NRPSI Anniversary conference: Looking forward to the next 25 Years
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Interpreting via video link:
Insights from research, questions for practice

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UNIVERSITY OF
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Centre for Translation Studies

- Postgraduate Translation programmes since 1986
- Research in Translation & Interpreting Studies
- PhD programme

Technology in interpreting

Technology in interpreting 2.0

Technology-supported interpreting	Technology-mediated interpreting	Technology-enabled hybrid modalities	Technology replacing interpreters
Technologies for preparation and real-time support	*Distance interpreting*	*Human/machine performance; spoken/written*	*Machine interpreting*

Technology-mediated interpreting (Distance interpreting)

Audio-mediated interpreting

- Since the 1970s; first systematic use in Australian health services (e.g. Ozolins 2011; Rosenberg 2007)
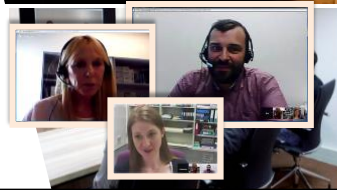
Video-mediated interpreting

- Experiments since the 1970s; first in conference interpreting; then shift in focus to healthcare and legal contexts (e.g. Azarmina & Wallace 2005, Braun 2015, Braun & Taylor 2012, Devaux 2017, Fowler 2013, Mouzourakis 2006, Napier, Braun & Skinner 2018, Roziner & Shlesinger 2010)

Hybrid

- Remote Simultaneous Interpreting – virtual booths (Braun, forthc., Seeber et al. forthc.)

Bibliography, please see www.videoconference-interpreting.net

Video-mediated interpreting: Configurations

Video Remote Interpreting

- Participants *together* in the same location
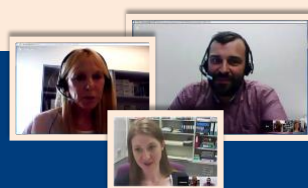- **Interpreter** in a different location, e.g. a hub (separated)

Videoconference Interpreting

- Participants in different locations
- **Interpreter** at one of these locations (co-located, integrated)

Mixed configurations

- Participants and **interpreter** in different locations
- Leads to three/multi-point video link

Video-mediated interpreting: Technological basis

Connection types

1970s   **1990s**   **2000s**   **2010s**

Satellite
Too expensive
for 'ordinary' use

ISDN-based
Sound/image
problematic
for interpreting

Internet-based
More conducive
to interpreting

**Cloud-based and
mobile systems**
Less stability

Video-mediated interpreting: Technological basis

Basic hardware

➢ Room systems, rollabout units, desktop PCs, laptops, mobile devices
➢ Single/multiple screens, cameras, microphones

Video-mediated interpreting: distributed practice

Technology as additional dimension

Interacting with videoconferencing technology

Interacting with the other participants through this technology

"distributed" becomes the new "situated" (fractured ecologies)

… and (still) raises many new questions

From practice to research: legal settings

From practice to research: legal settings

Video-Enabled Justice
Linking, e.g.
- Court – police station
- Court – prison
- Court – witnesses
- Lawyer – client
- Doctor – inmate

Interpreter normally at one participant site

Video Remote Interpreting; On demand interpreting

Interpreter at separate site, e.g. in hub

Research in the European AVIDICUS projects

AVIDICUS 1-3: Assessment of Video-Mediated Interpreting in the Criminal Justice System

- Stakeholder attitudes, perceptions and experiences
- Interpreting performance and quality
- Spatial organisation
- Communicative dynamics, interaction
- System design and implementation
- Impact of training, technology, set-up; adaptation

With financial support from the European Commission, Criminal Justice programme.
www.videoconference-interpreting.net

Quality of interpreting performance in video links

Stakeholder perceptions of quality

How would you rate your VMI performance (by age range)?

Comprehension of source text
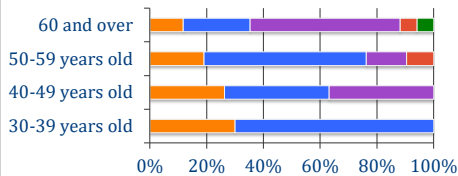
Production of target text

