Complex collaborations

Interpreting and translating for the UK police

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Interpreting and translation are increasingly provided in the public sector via large-scale outsourced framework contracts (Moorkens 2017). In the UK, one of the largest recent framework agreements for interpreting and translation was introduced between 2016 and 2017 in critical contexts for justice, including the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice and the police. These agreements involve new types of collaboration between new partners and agents in the delivery of interpreting and translation, who each have different aims, expectations, standards and working methods. This contribution examines these emerging complex collaborations, and is the result of a rare type of complex collaboration between academic researchers, framework contract-holders and managers, interpreters and translators, language service providers, professional associations, and users of translation and interpreting services, within the Transnational Organised Crime and Translation (TOCAT) project.

The article reports on original research conducted during the TOCAT project, and outlines and evaluates some novel, complex and ethically challenging 'translaborations' in police settings. The collaborations discussed are complex because of the range of parties and actors involved and because of the challenging content and settings in which the police rely on interpreting and translation. 'Translaboration' is used here to encompass multiple evolving collaborations between different providers and users of interpreting and translation, policy makers, trainers and researchers. Important questions of translation quality and ethics in the management of large-scale framework contexts for public service delivery are raised.

Keywords: modern slavery, outsourced language services, public sector interpreting and translation (PSIT), policing, transnational organised crime, translation and interpreting ethics

1.   Introduction

Interpreting and translation are increasingly provided via large-scale outsourced framework contracts (Moorkens 2017), mostly as a result of the global spread of competition laws (also known as anti-trust or anti-monopoly laws), particularly since the 1990s (Büthe and Minhas 2015). This shift in how interpreting and translation are procured has resulted in new types of collaboration with new partners and agents, who may have no prior experience of the language services sector,[1] and who have different aims, expectations, standards and working methods. These new collaborators are diverse, ranging from private equity firms attracted by the potential for profit, to established multinational outsourced service providers whose experience lies in unrelated sectors, such as cleaning, information technology or security. Contract-holders must usually manage communication to and from dozens of languages, or be able to do so for any of the world's language pairs that might be requested. They may be required to supply specialist linguists at short notice to work across a wide range of specialist fields and settings, and the agreements need to be profitable within a relatively short period, typically two to five years (Wills 2000; Grossman and Helpman 2005).

Such new types of collaboration are being introduced wholesale by some sectors' largest clients, including in critical contexts for justice. One of the largest recent framework agreements for interpreting and translation in the UK, the *ESPO 402_16 Interpretation, Translation and Transcription Services* framework, was introduced between 2016 and 2017 with a total value of between £40 million and £120 million (ESPO 2015), which, for the first time, includes the police and most Home Office[2] settings.[3] Prior to this agreement, interpreters and translators were booked directly by police or Home Office users, usually via the National Register for Public Service Interpreters (NRPSI) (Townsley 2007; Gallai 2012; House of Commons Justice Committee 2013, 10). Outsourcing has previously been shown to have adverse effects on working conditions in a range of sectors. For example, studies have documented how outsourcing leads to "large wage reductions" (Goldschmidt and Schmieder 2017, 1166) in industries with longer

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1.   The term 'language services' includes interpreting and translation, and is used here to convey the broader range of standard services offered today, such as project management and quality control; but also to embrace emerging new types of linguistic expertise, some of which will be outlined here. In this article, the term 'linguist' is used in order to cover all these activities, unless it is necessary to distinguish interpreters and translators specifically.

2.   According to its website, the UK Home Office is the lead government department for immigration, crime, fire, counter-terrorism and police (Home Office n.d.).

3.   A previous (and notorious) framework agreement applied to the Ministry of Justice, but did not extend to work for the police and Home Office.

histories of outsourcing and related work arrangements such as offshoring, sub-contracting and temporary project-based contracts: "Business service firms compete fiercely with each other for service contracts from large companies on price, and since labor costs are a large share of business service firms' total costs, this creates intense pressure to lower wages and reduce benefits" (ibid.).

