



**MOBILE TELEPHONE-MEDIATED INTERPRETING PRACTICE IN
RWANDA: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS**

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Sylvestre NDAHAYO, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are entirely my own and that I have not previously submitted this thesis in its entirety or in part for obtaining any qualification. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to be 'Sylvestre NDAHAYO', enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Date: 19 March 2021

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ABSTRACT

Until not long ago, technological developments had an obvious impact on how we communicate, irrespective of the settings in which we are. In the same vein, the rapidly evolving communication technologies have continuously fuelled changes in the provision of interpreting services. It is in this perspective that telephone-mediated interpreting has been introduced in many parts of the globe, but with little traction by practitioners and researchers. As we know, little research, if any, has been conducted in Rwanda regarding telephone-mediated interpreting, and the purpose of this thesis is to bridge the gap by investigating challenges facing those providing mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services in Rwanda in addition to presenting opportunities arising therefrom and proposing solutions. The study relied on secondary data collected from limited research available in the area and primary data collected from a limited sample of nine telephone-mediated interpreters who completed our questionnaire. The study findings suggest that telephone-mediated interpreters in Rwanda face challenges that include, among others, the absence of necessary details ahead of the call and having a hard time managing the turn-shifting. The main research findings of the study further show that other challenges include the fact that telephone-mediated interpreting becomes more complicated when the call involves using visual materials. Also, the study suggests that telephone-mediated interpreting fuels nervousness and stress, and carries in itself inherent challenges related to technical issues arising from sound systems and background noise, contributing to hampering comprehension. According to the findings, however, most of the challenges facing telephone-mediated interpreters in Rwanda are no different from those facing telephone-mediated interpreters in other parts of the world. Along the same line of reasoning, the study identified major challenges that equally apply to other telephone-mediated interpreters, which can be described as common. According to the study findings, there is a need for telephone-mediated interpreters based in Rwanda to receive training in telephone-mediated interpreting, because this mode of interpreting has its own characteristics and practical implications. As concerns potential solutions, the study findings further suggest that it is important for those who seek mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services to be educated.

Keywords: mobile telephone-mediated interpreting, face-to-face interpreting, interpreter

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

A.M.:	Ante meridiem
COVID-19:	Coronavirus disease -2019
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
EST:	Eastern Standard Time
Etc.:	Et cetera
FTFI:	Face-to-face interpreting
ICT:	Information and communication technologies
Int.:	Interpreter
P.M.:	Post meridiem
TI:	Telephone interpreting
USA:	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background to the study

First and foremost, there would be no *raison d'être* of our research study, if there were no interpreters in Rwanda. Also, of interest is that the interpreting practice dates back to time immemorial, and came into being in Rwanda when explorers from other continents set foot in Rwanda, especially back in 1894 when Count von Götzen worked his way through the borders of Rwanda. SHYIRAMBERE (1975 :12) recounts the event as follows :

Venu de Zanzibar, le comte von Goetizenfut reçu à la cour. Sa conversation avec le mwami (roi) de l'époque fut possible grâce aux interprètes noirs que comptait sa colonne.

[Arriving from Zanzibar, Count von Götzenwas received at the [Royal] Court. His conversation with the then Mwami (King) was made possible through black interpreters who were part of his column.] (My translation)

According to KANEZA HABİYAMBERE (2011: 55), however, Oscar Baumann is credited with being the first European who set foot on the Rwandan soil, because he stayed incognito in the southern parts of the country from 11 to 15 September 1892 having no official contact with the country's authorities.

Apart from serving as a medium of communication between the King and people from other lands – interpreting, according to SHYIRAMBERE (1975 :501), continued to make its way into Rwanda through the missionary outreach:

Les premiers missionnaires n'ont atteint le Rwanda qu'après un séjour plus ou moins long dans les pays est-africains sous domination allemande. Les interprètes des tribus basukuma et baganda qui les accompagnaient ne connaissaient pas le français. La langue commune entre intreprètes et missionnaires était le swahili.

[The first missionaries did not enter Rwanda until after a longer stay in East African countries which were under the German rule. Their accompanying interpreters from the Basukuma and Baganda tribes could not speak French. The common language for communication between interpreters and missionaries was Swahili.] (My translation)

However, the particular question that arises here is whether such self-made interpreters from neighboring countries knew the local language, viz. Kinyarwanda, as the only possible means for them to be able to break language barriers between such missionaries and Rwandans. Worthy of note is that on arriving in the East Africa, such missionaries rushed to learn Swahili to interact with locals. Like Msgr. Hirth, missionaries chose to do so out of the desire to expand their sphere of influence towards neighboring countries they had to enter by arming themselves with people who, in addition to knowing their native language, namely Kiswahili, could speak the language spoken in those countries who were in the missionaries' spotlight. L. de LACGER (1959 : 382) expounds on this as follows:

Il avait en outre engagé une douzaine de chrétiens noirs de l'Uganda, qui, plus voisins en toute matière des natifs, se rendraient rapidement maître de leur langue, serviraient d'interprètes auprès des missionnaires et constitueraient le premier collège de catéchistes. La caravane s'organisa à Katoke et se mit en route au début de décembre 1899.

[He [Msgr. Hirth] had also hired a dozen black Christians from Uganda who, being closer in all respects to the natives, would quickly become proficient in the natives' language [Kinyarwanda], and serve as interpreters for the missionaries and constitute the first cohort of catechists. The caravan formed in Katoke and set off on the journey in early December 1899.] (My translation)

The existence of such self-taught interpreters set interpreting in motion in Rwanda, and for each incoming visitor from foreign countries was an occasion for them to serve. This is asserted by SHYIRAMBERE (1975 :502):

Chaque visite au Rwanda d'une personnalité européenne civile (Duc de Mecklenburg, en août 1907 ou Mr Voisin, vice-gouverneur général, en novembre 1931) ou religieuse (Mgr Dellepiane, délégué apostolique, en novembre 1931) offrait une occasion privilégiée pour ces interprètes de manifester leur savoir.