Your rapport with the other participants

Legend:
- ■ Much worse than face-to-face
- ■ Not quite as good as face-to-face
- ■ The same as face-to-face
- ■ Slightly better than face-to-face
- ■ Much better than face-to-face
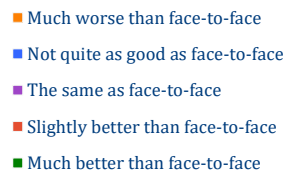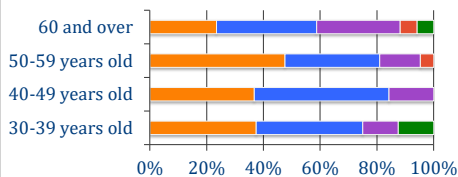
(Braun & Taylor 2012; 150 interpreters in different countries)

Stakeholder perceptions of quality

Do you think VMI affects your interpreting performance? (interviews)

No (because… / but…)

"Uh, <u>not necessarily</u>, **because I'm used to it**." (8)

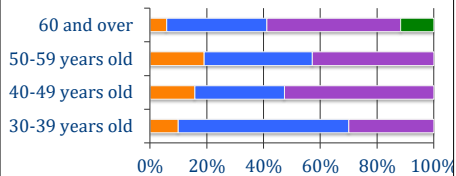"<u>No, I don't think so</u>. **But, uh, I'd hate to think you know that it is… was someone that really speaks with a very strong accent**." (7)

"I think **because in the same room, it's more human**. OK, so it's more a human factor. **But** <u>I don't think it has an impact</u> on the ability to trans-, to interpret." (6)

"The only thing that could go wrong with the video, is the sound. **And then, because you don't hear very well, you've got to really make sure that you hear the person, because the sounds can interfere**, as opposed to, uh, where you sit face-to-face. Other than that it's the same." (6)

"I think because you have to look at the screen uh I would say **it's a bit more tiring**." (6)

Braun (2019)

Stakeholder perceptions of quality

Do you think VMI affects your interpreting performance? (interviews)

Too early to say (but…)

"<u>I couldn't say at this stage</u>." (1)

"In general, I think <u>it's a little bit early to decide</u> whether it will affect, it will have an effect or not. But, uh, certainly, I mean, I wouldn't do a, a complicated case via video link. … Uh, **but it is much more tiring** to do it... I mean, you really need to concentrate a lot more." (2)

"I was so busy concentrating! I wouldn't like to do that all day long. Because that would be **very tiring**! I mean, if I had to do four-five interviews like that, all day long, that would not be very nice job. You would feel very isolated. You would feel very tired. **If you get fatigue, then your concentration is affected. And then your interpretation is affected. Your accuracy is different**." (2)

Braun (2019)

Stakeholder perceptions of quality

Do you think VMI affects your interpreting performance? (interviews)

It could do (because…)

"Well it, <u>it could do</u>, **because I think your mind is kept alive by the fact that you're there**, and even if the furnishing is very simple, there are things, they're like, uh, probably a desk, a chair and things around you. And there might be smells, there might be sounds, anything. You see, they're all stimuli. You know, **mental stimuli**." (3)

"<u>It might be a bit tricky</u>, when it comes to the names. They say 'My name is…' and there's sometimes very **long foreign names**, and then they mention a lot of other long foreign names, so I suppose the end result of **statement-taking** would be, um, um, less, uh, poor quality. I would imagine. I don't know." (3)

Braun (2019)

Comparative analysis of interpreting quality

Study across at 3 sites:
- **Simulation** of investigative interviews (40 in total)
- **Comparison** on onsite / videoconference / video remote interpreting
- **Participants**: experienced legal interpreters; police officers and prosecutors experienced in working with interpreters (police officers, prosecutors); role players

Comparative analysis of interpreting quality

Identification, classification and quantification of problems

Results from Surrey site (police suspect interviews):

	Onsite interpreting		VRI	
	total	Ø per VC		
Content-related problems	201	25.13	295*	36.9
Linguistic problems	170	21.25	212*	26.5
Paralinguistic problems	577	72.13	704*	88.0
Interaction problems	34	4.25	110*	13.8

* significant difference acc. to paired t-test and Wilcoxon signed-rank test (p = 0.5)

See Braun & Taylor 2012, Braun 2013
Bibliography on VMI: www.videoconference-interpreting.net