The move to outsourcing means additional complexity in the collaborations between clients, users and linguists, since powerful new intermediaries are introduced into the relationship (Criminal Justice System 2007; Townsley 2007). Within the context of the UK police, outsourcing has abolished longstanding direct relationships between linguists and trusted local providers, as police users now have to make bookings via intermediaries who usually work across a much larger geographical area and funnel requests through call centres which may be located hundreds of miles away. The framework agreement is managed by different agencies across the UK for groups of constabularies and, for particular needs, such as British Sign Language interpreting, this has brought varied, and shifting, expectations and approaches. Although freelance linguists have always faced different kinds of collaboration from one job to the next (Fraser and Gold 2001), additional complexity has been introduced by the intermediaries' new requirements and working methods for linguists, such as obligatory booking apps and fines for non-attendance or late arrival.

Other important large-scale shifts have also contributed to the growing complexity of these collaborations. First, in societies marked by increasing linguistic diversity, such as the UK (Vertovec 2007), police constabularies now regularly work across a high and growing number of languages, whereas previously there was limited demand for translation between a few well-resourced language pairs. Linguists, therefore, often work with new police partners who are unlikely to have received any formal training in how to collaborate with them effectively and ethically. Second, these shifts for linguists are taking place in a broader policing context of dramatic funding cuts due to government austerity policies, and the ramping up of outsourcing and private sector provision across the board following the recommendations of the 2012 Winsor Independent Review of police remuneration and conditions (Loveday 2015, 115). Third, these shifts represent only a small part of huge changes in policing due to technology (e.g., the introduction of body-worn video recording and facial recognition technologies) and the rapid growth of transnational organised crime (McFarlane 2013, 132). Fourth, linguists working in these complex new police collaborations have limited opportunities to learn from others' good practice, or to respond effectively when they are witness to others' bad practice, given the professional requirement for confidentiality, which is of particular significance in criminal justice contexts (Mulayim and Lai

2017, 62). All of this means that these new complex collaborations take place in particularly difficult circumstances, where the stakes are high if things go wrong.

2.   Are these complex collaborations 'translaboration'?

This article reports on some novel, complex and ethically challenging collaborations in UK policing. The complexity described here is twofold: it refers to difficult content and settings for translation and interpreting, and to the range of parties and actors involved in this (i.e., the providers of language services, and the users of these services such as lawyers, police officers, suspects, and victims and witnesses of crimes). It is important to acknowledge that beyond simply studying and describing them, researchers too are implicated in the emerging collaborations outlined in this study. This article draws on original research conducted as part of the TOCAT project in collaboration with the UK and Belgian police, the Home Office, police trainers and professional associations for linguists. The UK police and Home Office are expected to adopt evidence-based approaches to policing (Haynes et al. 2012; College of Policing 2020). The research into user needs conducted as part of the TOCAT project fed into the initial development of new training and guidance for police investigators working in these complex collaborations with linguists. In the second stage of the research, the training and guidance materials that had been produced jointly were tested. Results of the test stage were shared with the collaborators in an iterative process to refine and then re-test the materials. At this stage, the researchers also invited feedback on the materials from the full range of parties involved in delivering language services, which was collated and analysed and used to refine the materials before final adoption for training all future investigators by the College of Policing, the Home Office and the police. 'Translaboration' here, then, refers to a complex three-way set of collaborations between (1) providers of translation and interpreting (including, but not limited to, linguists themselves); (2) users of translation and interpreting (including direct users such as police investigators and the suspects, victims and witnesses they interview, and indirect users such as the courts, the police service more broadly and their trainers nationally); and (3) researchers.

   The neologism 'translaboration' offers a way to recognise the complexity of but also the common thread within these collaborations, which involve translation in its various senses: translating and interpreting content; translating or adapting different institutional and professional norms and demands to allow collaboration; and translating understanding into policy and practice. Other neologisms such as 'transcreation', 'transterpreting' and 'tradaptation' have attracted criticism from translators and within translation studies mainly because they

are felt to imply that translation does not encompass the activities these terms seek to describe (Gaballa 2012). Translaboration is regarded as distinct from these other, potentially problematic, terms because it seeks to highlight hitherto-neglected collaborative aspects of translation, new emerging types of collaboration and the spaces (the 'lab') where such collaborations might happen. This is in line with emerging work in translation studies that challenges the centuries-long misconstrual of translation as a solitary activity, such as Cordingley and Frigau Manning (2017), or that argues for a more user-centred view of translation, such as Suojanen, Koskinen, and Tuominen (2014). As is discussed in Section 5, linguists' work for the police is characterised by a high degree of security and confidentiality, but also by a growing demand for collaboration. Such collaborations, which are new in terms of type and scale, usually take place on site over long periods, and do not typically involve linguists working from home or remotely, or being booked for one-off short assignments. This makes the concept of the 'lab', where collaborative experiments typically take place, a particularly appropriate one here.