[Each visit to Rwanda by a European civil personality (Duke of Mecklenburg, in August 1907 or Mr. Voisin, Deputy Governor General, in November 1931) or religious (Msgr. Dellepiane, apostolic delegate, November 1931) presented a unique opportunity for these interpreters to demonstrate their skills.] (My translation)

Building on the history recounted above, interpreting in Rwanda has progressed over time as a result of various languages which were introduced, namely French followed by English, which

according to Article 8 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015, are recognized as official languages on the same footing as Kinyarwanda.

Interpreting, be it in Rwanda or anywhere else, has adapted to the changing world, particularly to the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) which, over the last decades, has made it very easy for people to access interpreting services contrary to years past when they remained the preserve of the well-to-do.

Today, advances in the field of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are providing people with the opportunity to use portable devices to procure goods and services. In the same vein, real-time video and audio interactions have become commonplace and more affordable for most people from all walks of life. Until recently, however, interpreters could serve relying on shared settings including meeting or conference halls or such places as courtrooms or hospitals. Today, people across the globe have access to ICTs, resulting in them engaging in the demand for goods and services making use of ICTs, with interpreting services being no exception. Andres & Falk (2009:1) note: “With the growing demand and better information and communication technology, the use of remote interpreting and telephone interpreting has increased considerably in order to provide cheaper and faster interpreting services.”

And because of that, technological advances have had a powerful influence on how we communicate in a relatively short period of time. When it comes to interpreter-facilitated communication, we cannot but notice that the introduction of technologies has dramatically changed the way interpreting services are provided, and realize how such services are still changing rapidly, taking account of the channels through which they are delivered. While traditional face-to-face interpreting has long been relied upon, modern communication channels have given rise to different forms of remote interpreting by various media, including mobile telephones.

This particularly holds true today as technological developments are making it possible for people to transform the settings in which events requiring interpreters take place. In the same vein, those same technological developments have brought into being another work setting for

the benefits of interpreters, enabling them to provide services away from the people they serve, arming themselves with their mobile phones. As a result, technological developments are leading to the working environments of interpreters getting diversified and increased, following which interpreters have an option of working from home or from any other location that is different from a conventional conference venue and facilitate communication between people speaking different languages, being in a location different from where they are, with those people engaged in communication being in the same or separate places.

Another important note in this connection is that such changes in the way interpreters interact with those they serve have not gone unnoticed by scholars in the field. For example, a number of researchers like Riccardi (2000) and Baigorri Jalón (1999) provide further evidence on how the field of interpreting has been in almost continuous cycle of change. And as Riccardi (2000) argues, the field of interpreting has seen changes since its emergence. Thus, Baigorri Jalón (1999: 29) argues, after the advent of consecutive interpreting when interpreters had no alternative but to delve into the career on a learning-by-doing basis, and the subsequent discovery of simultaneous interpreting with the Nuremberg Trials, another type of interpreting, namely remote interpreting, saw the light of day. As was the case with other types of interpreting, scholars, albeit not great in number, rushed to do some research into it, with some going as far as to find definitions of it to set it apart from other types of interpreting. Of those who worked to define remote interpreting are Braun (2015: 1) who says that remote interpreting implies “the use of communication technologies to gain access to an interpreter in another room, building, town, city or country.” In the same line, Mouzourakis (2006: 46) defines remote interpreting as “situations in which interpreters are no longer present in the meeting room, but work from a screen and earphones without a direct view of the meeting room or the speaker.”

It appears from both definitions that remote interpreting implies the interpreter’s absence in the location of some, if not all, of those who are benefiting from his services. However, myriads research studies have been conducted on simultaneous interpreting with, as Oviatt and Cohen (1992) argue, little interest being shown in other types of interpreting. This is a result of the assumption that, Lee (2007) says, telephone interpreting is the same as on-site interpreting. And yet, all the types of interpreting complement each other, despite the use made of them in different ways and settings. However, experience shows that such other types are increasingly taking root

in the industry. As is the case with simultaneous interpreting, the performance of other types of interpreting is no mean feat, as they too involve the rendition of the source message into the target language as accurately as possible, which is not without challenges.

With an increased use of remote interpreting today, there is every interest in exploring the field of telephone-mediated interpreting, the spread of which is being spurred by the development of communication technologies for long-distance communication that usually involves the use of electronic gadgets such as mobile phones.

Importantly as well, there are consistent research findings showing that mobile telephone-mediated consecutive remote interpreting is gaining more ground. Still according to research, this mode of interpreting is hailed for its contribution to improving cost efficiency and being a means of meeting the growing demand for interpreting services at a time when access to on-site interpreting services is difficult, if not impossible. Though today the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the way most of the human interactions are conducted, even in pre-COVID era, telephone-mediated interpreting had started evolving into greater presence. It had become the main focus of research and scientific studies by such scholars as Rosenberg (2007), Kelly (2008), Fernández Pérez (2012), among others.

Also, we have to establish that having recourse to telephone-mediated interpreting is further warranted by many other reasons, including the fact that there are many places where interpreters cannot be available to work face-to face, particularly in certain language combinations, where for instance, an expert based in Washington DC, may need to talk to a local of the Democratic Republic of Congo's Ituri Province who only speaks Swahili.

I.2 Problem statement

Mobile telephone-mediated interpreting has proved to be of great importance, especially today following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of which people are forced to change their traditional modus operandi in ways that they could not have imagined nearly one year ago. As a consequence, mobile telephone-mediated interpreting is currently taking a huge upswing, but too little is known about it and the many people, including professional interpreters across the globe, especially in Rwanda, do not know much about the practice of it. Worse still,

this is likely to result in mobile telephone-mediated interpreters based in Rwanda finding themselves having no one to turn to in case of challenges when it comes to providing mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services or in the event they are asked to provide such services.