Comparative analysis of interpreting quality

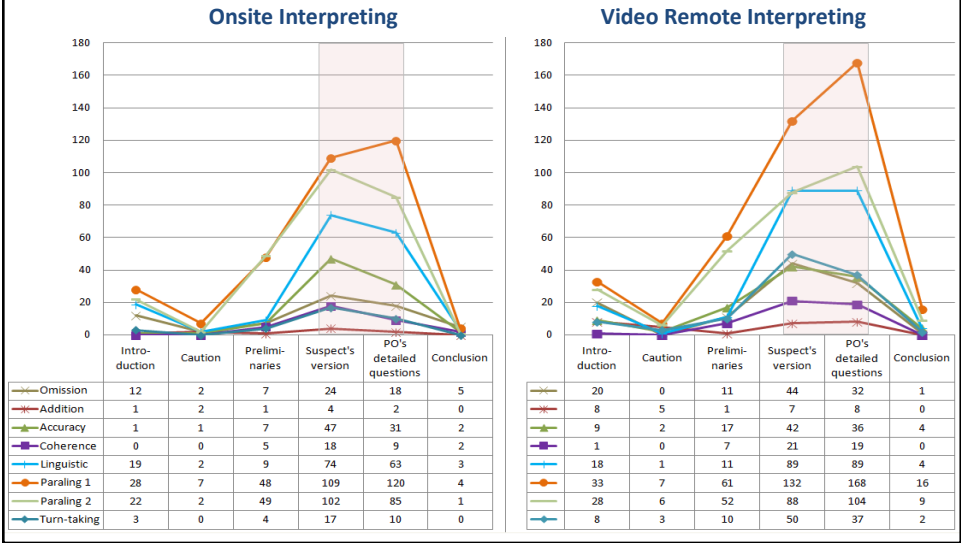### E.g. Accuracy (meaning shift)

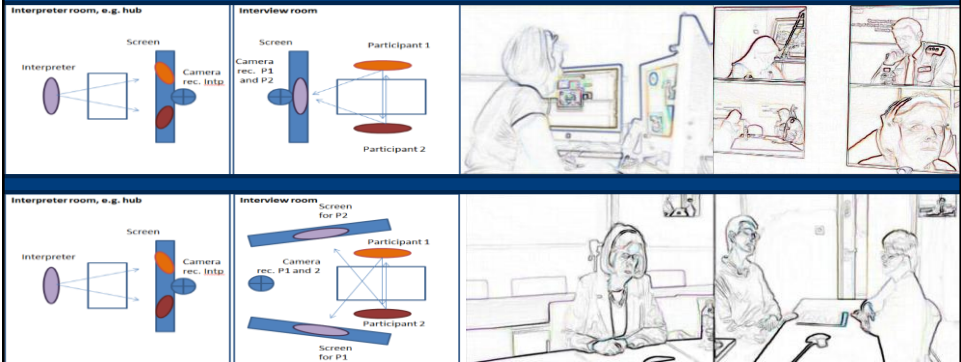**Suspect's version** (assault case – taxi driver)

1. Det: Alors, elle a dit que **tout-** elle m'a demandé `**toute personne** qui quitte ta voiture est-ce que c'est ta femme?'
      So, she (=the boss) said that all- she asked me 'every person who gets out of your car is that your wife?'

2. Intp: So she asked me `**that person** who who left the car is it your wife?'

Comparative analysis of interpreting quality

Distribution of problems

Onsite Interpreting

Video Remote Interpreting

	Intro-duction	Caution	Prelimi-naries	Suspect's version	PO's detailed questions	Conclusion
Omission	12	2	7	24	18	5
Addition	1	2	1	4	2	0
Accuracy	1	1	7	47	31	2
Coherence	0	0	5	18	9	2
Linguistic	19	2	9	74	63	3
Paraling 1	28	7	48	109	120	4
Paraling 2	22	2	49	102	85	1
Turn-taking	3	0	4	17	10	0

	Intro-duction	Caution	Prelimi-naries	Suspect's version	PO's detailed questions	Conclusion
Omission	20	0	11	44	32	1
Addition	8	5	1	7	8	0
Accuracy	9	2	17	42	36	4
Coherence	1	0	7	21	19	0
Linguistic	18	1	11	89	89	4
Paraling 1	33	7	61	132	168	16
Paraling 2	28	6	52	88	104	9
Turn-taking	8	3	10	50	37	2

Impact of training, technology and set-up – adaptation (?)

Study design

- Replication of AVIDICUS 1 **simulation** 2 years later (32 further simulations)
- Same/similar interpreters, but after training and real-life experience
- Use of original and improved technology and set-up
- Analysis of interpreting performance and adaptation strategies

Impact of training, technology and set-up – adaptation (?)