3.   Methodology

In this article, I report on some examples of complex translaboration in police settings under current working conditions. It draws on data collected during the TOCAT project: a collaboration involving academic researchers, the UK College of Policing, interpreters and translators, language service providers, framework contract-holders and managers, professional associations, and the police in the UK and Belgium. The project was established between 2015 and 2016 when the UK police and the College of Policing decided to develop and implement the first-ever nation-wide training in working across languages. In the first step of the project, an Authorised Professional Practice (draft national guidance which must be applied in each constabulary) was compiled by an expert group comprising language service providers, police, professional associations, translation studies academics and police trainers. This was then 'translated' into training materials, which included a Trainer Guide, PowerPoint presentations, handouts and optional props, such as quotes from experienced police interpreters and translators for display around the training venue as prompts for small-group discussion. Trials of the training were delivered by experienced police and Home Office staff to groups of between six and twenty police investigative interviewers and Home Office interviewers in four UK locations, on several occasions at each venue. The draft national guidance and training materials were then translated into Dutch for a similar round of testing in Belgium. The UK trial ran from 2016 to 2018

and resulted in interviews and focus-group discussions with approximately 180 participants, more than fifty completed questionnaires[4] and a live consultation with over fifty invited representatives of stakeholder groups and policy makers. Researchers interviewed the full range of frontline workers involved in cross-language police and border investigations, as well as linguists' professional associations, agencies, users, trainers and gatekeepers (e.g., gatekeepers to language services, such as serving police custody officers and bookers of interpreters and translators). Semi-structured interviews were conducted in person and by phone with the full range of participants. Discussions with focus groups of between six and twelve participants each were conducted in person with police and Home Office investigative interviewers and trainers following the training sessions. All interviews and focus groups were recorded using digital voice recorders, and all recordings were anonymised and transcribed. Transcription was carried out by a team of transcribers following joint training to agree a common transcription approach and shared template. The transcripts were then cross-checked against the original recordings before coding and thematic analysis was done by the research team.[5]

This collaboration between researchers, and providers and users of translation and interpreting services uncovered multiple new types of what might be called translaboration in police settings. These new types of collaboration can be grouped into two categories: formal collaboration and informal collaboration. In Section 4.1 and 4.2 one illustration of each type is outlined. Thereafter the implications of these for the concept of translaboration are discussed in Section 5.

4.   Analysis

4.1   Formal collaboration: The linguist as crime fighter

All interviewees who had experience in providing translation and/or interpreting in police settings were asked to outline what they considered to be their standard assignment types and then to consider if they had ever been asked to take part in assignment types that might be considered less standard. The answers revealed

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4. These were distributed to all training participants before training sessions, and to the majority (>80%) of participants after training sessions, subject to availability. The return rate was 100% as participants were required to complete the questionnaires on site before leaving the venue.

5. All TOCAT interview and focus group transcriptions for which permission was obtained, and where confidentiality or operational reasons are not at issue, have been shared with the UK Data Service and are freely available from their portal to anyone registering as a user from 2019.

various types of formalised collaborations between police and linguists. The results showed that linguists, usually interpreters, were employed by the police on temporary contracts to assist with evidence-gathering and translation. The illustration that follows was reported by several interviewees working for three different constabularies in the UK. Details have been summarised to respect confidentiality and to avoid identifying any individual.

Interpreters who worked regularly with the police reported being approached to become 'embedded' in police investigations, typically for periods ranging from a few weeks to several months. They signed a contract of employment directly with the police and worked on site as part of the investigative team, usually on a full-time basis. The activities requested of linguists varied, and the interviewees coined a range of different titles to describe their roles, highlighting the emerging nature of this type of collaboration: 'read-and-select', 'linguistic assistance for an investigation', 'police linguist', and 'consultant'. The common factors across these assignments were: (1) freelance interpreters with experience of legal/police interpreting assignments were approached individually with the offer of a new type of assignment; (2) if they accepted, they were then employed directly by the police to sift through huge amounts of data in a range of formats, in a language other than English; and (3) their brief was actively to assist in an investigation rather than only to interpret, translate or transcribe interlocutors' words. A core activity included providing explanatory comments or the linguist's opinion on broader aspects relating to language, such as dialect, accent and possible meanings of ambiguous terms and phrases.