Despite the fact that telephone-mediated interpreting is a practice that has spread rapidly in many parts of the world and is increasingly being used, scientific research has not kept pace with its proliferation, and challenges facing those who perform it are abounding, with very limited research on it across the globe, let alone in Rwanda. And yet, telephone-mediated interpreting has its own characteristics and practical implications, which instead require ample research.

Following the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, people, including interpreters, were forced to adapt to a new configuration dictated by restricted physical distance. Deprived of their booths and equipment all of a sudden, interpreters who relied on face-to-face interpreting had to explore new ways of working, including from home. It has become clear that each and every interpreter can interpret from a distance, provided that they have proper equipment which includes mobile phones, thereby coping with the new situation brought about by contingencies such as COVID-19.

Today, however, the use of mobile telephones to interpret in Rwanda remains nearly unexplored and unknown, and some people are missing out on opportunities that go with it that derive from the fact that today, mobile telephone interpreting remains one of the main options for interpreters to provide interpreting services, not only without travelling distances, but also from home. It has also proved to offer clients lower-cost interpreting services at lower costs. This study therefore offers an opportunity to explore its different angles and the benefits it can potentially offer people, whether laymen or professionals to mediate communication in multilingual contexts.

In addition, a little number of people are involved in documenting insights from the little existing research in the field, and collect ideas from the very few practitioners of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting to shed light on the major challenges faced and propose viable solutions for the development of this type of interpreting in Rwanda.

For the case of Rwanda, and as is the case with other parts of the globe, there is a lamentable lack of studies and research on mobile telephone-mediated interpreting. And yet, as stated by

Rosenberg (2007: 65) “Telephone interpreting is beginning to replace on-site interpreting in some community settings, such as medical and legal and in addition, it is also widely used in business settings.” Thus, it must be noted that telephone-mediated interpreting cannot be easily apprehended in the absence of studies dedicated to it.

The lack of studies on telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda presents a major challenge, especially because there are people who practice it in Rwanda, who are obliged to go on their own way, and probably struggle with problems for lack of guidance. The practice of telephone-mediated interpreting involves its own technical problems and practical implications. Thus, the lack of access to studies on practical challenges inherent in nature makes this type of interpreting extremely feared, attracting scanty individual cases of practitioners with very limited skills.

Telephone-mediated interpreting is demanding, because it requires techniques which differ in one way or another from other types of interpreting. As telephone-mediated interpreters face various challenges while providing services, they need to be aware of techniques needed to help them overcome such challenges.

Again, it should be emphasized that interpreting, whether telephone-mediated or not, is not made for self-made interpreters as it involves a number of requirements. In an effort to confirm this, Pöchhacker (2001: 421) highlights the common denominator of all types of interpreting, assuming that the interpreter: “[...] supplies a textual product which provides access to the original speaker’s message in such a way as to make it meaningful and effective within the socio-cultural space of the addressee.”

As such, research studies on telephone-mediated interpreting are of paramount importance in that they are the spring from which prospective telephone-mediated interpreters need to drink for successful performance of the interpreting duty. Along the same line of reasoning, Bühler (1986), in her attempt to define the quality of interpreting, assumes that “an ideal quality of output can only be for a specific situation.”

As telephone-mediated interpreting requires techniques which are sometimes tailored to the settings, telephone-mediated interpreting may also pose problems for local interpreters who are engaged or may decide to engage in it, owing to lack of guidance.

I.3 Research objectives

This study builds on overall and specific objectives that make it possible to further study the field of telephone-mediated interpreting whose spread has been favoured by the development of ICTs.

I.3.1 Overall objective

Although telephone-mediated interpreting can be carried out in a number of ways, a particular focus in this research will be placed on mobile telephone-mediated interpreting. Thus, the overall objective of this research study is to identify and describe opportunities and challenges of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda, and propose viable solutions.

I.3.2 Specific objectives

1. To examine the practice of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda in relation to other types of interpreting;
2. To identify challenges facing Rwanda-based interpreters who provide telephone-mediated interpreting services;
3. To propose solutions to challenges facing mobile telephone-mediated interpreters, particularly in Rwanda.

I.4 Research questions

In line with the focus of the research, the following questions are formulated:

- 1) What is the current status of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda?
- 2) What are the challenges that Rwanda-based mobile telephone interpreters face?
- 3) What are the strategies to overcome those challenges?

I.5 Motivation

This dissertation was born out of my delving into and strong passion for remote interpreting and, in particular, for telephone-mediated interpreting. I feel, however, compelled to recognize I am not perfect in it, which is why I feel embarrassed to judge others. This way, I place the same blame on myself as well, because it was not until a client of mine for whom I usually provided

translation services asked me a question, “Dear Sylvestre, will you be available today to help out with our call with our reporters in Haiti?” Not wanting to disappoint the client, I rushed to hesitate a moment, as I was at a loss what the type of help the client needed, then I timidly replied, “yes”. Right after the reply, I reached out to one of my fellow translators who I thought was the one to know what it was about so that he could help me understand how I was going to fit the job in, and ended up realizing that he too knew nothing about it. As I was having a hard time getting help locally, I had no alternative but to try to seek help from people outside our borders, after which a Cameroonian translator who is a friend of mine came to my rescue, helping know really, not only what it was about, but also how I would go about it, and I finally made it that way, making use of my mobile telephone. So was born my interest in conducting a research study on mobile telephone-mediated interpreting, keeping in mind that my fellow interpreters based in Rwanda may find themselves or have found themselves in the same situation, having no one to turn to.

Then the peculiarity of this interpreting mode slowly uncovered itself to me, as a result of which I ended up realizing that there are other few persons who practice it here in Rwanda! This fuelled my interest in studying this type of interpreting in depth, in order to further understand opportunities it offers, the challenges linked to it in the lenses of my colleagues as compared those that I myself have been facing since I embarked on its practice.

