences of their actions
  - o the broader systems of oppression
- Models are always utopian. Consistent with allyship, which is a practice which is developing every day.

### The Ally Model in Interpreting

- Arose together with the deaf civil-rights movement in the USA. The majority of the research on it in relation to interpreting exists within the field of signed languages, where power imbalances are more readily identified given that deafness is often understood as a disability.
- Need for self-awareness: interpreters must avoid reverting to helper/care-taker model (paternalistic). Allies are not crusaders, saviours nor leaders who take control.
- Further research is needed when it comes to translating awareness into action (a key part of allyship) and determining what that action looks like.

### For today:

1. What are the ideal characteristics of an interpreter?
2. What excites me about the ally model in interpreting? What worries me or stops me from implementing it?
3. What does the model look like in practice? What do we have to do?

## Letter of support



24/09/2020

All members of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee  
Level 4, WU Building  
46 Wakefield Street, Auckland 1010  
Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142  
24 September 2020

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam

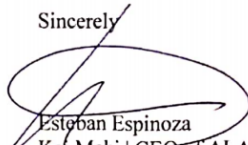
I am writing to you today to confirm that I met with Agustina on 9 September 2020 to discuss her research project about the role of the interpreter and the possibility of considering this role from a social justice perspective.

I have also expressed an interest in having ALAC Inc participate in this research and Agustina stated she could accommodate for that.

While she was at the ALAC office in Onehunga, she also met and talked to the rest of the staff, explained her project to them, and they also had the opportunity to ask questions and make recommendations.

I believe that her research practices are appropriate and acceptable and would like to extend my support.

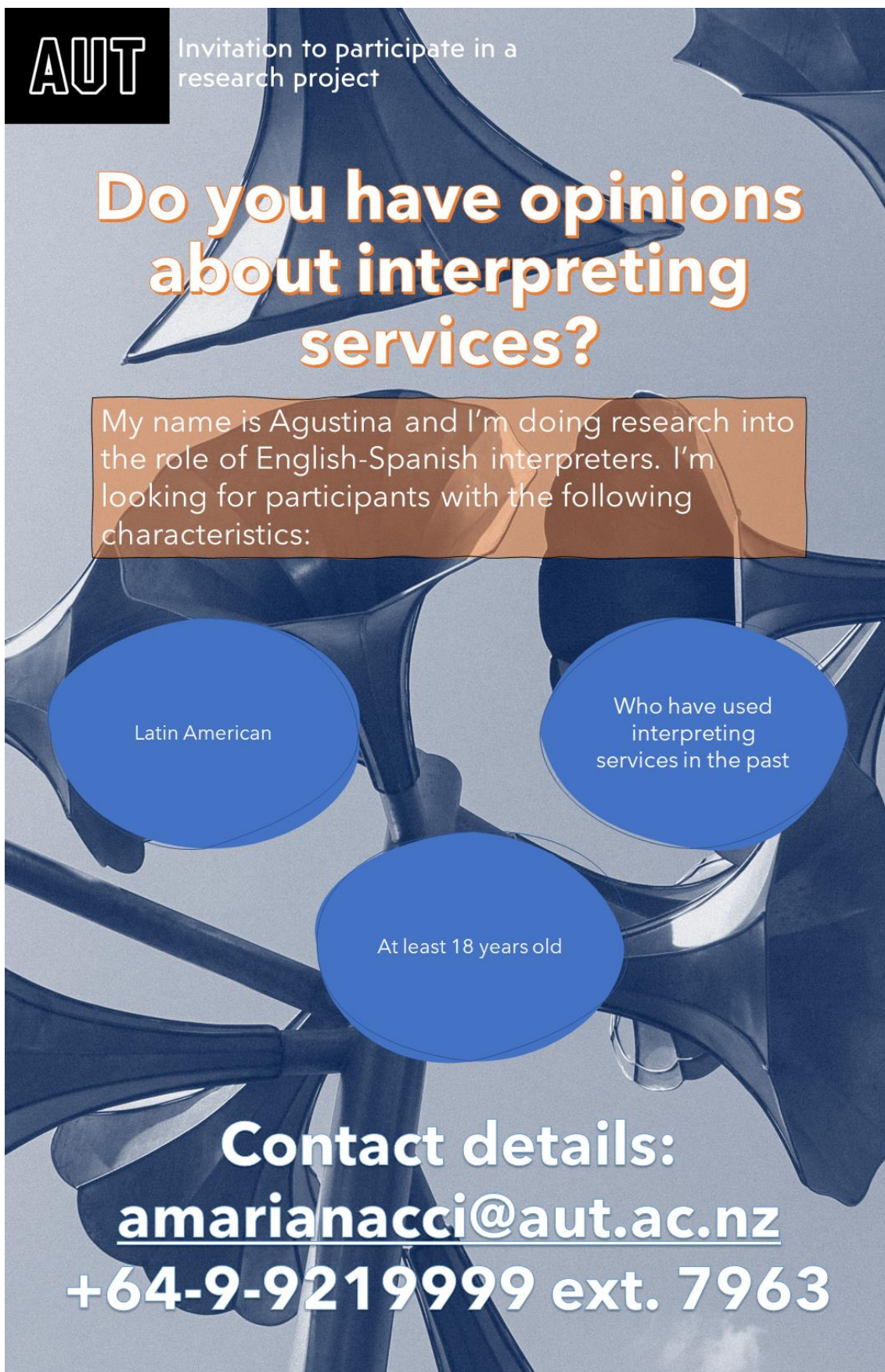
Sincerely



Esteban Espinoza  
Kat Mahi | CEO of ALAC

45 Cardwell Street/ Onehunga/ Auckland/ New Zealand 1061-P.O 137-41 Code 1643/ Phone-Fax (09) 6365313  
[www.alacinc.org.nz/](http://www.alacinc.org.nz/) [socialservices@alacinc.org.nz](mailto:socialservices@alacinc.org.nz)