Police evidence gathering today encompasses a range of digital sources. For instance, police officers routinely use body-worn video, defined as "the use of cameras to record police – public encounters" (Jameel and Bunn 2015, 2–3). Cameras are attached to officers' clothing or equipment. Officers are only permitted to switch the camera on during patrols or at the scene of an incident and use must be 'overt' (i.e., anyone who might be recorded must be told that this is happening by the police officer who is wearing the recorder). The audio from the resulting video footage may then be transcribed. Other digital information sources used in evidence gathering include electronic messages such as email, instant messaging, Facebook messages and text messages. With appropriate permission, the police can download months of data, sometimes for multiple persons of interest to their investigation.

Rather than the interpreter's standard activity of transferring verbal (or signed) and non-verbal content contemporaneously (Pöchhacker 2016, 11), the linguists were employed to play an active role in selecting which elements of textual communication were relevant to an investigation, and were accorded unusual discretion and power in this decision-making. Examples of the activities they reported being asked to perform include: reading large quantities of electronic

text to identify what was of relevance for the investigation (this usually meant months of intercept data,[6] usually in Excel spreadsheets but sometimes in PDFs); scanning for key terms which had been selected in collaboration with the police investigators, who did not speak the language used in the text, and any related synonyms, code words or similar terms the linguists subsequently identified; and partial translation of audio and video material in other languages, such as intercept recordings. For example, one interviewee reported being asked to listen to audio recordings of conversations involving multiple speakers of her A language, then produce a written translation of the extracts she deemed relevant for the investigation, rather than a full transcript which would have taken too long. All this work involved an unusually high degree of continuing collaboration. The police investigators clearly had to brief the interpreters on details of the investigation so that they were able to identify relevant text in the foreign language, but the interpreters also had to engage in active collaboration with the police to check meaning and relevance on an ongoing basis, as the texts they were working with presented complex issues which were impossible to comprehend without such cross-checking. These issues include innovative strategies to condense text, content in several languages and dialects, a highly colloquial register, shared in-group slang, fast-evolving terms and usage, a high degree of linguistic variation due to age, gender and other features, and inaccurate source content due to predictive text and frequent typos (Drugan and Kredens 2018, 417). Moreover, in criminal contexts, there are deliberate attempts to obscure content which investigators may struggle to decipher even in a single language, yet their linguist collaborators are expected both to understand such content and translate it effectively (Drugan and Kredens 2018, 417). Finally, the interviewees stressed that in order for the source text to be understood at the most basic level, collaboration between linguists and police investigators might be necessary, due to the challenges inherent in investigative materials and evidence:

> [It's particularly difficult because of] the bad quality of most stuff that comes from the police – not because of their own fault, but because it will be usually documents that are a bit of crumpled piece of paper, or a piece of evidence, an exhibit that needs to be translated but you can barely read even half of it.[7]

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6.   Interception involves obtaining a communication in the course of its transmission. Under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (Gov.UK RIPA 2000) and the subsequent 2016 Investigatory Powers Act (Gov.UK RIPA 2016), intercept evidence is not admissible in court but may be used to gather evidence during investigations subject to a warrant, signed by the Home Secretary. In 2016, the last year for which statistics are available, 3,007 interception warrants were authorised, and 65% of these were for the purpose of prevention and detection of serious crime (Home Office 2018, 39).

7.   TOCAT interviewee, interpreter with over ten years' experience of working in police settings, 2017.

4.2   Informal collaboration: The linguist as informant

A second illustration of potential translaboration was less formalised but more widespread, indeed endemic, and might be conceived as linguists being asked to act as 'informants'. The choice of this loaded term, with its particularly negative connotations in police contexts, is deliberate and was also made by some interpreter interviewees:

> Sometimes there will be a little bit of an exchange about how the interview went and so on. Obviously, not saying "Oh I think he's guilty as hell." They [police interviewers] might make comments about how they feel it's going to proceed after this and ask for my comments in terms of language. There could be occasions where [the] police think someone is avoiding the point, or lying about something, and they'll ask me, whereas, I might feel that, that's just the way that people talk in that culture. But is it my job to be an informant for them?   No.[8]