I.6 Significance of the research

Rwanda has unquestionably made great strides in terms of technological development, and there is a need for Rwandans from all walks of life, including interpreters, to unleash all the opportunities that arise in tandem with such development. Today, some Rwandan interpreters have jumped on board, making use of technological remote working tools such as mobile telephones to earn money and eke out a living, serving people in Rwanda and in other corners across the globe, with their working languages being Kinyarwanda, (Ki) Swahili, English or French, with the source and target languages depending on the users’ needs.

Research studies examining challenges facing interpreters, especially mobile telephone interpreters in Rwanda, can prove useful to interpreters not only those in Rwanda, but also those in other countries, and pave the way for Rwandan interpreters share their experience with their

fellow interpreters in other lands. With interpreting from one language to another giving rise to a slew of challenges, especially when the interpreter is unaware of coping tips, Gile (1995;2009) advocates for the need for interpreters to have strategies and tactics to apply when faced with problems in the interpreting process.

There are several reasons why mobile telephone-mediated consecutive interpreting deserves special attention. The first reason is that, despite the fact that it qualifies as remote interpreting, it has its own characteristics, requiring a methodology that is all its own and specific training for professionals who practice it. Another reason why we consider this research to be necessary is that the lack of research on mobile telephone-mediated consecutive interpreting reinforces the need for in-depth investigation of the field to lure other researchers into the field.

Furthermore, some studies have shown that telephone interpreting exists, but only a few research studies have been conducted on it, making it lag behind other types of interpreting. And yet, Lee (2007) asserts that telephone interpreting exists to serve society, and should therefore find its proper place in the industry and education. For that reason, this research will serve as tool, not only to get interpreting professionals, especially those based in Rwanda, to be interested in telephone interpreting, but also to lead to prospective telephone interpreting users being aware of the existence of telephone interpreting, and make use of it.

Also, conducting a research study on challenges facing mobile telephone interpreters with a focus on the Rwandan setting will not only contribute to the development of the telephone interpreting industry, but also help interpreters and other people alike better understand the challenges facing telephone interpreters. Thus, the strategies developed in this study will help telephone interpreters to improve their performance by learning tips to successfully seek most of the challenges that confront them as part of their profession. Furthermore, this research study will be of great help to people or interpreters interested in taking on telephone interpreting as this research study will make it possible for them to have a good understanding of what is at stake when it comes to telephone interpreting. In addition, this research study will be an opportunity for institutions of higher learning to look at ways to train students in telephone interpreting and help people be aware of possible use of telephone interpreting services. Furthermore, the study

will serve as a source of inspiration for those interested in conducting further studies on telephone interpreting.

Also, of significance is the fact that, not only do people need to know the challenges that go with telephone-mediated interpreting, they also have to be aware of the advantages that flow from this mode of interpreting for them to use it instead of relying only on on-site interpreting, which often is not easily accessible, and have the opportunity to reduce costs and have more interpreters available. This is all the true as no one expected contingencies such as COVID-19 to force human beings to change their traditional modus operandi in ways that they could not have imagined nearly one year ago.

I.7 Scope of the research

This research study specifically focuses on the challenges facing mobile telephone interpreters based in Rwanda. Even though there may be different interpreters based in Rwanda that use different working languages, this research study will be limited to those who provide telephone interpreters serving people who live in Rwanda or not. This research study, however, acknowledges the reality that a thorough comprehension of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda would ideally target all telephone interpreters found in Rwanda irrespective of their working languages. However, this research study will target mobile telephone interpreters whose working languages are English, French or Ikinyarwanda, because they are the ones we will easily have access to, all the more so challenges experienced by them cannot be significantly different from those who serve, using working languages other than those.

I.8 Organization of the research

This research study is made of five chapters. Following this general introduction, chapter Two focuses on extensive review of various research studies on telephone interpreting whilst chapter Three elaborates on the methodological framework. Chapter Four includes interview findings and chapter Five presents and discusses interview findings. Finally, in the conclusion, account is taken of the considerations that emerged from various results obtained from the analysis and some useful suggestions for the future use of telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda. Such

suggestions are based on the challenges identified by Rwanda-based mobile telephone-mediated interpreters. Also, such considerations and suggestions are intended to be the basis for further research in the area of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Today, when we talk about interpreting, we often find ourselves faced with perplexity and, at times, many people tend to confuse it with the knowledge of more than one language. In reality, however, interpreting goes far beyond the mere linguistic knowledge. And as we will see later, interpreting is not a subject of recent decades but, on the contrary, it dates back to time immemorial.

It is for this reason that in this chapter, a particular focus is placed on the definition of interpreting as well as its major types and modes. Subsequently, an overview will be provided of studies on telephone-mediated interpreting, including those on advantages and disadvantages that go with them.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Theories used in this study that serve to support our research are those which relate to the types of remote interpreting, including telephone interpreting. According to scholars such as Braun (2015) and Rosenberg (2007), remote interpreting, especially mobile telephone-mediated interpreting is a form of pure dialogic technologized speech communication, which leads us to suggest that a robust theoretical framework for mobile telephone-mediated interpreting should explore the challenges and limitations associated with these modes of technology.

As a result of the above, we have to build our theoretical framework on the theories by Braun (2015), Rosenberg (2007), Lee (2007) and Ozolins (2011) who argue that communication technologies give rise to novel communication ways. Also our research is based on the theory by Hutchby (2001:7) who argues that these new forms of interpreter-mediated interaction are actually the product of the interactants' appropriation of the technology to achieve their own goals more than an appropriation of the "actual technology affordances of the remote and telephone as media affording a form of co-presence and intimacy, which impacts the positioning of interpreters vis-à-vis face-to-face interpreting as well as the relationship between the interactants." Hutchby (2001) further suggests that "[...] technological affordances frame the possibility for agentic action. In this way, technologies for communication can be understood as

artefacts which may be both shaped by and shape the way we talk, shaping the nature of sociability.”