## Research advertisement



**AUT** Invitation to participate in a research project

## Do you have opinions about interpreting services?

My name is Agustina and I'm doing research into the role of English-Spanish interpreters. I'm looking for participants with the following characteristics:

- Latin American
- Who have used interpreting services in the past
- At least 18 years old

**Contact details:**  
**[amarianacci@aut.ac.nz](mailto:amarianacci@aut.ac.nz)**  
**+64-9-9219999 ext. 7963**



## Appendix C. *Codebook*

### Codes: third cycle

Code name	Code description
Allyship and social justice	
Allyship	
Allyship - Agustina's input	Explanation of the use of “ally” in the context of this research
Allyship - users' definition and previous knowledge	Users’ definitions of an ally and knowledge before Agustina’s input
Allyship - users' dialogic response	Comments offered after Agustina shared information and clarified the intent to bring allyship into interpreting
Intersectionality	References to the interconnected nature of social categorizations which create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage
QUIÉN PODRÁ DEFENDERME (“Who could defend us”)	Information about users being disempowered, resourceless, not knowing what to do, lacking information
Accessing interpreting services	References to the services the users needed to access through interpreters, as well as all difficulties accessing the interpreting services themselves.
Ad hoc interpreting	References to the use of untrained individuals who are called to interpret
Immigrant vs refugee	Differences between arriving/being in Aotearoa as an immigrant and as a refugee
ME FRUSTRÉ UN MONTÓN (“I got really frustrated”)	The feeling of frustration, of not being able to do something, having your hands tied

DEBERÍAN ESTAR PREPARADOS ("they should be prepared")	Information about interpreter education on social justice
HAY QUE RESPETAR ESO ("You need to respect that")	References to users being able to choose what they want from the interpreting service
Trust	
DISTANCIA ("Distance")	References to users not feeling a connection with the interpreter
Ignorance is bliss	Trust as a result of a lack of linguistic knowledge
NO CONFÍO NI EN MI SOMBRA ("I don't even trust my own shadow")	Information about trust
TODO BONITO pero NO ENTIENDO ("Everything's pretty" but "I don't understand")	Shows of attentiveness and willingness to help are useless if, in the end, there is no access to the information because of the linguistic barrier
The interpreter's role	
Beyond the role	Actions that go beyond expectations/understandings of the interpreter role
CONTENCIÓN ("Support")	References to interpreters offering support
EL INTÉRPRETE INTERPRETA ("Interpreters interpret")	Acknowledgement of the interpreter's agency in deconstructing and reconstructing messages
Interpreting as an exchange	References to everyone benefitting from the interpreting experience (not just the users).
Necessary evil	Interpreting services conceptualised as something unwanted but needed

NO ESTÁ BIEN LA LÍNEA ("The line is not right")	Users' negative feelings about the imposition of role boundaries
Taking sides	Information about the interpreter taking sides (or not), neutrality and impartiality
UN POQUITO MÁS ALLÁ DE LO PROFESIONAL ("A little bit beyond professionalism")	Users' feelings of interpreters doing more than what they absolutely had to. An explicit acknowledgement on the part of the user.
NO ES FÁCIL (interpretar) ([interpreting] "isn't easy")	The difficulty of the interpreting job as identified by interpreter users
Comparisons	
Interpreters as social workers	Comparing interpreters to social workers
Interpreters as aides	Comparing interpreters to aides
Interpreters as lawyers	Comparing interpreters to lawyers
Interpreters as friends	Comparing interpreters to friends
Interpreters as mothers	Comparing interpreters to mothers
INFORMACIÓN ES PODER ("Information is power")	References to the importance of information and interpreters being clearer, offering more information
QUE ALGUIEN HABLE POR TI	References to interpreters speaking for you and taking on part of your identity or doing things that users cannot do on their own
Within the role	Actions that fall within the expectations/understandings of the interpreter role



Confidentiality	References to the principle of confidentiality and interpreters not disclosing information
Ethics	References to interpreting ethics
Explaining role boundaries	Information about interpreters explaining their role, educating clients and clarifying what the boundaries are
Managing the floor	References to interpreters managing the floor
NI QUITARLE NI PONERLE ("No removing from it, no adding to it")	Information about staying within the prescribed role, being accurate, omissions, being faithful
NO PODEMOS REBELARNOS ("We can't rebel against it")	Information about the limitations imposed by the industry. Interpreters being tied to the code or certain practices.
Users' feelings and reactions	
Negatives	
EL TIEMPO ES LIMITADO ("Time is limited")	References to not having enough time with the interpreters or needing more time, as well as having a lot of time with the interpreter
Interpreter shortcomings	References to interpreter mistakes or interpreters not doing a good job (regardless of whether the user feels negatively about it or whether they feel that it was okay to make a mistake)
Positives	

(IN)CÓMODO	References to being comfortable or uncomfortable with the interpreter
("[Un]comfortable")	
Being grateful	References to being or feeling grateful
CONTENCIÓN	References to interpreters offering support
("Support")	
Interpreting as an exchange	References to everyone benefitting from the interpreting experience (not just the users).
MÁS HUMANA	References to humanity, the parties being human, showing love/affection
("More humane")	
NUNCA UNA MALA EXPERIENCIA	References to there being no problems, being able to communicate through an interpreter, and interpreters doing a good job
("Never a bad experience")	
SUPER TRANQUILA	References to feeling relieved or reassured because of the interpreter's presence
("Super calm")	

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