Similarly, interpreters working in immigration settings could, almost without exception, recall instances where they were asked to comment on the likelihood of an interviewee being a native speaker of a particular language or dialect, or to make a judgment on the authenticity of an interviewee's accent (see also Jacquemet 2010): "I would occasionally be asked for my opinion on a specific case or whether someone was really from [*country*]. Interpreters are not lie-detectors so officers shouldn't be asking them that sort of thing."[9]

That linguists are regularly asked to give their opinion about the truthfulness of claims made by speakers of their languages is also confirmed in the literature on court interpreting. Elias-Bursać (2015, 86) cites a judge directly questioning a court interpreter regarding the veracity of a witness's claim in the courtroom, for instance. The investigative interviewers and linguists interviewed as part of the TOCAT project expressed opposing views as to whether providing such commentary was acceptable or ethical, despite clear guidance in official codes of conduct for both parties advising that this is neither reliable (since interpreters are not employed or trained as forensic linguists) nor professional.

A related, and growing, type of informal collaboration between linguists and police users of interpreting and translation derived from the stronger focus on quality control inherent in outsourced framework contracts. This form of collaboration relates to informing not on police interviewees, but on fellow interpreters and translators. There is an expectation in outsourced framework agreements that quality should be quantified, measured, reported on and reviewed. Delivery of

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8. TOCAT interviewee, interpreter with an unknown (unstated) number of years' experience of working in police settings, 2017.

9. TOCAT interviewee, interpreter/translator with approximately twenty years' experience of working in police and immigration settings, 2017.

the agreed services must be monitored via feedback loops to ensure the contract works as expected, and, in the public sector, there is also a duty to report on how public funds are spent (Hodge 2016). The contracts to supply interpreting and translation services to the police and Home Office did not make provision for quality monitoring, unlike the second round of outsourced contracts for the Ministry of Justice, which awarded this type of work to London-based agency, The Language Shop. Nonetheless, it was found that it is now quite common for linguists to be asked to engage in the quality assessment of others' work, typically without the knowledge or consent of those being monitored. For example, linguists can be asked to watch or listen to audio- or video-recorded interviews and produce a transcript with critical commentary or quality assessment of others' interpreting performance. In some cases, linguists were booked to perform quality control of previously translated interview transcripts.[10] This quality checking may be requested by the police themselves, or by lawyers who suspect a quality issue in the production of an interview transcript, for example. Unlike the more formal model of collaboration in which the linguist is embedded in the police investigation, these quality monitoring jobs were awarded as one-off assignments on a freelance basis, often through the agencies which hold the outsourced contract for language services for the constabulary where the quality concern has arisen. There is, however, highly varied practice in this area. None of the linguists interviewed had been offered training before conducting this type of quality monitoring in police contexts. One had previously received training to monitor interpreting quality in courtroom settings on behalf of the Ministry of Justice contract-holder, The Language Shop, but felt this was very different in nature as the interpreters he monitored should have been aware that such quality monitoring ('spot checks' and 'mystery shopping') was included in the framework agreement under which they were working. The linguist who carried out this monitoring on behalf of the Ministry of Justice believed he had appropriate support to do the work, as he was provided with training in what constituted an error and a standardised template to record any issues he noticed. Nonetheless, translation errors and translation quality assessment are notoriously challenging areas where consensus is far from established, whether among industry quality assessment specialists or translation studies academics. Translation quality assessment has been a central theme in translation studies for decades, which reflects how difficult and contentious it is. There is no single agreed model for assessing or com-

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10. This happens when there is a concern around accuracy or quality of previous linguists' work. For example, if an interview has previously been transcribed and translated, an experienced linguist may be asked to check the quality of the original translation of the transcript, including a back-translation to highlight any problems or issues with the original translation.

paring the quality of translations, nor even an uncontroversial shared definition of what quality consists in (House 1997; Drugan 2013). Complicating this picture further are the known risks for the accuracy of understanding in police interview contexts. Coulthard and Johnson (2007, 144), for instance, cite examples of interview transcribers "hearing what they expected rather than what was actually said" on audio recordings of interviews, even in monolingual English recordings, and even in the most serious cases:

> A murder suspect, with a very strong West Indian accent, was transcribed as saying in a police interview that he "got on a train" and then "shot a man to kill;" in fact what he said was the completely innocuous and contextually much more plausible "show[ed] a man ticket."   (145)

As with the more formal type of collaboration outlined in Section 4.1, this work is conducted not by specialists in the task (in this case, quality assessment of translations or transcriptions), but by freelance interpreters without targeted training in this type of difficult work. Rates of pay and time allocated for the job also varied significantly, with some interviewees billing their daily or hourly interpreting rate, and others viewing the work as akin to translation revision and charging as they would for that type of work. This reflects a widespread lack of understanding of what quality assessment work entails. None of the interviewees knew what the result of any negative assessment of quality would be for the linguist whose work was under assessment, or indeed for the police investigation. Several interviewees volunteered that they had rejected requests to conduct this type of work on both practical and ethical grounds:

> [I was asked] to listen to an interview recording and check the transcript and give an assessment but I said no, partly because I thought it would take too long because I hadn't done it before. But also... I just think I didn't feel I had the right, I was thinking, wait a minute, do they do this with me too? Who's doing it? What are they saying? You know how it is with translations [sic], everyone's a critic. So no, I didn't do it and I'm glad I said no.[11]

5.   Discussion

The two examples outlined in this article clearly involve complex collaborations in police contexts – between linguists, service providers and police users of translation and interpreting; and between all these groups and researchers.

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11. TOCAT interviewee, interpreter/translator with over five years' experience of working in police settings, 2018.

These types of translaboration, which involve multiple evolving collaborations between different providers and users of interpreting and translation, first raise questions of competence (Martinsen and Wølch-Rasmussen 2003). Neither linguists nor the police are trained to do this type of linguistic collaborating (Perez and Walker Leckie 2009), the service providers are new to the work, and the various users are working under considerable stress due to tight deadlines. According to those interviewed, the work is idiosyncratic, highly skilled and difficult; yet it must be done without any way of learning from existing good practice. Some potentially useful types of collaboration (e.g., between police investigative teams nationally, or between linguists) are rendered impossible by professional codes, the need for secrecy during investigations or data protection requirements. These collaborations are neither straightforward translation nor interpreting, but rather encompass linguistic advice and consultancy based on specialist skills and knowledge. This means that interpreters find themselves acting on text, including hybrid text forms (video or audio recordings, and/or transcripts); and translators find they must engage with unfamiliar, complex audio or video content.

Some of the interpreter interviewees recognised these challenges and indicated that they felt professional translators would be better able to perform the embedded linguist roles because of their knowledge of technology:

> Translators, the ones that work just as translators, will be hugely more knowledgeable about technology. You ask them about all sorts of things – how to convert this, that, and the other – and they will do it in no time at all. Interpreters are slightly more scared of technology.[12]

Yet professional translators would presumably also feel less well-prepared than interpreters to engage with the content of audio recordings for translation under the time pressures and into their B language, since professional translators overwhelmingly work into their mother tongue or A language in the UK.[13] Along with the need to navigate ongoing collaboration with the police experts involved in an investigation in order to decipher the difficult content, this points to the likely ongoing need for complex collaboration (what might be termed translaboration) in order to make meaning jointly in challenging and evolving circumstances. Such

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12. TOCAT interviewee, interpreter with over ten years' experience of working in police settings, 2017.

13. While practice varies for different language pairs and national settings, in the UK, professional translators are typically expected to work only into their A language. The rationale for this expectation is laid out in the Institute for Translation and Interpreting (ITI) guide to buying translation services: "Professional translators work into their native language" (Durban 2014, 16).

collaborative work must continue to evolve, confirming de Pedro Ricoy's (2010, 100) recognition of the need for a "coherent, integrated approach to training, practice and quality assurance" in public-service interpreting.