2.2. Definition of interpreting

In the light of the Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies (Baker 1998), we are justified in arguing that there are myriads approaches scholars draw on to define interpreting. As a result, many scholars have attributed various definitions to the concept of interpreting, going as far as to define interpreting as a younger brother of translation, both disciplines, they say, differing in that interpreting is in itself immediacy and real-time execution.

Interpreting, often understood as the oral conversion of one language into another, is generally considered to be a branch of translation. Despite being closely related, however, interpreting and translation differ from one another by their very nature.

Some scholars have defined translation as a process of converting one or more written words from one language to another while others have referred to interpreting as the process of translating the oral productions of speakers.

When defining the concept of interpreting, there is a need to consider its rapid occurrence. To this end, Otto Kade (1968) emphasizes the need to go beyond the traditional differentiation of translation and interpreting, highlighting how the concept of immediacy is a peculiar characteristic that allows to distinguish between the two disciplines. This leads us to say that interpreting is based on the principle that, contrary to translation, the interpreter’s product is presented only once and can neither be repeated nor revised. Moreover, the production into the target language involves the pressure of time that weighs upon the interpreter, thus limiting the possibility for the interpreter to revise or correct the target production. This is borne out by Pöchhacker (2004:11) who defined interpreting as “a form of translation in which a first and final rendition in another language is produced on the basis of a one-time presentation of an utterance in a source language.”

In the same vein, some scholars are of the opinion that interpreting should be distinguished from translation by its immediacy, adding that people can be wrong in defining interpreting equating interpreting with “oral translation” because, they argue, basing the differentiation on the

dichotomy of oral vs written would lead to the risk of casting aside signed language interpreting, and such other interpreting variants as live subtitling and sight translation. This vindicates the choice by Kade (1968) to define interpreting as immediate rendition activity done in a real-time for immediate use purposes.

And to strengthen his view, Kade (1968) defined interpreting as a form of translation in which “the source language text is presented only once and thus cannot be reviewed or replayed or the target language text is reproduced under time pressure, with little chance for correction or revision.”

Nida (1964:159), for his part, minimizes the difference between the two disciplines, asserting that “both of them have one common goal: aim at equivalent effect by producing the same impact on the target audience as the original text.”

Interpreting cannot be considered a simple activity based on the conversion of messages from one language into another, because its nature means that the interpreter must ensure that the product of his endeavours creates the same effect in the target audience as would the speaker’s message.

2.3. Categories of interpreting

Not only are scholars having a hard time agreeing upon a single and unified definition of interpreting; not all scholars agree on the categories of interpreting. As a result, classifications of interpreting often overlap and their differentiation remains blurry (Merlini and Favaron, 2003:206). For the purpose of our study, however, we will discuss categories of interpreting based on the dichotomy remote vs on-site. And as underlined at the outset of this study, our focus is on mobile telephone-mediated interpreting, which is one of the components of remote interpreting. And, as a result, we have chosen to briefly discuss on-site interpreting to spare time to amply discuss remote interpreting, with a focus on telephone-mediated interpreting.

2.3.1 On-site interpreting

Today, one thing is certain and that is that scholars argue that on-site interpreting comprises two main types of interpreting, namely consecutive and simultaneous interpreting.

As concerns simultaneous interpreting, Hale (2007:10) breaks it down into equipment-based simultaneous interpreting and equipment-free simultaneous interpreting also known as whispered interpreting or chuchotage. Likewise, according to Hale (id.), consecutive interpreting has two subdivisions, namely long and short consecutive interpreting. Following the setting, the context and situation in which interpreting takes place, there exist community and conference interpreting (Merlini and Favaron 2003:206), and besides this, Hale (2007:28) and Phelan (2001:20) respectively categorize business interpreting and court interpreting into community interpreting. To these categories, Phelan (2001:12) adds other types, including telephone interpreting.

2.3.2 Remote interpreting

Remote interpreting encompasses various modes, and we cannot afford to cover them all in this study whose scope is limited. As a result, we propose to briefly discuss the main modes, which are videoconferencing interpreting and telephone-mediated interpreting. As the scope of the study dictates, we will briefly discuss videoconference interpreting prior to extensively expanding on telephone-mediated interpreting that draws this study's attention.

Interpreting can mainly take place in consecutive and simultaneous modes. And in the absence of physical presence of interpreters, the use of consecutive or simultaneous interpreting cannot happen without having recourse to remote or distance interpreting. Before delving into remote interpreting, we must recall that nearly twenty years ago, Kellett (1999: 24) pointed to the likelihood that technology development would render booths in conference halls obsolete. And it appears that the prediction is progressively coming true with the advancement of new technologies, including the use of mobile telephones, which is confirmed by Braun (2006: 1) who says:

Traditionally, interpreting [...] has been associated with synchronous communicative interaction in which all participants (i.e. interlocutors as well as interpreters) share the same physical environment. However, the ongoing spread of information and communication technologies along with growing multilingualism and efforts of social inclusion [...] has led to changes in communication practices, which have also had repercussions on the practice of interpreting at the beginning of the 21st century.

Braun (2015: 1) further defines remote interpreting as “the use of communication technologies to gain access to an interpreter in another room, building, town, city or country.”

Another definition of remote interpreting has been given by Moser-Mercer (2003:1), who describes it as “Any form of simultaneous interpreting where the interpreter works away from the meeting room either through a video-conferencing set-up or through a cabled arrangement close to the meeting facilities, either in the same building or at a neighbouring location.”

Today, remote interpreting is being used in various contexts, allowing people to have access to interpreting services, especially in difficult times when people’s movements are restricted because of circumstances such as those created by COVID-19 which has gripped the world since early 2020. Despite having proved useful, people say, remote interpreting has limitations in that the interpreter has limited means to interact with speakers in case, for instance, of excessive speed of speakers’ delivery.