Identification, classification and quantification of problems

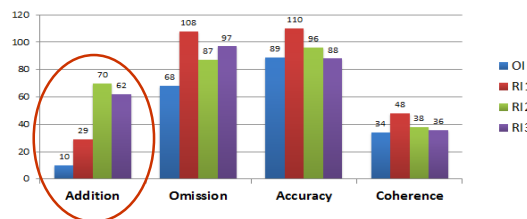|	onsite		VRI 1 (no training)		VRI 1b (training)		VRI 2 (training and better tech)	
	total	Ø per VC						
Content-related problems	201	25.13	295*	36.9	291*	36.4	283*	35.4
Linguistic problems	170	21.25	212*	26.5	127	15.9	151	18.9
Paralinguistic problems	577	72.13	704*	88.0	646	80.8	689	86.1
Interaction problems	34	4.25	110*	13.8	86	10.8	113*	14.1

- significant difference acc. to Multiple samples, pairwise comparison, Nemenyi's test (p = 0.5)

Braun (2014)

Impact of training, technology and set-up – adaptation (?)

Identification, classification and quantification of problems

	onsite		VRI 1 (no training)		VRI 1b (training)		VRI 2 (training and better tech)	
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Braun (2014, 2017)

Spatial organisation in video links

Interpreter location: "here" or "there"?

Legal practitioners' arguments

- **Authority:** interpreter should be **in the courtroom**
- **Practicability:** interpreter booked by court – placed in court
- **Communication:** better chance of detecting interpreting problems

VS.

- **Emotional support:** Interpreter should be **with the other-language speaker**
- **Practicability:** interpreter in court "disturbing"; can be muted when remote

Braun et al. (2018)

Interpreter location: "here" or "there"?

Interpreters' arguments

- **Avoid being "forgotten":** interpreter's 'presence' is stronger **in the courtroom**
- **Avoid "claustrophobic" experience:** dislike for work in prison
- **Avoid assuming additional tasks**, e.g. giving legal advice when lawyer not present

vs.

- **Avoid 'collaborator' impression:** interpreter should be **with the other-language speaker**
- **Increase rapport:** better support for other-language when co-located

Braun et al. (2018)

Interpreter's position

Often conditioned by:

- Technical factors, e.g. availability of microphone in court, number and position of screens/cameras
- Environmental factors, e.g. chairs bolted to floor in prison or in one row
- Lack of awareness, e.g. interpreter seated to the side of the screen; interpreter either too central or invisible
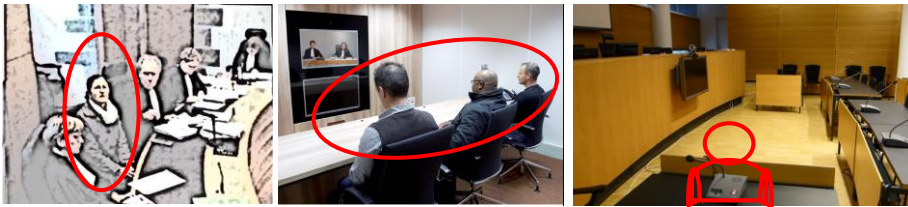
Braun et al. (2018)

Interpreter's position

... affects

- Perception of interpreter (collaborator vs impartiality)
- Interpreter's visibility
- Interpreter's view of participants
- Interaction

Braun et al. (2018)

Communication management and interaction in video links

Turn-taking and chunking

I: I see. Wait a moment.

I: They told- they told

I: Un instant s'il vous plaît. *One moment please.*

Summary of findings

Key findings from our research on VMI

1. Complex structure of research findings
(including some discrepancies between our and other work)

2. VMI magnifies some *known* interpreting problems, e.g.
– Linguistic/communicative dimension (e.g. accuracy)
– Interactional dimension (e.g. greater fragmentation, reduced rapport)
– Ergonomic dimension (e.g. fatigue)
– Cognitive dimension (e.g. less monitoring, less coherence)

3. Technological dimension – as added/new dimension
– Creates further challenges (e.g. spatial organisation)
– Requires adaptation
– Raises questions beyond individuals' performance (i.e. system design)