A second important theme that arises in both examples is that of translation quality. The risks and challenges of producing and interpreting transcripts of police interviews, even when working in one language and with clear audio, are well known (Rock 2001; Fowler 2003). In the examples analysed in this study, linguists had to work across languages to produce (partial) transcripts and translations from new or existing transcripts. Police interviewers raised the impossibility of sharing knowledge about incompetent linguists discovered through quality checks. Constabularies and agencies are currently advised that they are unable to share such information due to data protection legislation: linguists can therefore be booked for police assignments in other areas, even where concerns about the quality of their work have been shown to be valid. The NRPSI is well-placed to centralise such reports, but under the new framework contract it is unclear who can and should report issues, and, in the case of some rare or less-commonly used languages in UK police contexts, providers have to rely on linguists, and not on the NRPSI. What should happen if their collaboration is found to be inadequate or damaging? It is difficult to balance data protection, the sharing of specialist knowledge, competition law, effective crime fighting, safeguards and ethics (Berk-Seligson 2000). The risks involved include good practice not being shared, but also bad practice becoming endemic – what Carter (2011, 14) terms "the reliance on myths and on techniques handed down from officer to officer."

These features – the lack of training for this work, new challenges, and difficulties relating to translation quality – are all linked to a third broad area of concern, evident in both examples discussed: the ethics of large-scale framework contexts in the delivery of public services. The increasingly widespread types of multiple collaborations in the real-world provision of translation and interpreting discussed in this article have not thus far attracted sustained attention in translation studies or translator training (though they have featured in a few broader overviews in relation to non-police settings; e.g., Dunne 2012; Moorkens 2017). Both positive and negative implications of outsourcing emerge in the examples discussed here. Positively, there is potentially a valuable and ethical role for independent intermediaries to advise police users as to the most appropriate linguist profile for policing needs. Potential or actual conflicts of interest are likely if linguists are approached to work directly for the police (Mulayim and Lai 2017, 61), particularly if they plan to revert to working in interpreting or translation after some months as 'embedded' investigative colleagues. There is little motivation for linguists to turn down guaranteed contracts at favourable rates or to recommend more suitable colleagues to do the work, though some did state they had done

this. Intermediaries who managed such contracts and employed the linguists as independent suppliers, and who provided informed contacts if linguists wished to report concerns, might provide reassurance and support for linguists facing requests they feel to be inappropriate or unethical. Most freelance linguists are not currently protected under UK whistleblowing legislation because it relates to employees rather than independent workers.[14] Agencies and other intermediaries, such as professional associations, might be well-placed to offer support to vulnerable whistleblowers. More negatively, though, there is the risk that fewer direct ongoing relationships between police users and local suppliers of translation and interpreting might make such emerging approaches to policing across languages less feasible in future. All the linguists who had worked in formal collaboration with the police in this way were tried-and-tested contacts locally, but such relationships of trust are harder to build up under outsourced contracts. Within the context of outsourced contracts, agencies decide which linguists to send to jobs, usually selected according to linguist availability at the agency's preferred rate, which is likely to have been driven down under the framework agreements. Professional codes of conduct do not address these risks of, and to, collaboration in any detail. Linguists' professional associations face a difficult balancing act here, because the agencies which manage framework contracts may be corporate members of the same association, yet linguists' and agencies' interests are clearly not directly aligned, and can indeed come into conflict.

One last feature of both examples which points to the usefulness of the translaboration concept is the need for these kinds of collaborative activities to take place *in situ*. Formal collaborations involving embedded linguists of course involved the linguists' physical presence in the investigative team, but the less formal types mentioned here also relied on contact, either via informal conversations between interpreters and police investigators, or via translators and interpreters being brought on site to watch or listen to recorded interviews, and access confidential transcripts. The site of police investigative and evidence-gathering work clearly does function as a type of 'lab' for translaboration.

6.   Conclusion

Exploring these emerging 'contact zones' of collaboration in challenging real-world settings reveals their potential to identify new challenges facing linguists and the users of interpreting and translation, and to propose some practical solu-

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14. See the definition of whistleblowing and how this relates mainly to 'workers' (employees) on the UK government website, https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing.

tions for an important case: the efficient delivery of translation services in UK policing, where "process, structure, purpose, interpersonal communication and trust" are all salient (Gray 1989; Wood and Gray 1991, 139).