2.3.3 Videoconference interpreting

Videoconference interpreting takes place when the two or more interlocutors are in different locations which are connected by technology.

According to Braun (2006), videoconference interpreting appears to be an extension of telephone interpreting where two sites are linked via sound and video platforms such as satellite links, allowing for real-time interactions between people who are in different locations. In such a situation, people interacting with each other cannot only listen to each other, but also see each other on a screen. In this case, the interpreter may be in the same room as one of the parties or in a location other than the location where people interacting are.

2.3.4 Telephone-mediated interpreting

Mobile telephone-mediated interpreting is a type of interpreting in which two or more parties interact with the parties being in the same or different locations. The interpreter inserts himself or herself between the parties, following the conversation, usually making use of mobile telephones with or without headphones. In most cases, the interpreter provides services in a consecutive mode. Mobile telephone-mediated interpreting is first and foremost to refer to “a real-time language service that enables speakers of different languages to communicate by telephone with the assistance of an interpreter via a three-way conference call,” (Heh and Quian, in Gracia-García 2002: 4).

Kelly (2007: 1) provides another useful definition:

Telephone interpreting is provided when an interpreter, who is usually based in a remote location, provides interpretation via telephone for two individuals who do not speak the same language. Most often, telephone interpreting is performed in the consecutive mode. This means that the interpreter listens to each utterance first and then proceeds to render it into the other language, as opposed to speaking and listening simultaneously.

From Lee (2007:231)'s point of view, telephone interpreting (TI) refers to “a situation in which the interpreter works over the telephone, either at the same location as one of the interlocutors or at a separate location.”

According to Braun (2007: 21), telephone-mediated interpreting differs from videoconference interpreting in that it takes place in dialogue interpreting settings whilst videoconference interpreting is used in conference settings.

2.3.4.1. Origins of telephone-mediated interpreting

Telephone-mediated interpreting is one of the remote interpreting modes. Today, there is widespread use of this mode, especially in those circumstances where on-site interpreters are not easily accessible.

The origins of telephone-mediated interpreting are quite recent as is the case with other modes of remote interpreting. Telephone-mediated interpreting first emerged back in 1973 in Australia as a response to the large influxes of immigrants arriving and obtaining residence in the country. Those immigrants faced huge language barriers on a daily basis, and could find themselves in need of assistance in various settings, including health, legal or institutional ones (Kelly 2008b: 5).

Australian cities in which telephone-mediated interpreting services were first offered were Melbourne and Sydney. Turning out to be effective, the new interpreting mode subsequently spread to the United States in 1981 and in Europe (Phelan in Mikkelsen 2003: 3).

Thus, the 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of major agencies dedicated exclusively to the provision of telephone-mediated interpreting services, including the world's largest telephone

interpreting agency, Language Line Services in the United States (Kelly 2008; Ozolins 2011), and Translating & Interpreting Service (TIS) in Australia.

Similarly, smaller agencies that were already offering translation and interpreting services in various languages decided to add telephone interpreting services to their offerings, taking advantage of the rapidly growing use of mobile phones that was occurring during those years, but giving rise to various challenges (Ozolins 2011: 36).

2.3.4.2 How telephone-mediated interpreting works

Prior to dwelling on how telephone-mediated interpreting works, it is important to note that Ko (2006) argues that telephone interpreting falls under the category of remote interpreting, adding that remote interpreting can be subdivided into three categories, namely Internet-powered interpreting, landline-powered interpreting and telephone-mediated interpreting.

As noted above, telephone-mediated interpreting involves mediating between two or more parties who are co-located or located in different places. The interpreter performs his role, following the conversation, using his mobile telephone, with the parties using their mobile phones as well. In most case, the interpreter provides his interpreting services in a consecutive mode. Kelly (2007: 1) describes this as follows:

Telephone interpreting is provided when an interpreter, who is usually based in a remote location, provides interpretation via telephone for two individuals who do not speak the same language. Most often, telephone interpreting is performed in the consecutive mode. This means that the interpreter listens to each utterance first and then proceeds to render it into the other language, as opposed to speaking and listening simultaneously.

However, what we take of the above description is that it is limited in that reference is only made to telephone without Internet connection. With mobile telephones with Internet connection, the interpreter is able to provide interpreting services involving more than two parties, using platforms, including WhatsApp, Zoom and Skype.

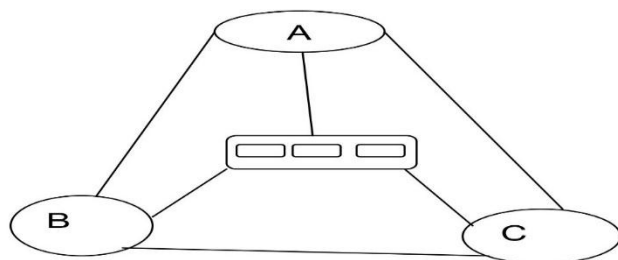
According to Kelly (2008b:31), various types of telephones can be used to perform telephone-mediated interpreting.

Any phone can be used during telephone interpreting, as the phone can be placed on speakerphone or passed from one party to the other (Kelly, 2008b:31). Dual receiver phones, which are user-friendlier as they have receivers for both parties, can also be used. Phones can be corded or cordless; fixed in different locations or carried around in cases or wheeled on trolleys; and can have a speed-dial function, which is normally pre-set to the interpreter's number (Kelly, 2008:31).