4. The complexity of combining videoconferencing and interpreting tends to be under-estimated by justice sector agencies and legal practitioners
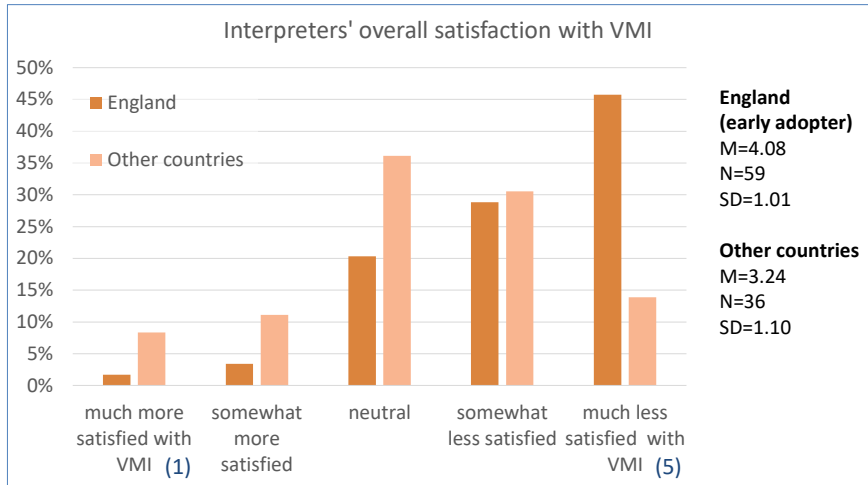
5. Interpreters often feel that they are not sufficiently involved in the implementation process (denial of 'expert status')

Key questions for further research & practice

- *Which* factors influence the viability of video-mediated interpreting – **and of technologies in interpreting more broadly**?

- *How* can we capture/measure the influence of these factors adequately in research (i.e. research methods)?

- *Which* problems can be mitigated/resolved e.g. through guidance/education, adaptation and technological innovation; which are likely to prevail?

- ***How*** can problems be mitigated/resolved, i.e. contribution of different variables
  - **User level: awareness-raising, guidance, education, appropriateness**
  - **System level: technological basis, system design, implementation**
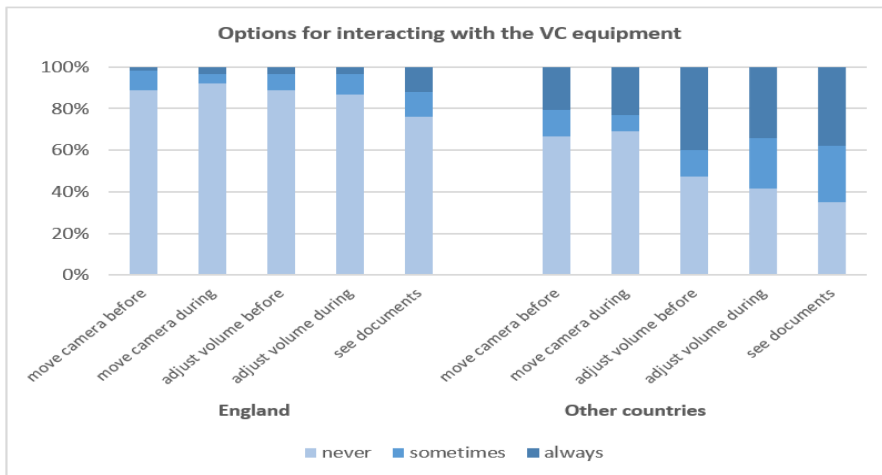
Key questions for further research & practice

Satisfaction with video-mediated interpreting – in context

Interpreters' overall satisfaction with VMI

**England
(early adopter)**
M=4.08
N=59
SD=1.01

Other countries
M=3.24
N=36
SD=1.10

Braun (2018)

Key questions for further research & practice

Satisfaction with video-mediated interpreting – in context

Options for interacting with the VC equipment

Braun (2018)

Key questions for further research & practice

- *Which* factors influence the viability of video-mediated interpreting – **and of technologies in interpreting more broadly**?

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  - **User level: awareness-raising, guidance, education, appropriateness**
  - **System level: technological basis, system design, implementation**

Imagining the future…

Faster horses?
  "If I had asked people what they want, they would have said faster horses." (Henry Ford?)

- **'Normalisation' of technology-mediated interpreting?**
  - Interpreters "at the push of a button", marginalisation and commoditisation of interpreting *vs.* adaptation potential and benefits (less travel, wider reach, sustainability)?

- **Replacement of interpreter?**
  - "I have little doubt that within a few years high quality *simultaneous translation* will be available and see the end of *interpreters*"? (Lord Chief Justice)

- **Client education!**

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AVIDICUS 3 PROJECT
Assessment of Video-Mediated Interpreting in the
Criminal Justice System – Assessing the Implementation

HANDBOOK OF
BILINGUAL
VIDEOCONFERENCING

The use of Videoconferencing in Proceedings
Conducted with the Assistance of an Interpreter

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

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AVIDICUS 3
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European Commission.

http://www.videoconference-interpreting.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/AVIDICUS3_Handbook_Bilingual_Videoconferencing.pdf