When new kinds of linguistic activity like this starts to emerge, a standard response in the translation studies literature is to call for more or different training for student interpreters and translators (e.g., Li 2000; Corsellis 2005). However, this is not an appropriate conclusion to reach in this instance. First, this type of police work continues to evolve as data types and criminal methods change, so training would quickly become outdated. Second, the skills required for these kinds of roles do not map neatly on to either translation or interpreting alone, so it is not clear where such training would need to be targeted. Third, the need for these types of collaborations is intermittent and ephemeral, so it makes no sense to train whole cohorts of students in the required skills, even if everyone agreed on what they might be. A more appropriate solution here, therefore, is to train those who require the services – in this instance, the police – so they are suitably informed when they source linguists to engage in such new roles. There is no single, simple way to do this, of course, particularly in contexts where needs vary so much. However, if users of language services such as the police are trained to understand what translators and interpreters do, and learn about linguists' professional context, qualifications, and standards, they can harness this knowledge alongside their own professional policing skills, experience and training to make a more informed choice of provider, and then navigate novel scenarios with linguists effectively and ethically (Corsellis, Clement, and Vanden Bosch 2011). This is the approach the TOCAT project adopted, with national guidance and training in working across languages now compulsory for all new investigative interviewers. The guidance and training cover key information, such as the difference between interpreting and translating, linguists' qualifications and professional status, to help guide investigators when they request non-standard contributions by linguists in future.

A clear feature of such novel translaborations is the need to consider the ethical dimension carefully. The challenges and implications of such translaborations for equal access to justice are significant. In particular, the important roles of various gatekeepers emerge from this research, such as the gatekeeping role of the linguist who collaborates with the police, or the framework contract-holders who nominate linguists for police assignments, or the police investigators who decide which linguist to work with in active translaborations.

This contribution focuses on two relatively constrained examples of translaboration in police contexts for reasons of clarity and space, but the picture can be complicated further still. Police investigations involve a wide range of other actors, including: suspects, victims and witnesses of crimes who do not speak

sufficient English to communicate with investigative interviewers; unqualified bilinguals acting as interpreters and translators for some languages due to insufficient supply; lawyers; the bookers of linguists working for outsourced contract-holders; other parties in the interview, such as 'Appropriate Adults' who support detainees under seventeen years of age or those who are "mentally disordered or mentally vulnerable;"[15] and procurement specialists within the police and government departments who author calls for tender and framework contracts. The interests of all these actors, and their participation in complex multi-party collaborations, have an impact on linguists' work and outcomes for justice but remain virtually undocumented in translation studies thus far.[16]

An important reason for this lack of documentation, and hence understanding, is the difficulty of gaining research access in police settings (Carter 2011, 10). Although previous work in translation studies, and other disciplines such as anthropology, has considered the embodied presence of translators and/or interpreters in a wide range of settings (Fernández-Ocampo and Wolf 2014; Niranjana 1992), there are few critical accounts of the impact of the translator's and/or interpreter's presence in police settings. In addition, researchers themselves are an embodied presence and active participants in the framing of these translaborations for understanding, critique and communication. Researchers also have a valid and valuable role to play as professional observers with the time and skills to draw connections between other sectors and academic traditions where similar patterns of complex collaborations are also emerging. For example, recent academic work in disciplines such as management studies and business ethics offers relevant insights on temporary project networks, which demonstrate similar features and dilemmas to those described in the complex temporary collaborations by police interviewers and linguists (DeFillippi and Sydow 2016, 6–7).

Two further important roles for researchers lie in their ability to engage with all contributors involved in such complex collaborations, and to translate understanding into practical outcomes. This can be through the training of new generations of linguists, who can learn and reflect on the shifting nature of professional demands, or the sharing of understanding and knowledge via policy measures. The research reported here is feeding into practical, evidence-based training and guidance materials which will be rolled out across the UK to train all future

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15. For further details of Appropriate Adults' roles and responsibilities, see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/117682/appropriate-adults-guide.pdf.

16. Work by Mulayim and Lai (2017) in police settings, and the other contributions in this special issue, are beginning to attend to the impact of complex multiple collaborations on linguists, but they are exceptions.

police investigative interviewers in working across languages in the UK effectively. Importantly, linguists' voices will be heard in this training. As one of the interviewees stressed:

> I just want to remind police chiefs and policy makers that we, the interpreters, exist and are an inherent part of 'the cycle'. They talk about a holistic approach but if they detach us from that process then it's no longer a complete cycle of assistance and investigation.[17]

Funding

Acknowledgements

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17. TOCAT interviewee, interpreter with over 10 years' experience of working in police settings, 2017.

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Publication history