As indicated in the three figures below, three scenarios come into play, depending on the location patterns of the interpreter and parties:

Scenario 1:

Figure 1: Involvement of A, B and C interactions in different locations

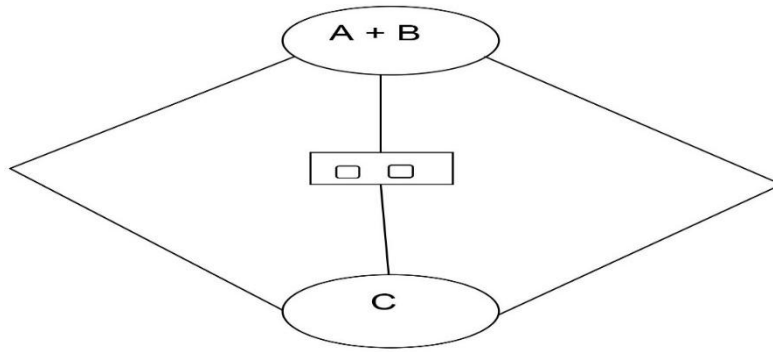


Source: Handbook of Remote Interpreting by Amato, A et al. (eds.), 2018. [http://amsacta.unibo.it/5955/1/HANDBOOK_SHIFT.pdf]. Accessed 3 February 2021.

This figure shows the first scenario in which all those involved in interactions (A, B, C) are found in different locations.

Scenario 2:

Figure 2: Interpreter (A) is in a location different from the location of the parties (B, C)

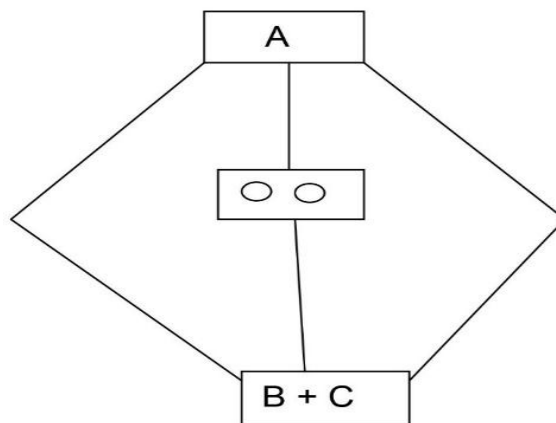


Source 2: Handbook of Remote Interpreting by Amato, A et al. (eds.), 2018. [http://amsacta.unibo.it/5955/1/HANDBOOK_SHIFT.pdf]. Accessed 3 February 2021.

This figure shows the second scenario in which the interpreter (A) is in a location different from the location of the parties (B, C). In this scenario, the mobile telephone can be placed on speakerphone or parties can exchange it between their hands.

Scenario 3:

Figure 3: Interpreter (A) is in the same location as one or more parties (B or C)



Source: Our own figure we came up with after showing separately two possible constellations that are featured in Figure 2 from Handbook of Remote Interpreting by Amato, A et al. (eds.), 2018. [http://amsacta.unibo.it/5955/1/HANDBOOK_SHIFT.pdf]. Accessed 3 February 2021.

The figure above shows the third scenario in which the interpreter (A) is in the same location as one or more parties (B or C), with the other party or parties sharing the same location. As is the case with the third scenario, the mobile telephone can be placed on speakerphone or parties can exchange it between their hands.

Note: We chose to adjust the figures to reflect the three scenarios. In the text from which we adapted the figures, only two constellations are given, with figure 2 illustrating two possible constellations. To make the constellations clearer, we saw fit to bring out the three constellations separately instead of relying on two figures only, with one of them consisting in a two-in-one option. Also, we chose to replace numbers (1,2,3) with letters (A, B, C) respectively to avoid a situation where the numbers may be mistaken for the number of interactants.

Unlike telephone interpreting is made possible by call centres where parties are connected by operators, mobile telephone-mediated interpreting becomes possible in the absence of operators, the reason being that conferencing platforms are used as a replacement for operators.

2.3.4.3 Telephone-mediated interpreting vs other modes of interpreting

Compared to other types of interpreting, especially those performed by on-site interpreters, telephone-mediated interpreting has its own unique twists that pertain to the way it is performed. As suggested by Wadensjö (1993), the management of turns in telephone-mediated interpreting is no mean feat as the telephone interpreter, unlike the on-site interpreter, is catapulted into a meta-linguistic role, being forced to serve as a “gatekeeper” or “coordinator” of the actions of interactants. He further argues that, contrary to the on-site interpreter, the interpreter’s role become even more complex, because of technical issues which result in possible overlapping in turns.

Another unique feature of telephone-mediated interpreting lies in the fact that some of the roles played by the telephone-mediated interpreter goes beyond the linguistic nature to such an extent that Merlini (2015: 106) describes the telephone-mediated interpreter’s role as “a meta-communicative activity, whose aim is to resolve communication problems by, for instance, clarifying, expanding, repairing, questioning or formulating understanding of the meaning of conversational actions”.

Such a role played by the mobile telephone-mediated interpreter diverges from the one taken on by other interpreters, particularly the on-site ones due to the fact that it becomes more complex as the interpreter sometimes finds himself obliged to coordinate interactions and struggle to cope with the lack of visual information. Also, his role completely depends on technologies, as a result of which his performance can at times fall prey to technical or connection issues.

In the case of the scenario in which all those involved in interactions (A, B, C) are found in different locations, the interpreter has to put more effort into managing interactions.

Along the same lines, Iglesias and Fernández (in Amato and Spinolo 2015: 17) suggest one of the difference between on-site and telephone interpreting consists in the fact that telephone-mediated interpreters are confronted with time-pressured interactions.

However, from the results of various studies analysed by Ko (in Andres and Falk 2009: 18), it is said that “TI [telephone interpreting] is not necessarily more stressful and demanding than FTFI [face-to-face interpreting] provided the right equipment is used and the interpreters have sufficient practice.”

As concerns the chunking of long turns, telephone-mediated interpreters are forced to use verbal gestures whilst on-site interpreters have the advantage of using both verbal and embodied gestures. Contrary to on-site interpreting, Amato (2017) suggests, non-verbal gestures in telephone-mediated interpreting may prove to be less effective, because of lack of visual information or remoteness constraints.

We can safely say there is a number of resources available to on-site interpreters when it comes to interrupting interactants in case of long turns. This is all the truer as on-site interpreters have even the discretion to use a mere glance as a means to ask any interactant to pause to leave room for them to interpret. Needless to say, that, however, telephone interpreters have no alternative but to use their voice to be given room to chunk pieces of information.

Unlike their on-site counterparts who can take advantage of visual information and use their gaze to request a break, Kelly (2008:37) says, telephone interpreters must necessarily step in to ask speakers to pause for them to be able to provide a rendition. She says the interpreter’s limited

ability to manage the length of the turns implies the need for the interpreter to a highly developed memory and note-taking skills.

On-site interpreters benefit from access to embodied gestures and movements through such inputs as postures and gaze (Poyatos 2002), but such resources remain non-existent resources in telephone-mediated interpreting much to the chagrin of the telephone-mediated interpreter. On-site interpreters get off to a good start with access to such gestures, thus enjoying a competitive advantage over their counterparts because, as suggested by Poyatos (1987: 88f):

The conscious or unconscious psycho-muscularly based body movement [...] of visual, visual-audible, and tactile or kinaesthetic perception, which, whether isolated or combined with the linguistic and paralinguistic structures and with other somatic and objectual behavioural systems, possess intended or intended communicative value.

It is interesting, in this regard, to note that, the lack of paralinguistic features deprives the interpreters of the opportunity to access guiding and supporting elements that are only available whilst in the meeting room. That also contributes to making it difficult for the interpreter to succeed in rendering source messages, because it only results in the interpreter becoming an easy prey to tiredness, fatigue and stress as he ends up finding himself obliged to display intense concentration.

In view of the above, it appears that unlike on-site interpreters, telephone-mediated interpreters are forced to learn not to rely on paralinguistic resources, counting solely on remote channels, namely their telephones, which sometimes cause technical problems that take form through poor Internet connection or headsets that contribute to distorting the sound quality.

The use of telephone-mediated interpreting gives rise to challenges for interpreters, because of lack of non-verbal cues. This is further confirmed by Braun and Davitti (2017a: 166) who conclude that “this in turn leads to a feeling of reduced presence. Overcoming this feeling, i.e. recreating a sense of togetherness, is likely to require more cognitive effort than face-to-face communication.”

There are many other examples of difference between on-site interpreting and telephone-mediated interpreting, but we cannot do without outlining the aspect that has been brought to the fore by Gracia-García (2002:14) who states that “Furthermore, unlike other forms of interpreting,

telephone interpreters do not have the opportunity to specialize in one discipline.” According to him, telephone-mediated interpreters have no choice but to navigate between various domains at the whim of clients.

To give even greater evidence of the difference between the two modes of interpreting, Kelly (2008) goes as far as to note that it is not surprising to see some top-tier on-site interpreters failing to be on a par with their telephone-mediated counterparts who have chosen to go for telephone-mediated interpreting.

2.4 Advantages and disadvantages of telephone-mediated interpreting

Prior to delving into the dimension of this section, we call in Kelly (2008:23) to witness in that she says telephone interpreting presents both advantages and disadvantages. And as though to prove her right, results of various other studies reveal that telephone-mediated interpreting has its pros and cons, which have been researched. Similarly, it is noticeable that this mode of interpreting is appropriate for particular contexts, while inadvisable in other circumstances. In this regard, it is worth mentioning some of the studies done so far in the field of telephone-mediated interpreting that present some interesting results in terms of advantages and disadvantages of telephone-mediated interpreting.

2.5. Advantages of telephone-mediated interpreting

First, one of the main studies in the field of telephone interpreting is the one conducted by Ko (2006). The study examined recordings of telephone interpreting in order to assess their quality, and assess the level of stress experienced by telephone interpreters and their resilience in response to concentration and fatigue.

From his study, Ko (2006) deduced that the type of equipment used in telephone interpreting has a significant influence on the interpreter’s performance and the level of comfort the interpreter experiences while serving. Analysis of the data collected in his study showed that the interpreters much preferred the use of headsets rather than cordless phones, which allowed them to take notes more freely.

The study also found that the use of cordless phones with a hands-free system created more problems with audio reproduction. This is also confirmed by a study carried out subsequently by Ko (2008) with a view to establishing what was the maximum level of resistance of interpreters providing services, using telephones. Participating interpreters further expressed a preference for using earphones as it allowed more freedom for their hands. From the results of the two studies conducted, Ko (in Andres and Falk 2009: 18) concludes that “TI [telephone interpreting] is not necessarily more stressful and demanding than FTFI [face-to-face interpreting] provided the right equipment is used and the interpreters have sufficient practice.” Therefore, this implies that with proper training, experience, and the right equipment, telephone interpreting can be preferred at par with face-to-face interpreting, without involving any other particular difficulty.

Another significant study was conducted by Lee (2007) in which he interviewed twenty Korean telephone interpreters and asked them about their experience with telephone-mediated interpreting. The interpreters interviewed recognized both advantages and disadvantages of this new mode. Among the main advantages that emerged were: the flexibility of working hours, the possibility of working from home and not having to travel long distances to reach the workplace.

In 2007, another highly significant study was carried out by Rosenberg. The study examined a very large number of recordings of telephone conversations mediated by interpreters (about two thousand) with a focus on the healthcare context, in order to identify their main characteristics. He divided the conversations into three categories. The first category consisted of interactions in which the three participants, namely the patient, doctor and the interpreter were found in three different places. The second category comprised interactions in which the doctor and the patient were in the same room, with their communication being remotely mediated by an interpreter through a hands-free telephone system. And the last category was made up of interactions in which the doctor and patient communicated from the same room aided by an interpreter found some miles away from them through a cordless phone (Ozolins 2011; Andres and Falk 2009).

Rosenberg (2007) conducted an analysis of the collected recordings according to various benchmarks for interpreting effectiveness and accuracy, as well as a more general analysis of the salient features of interpreter-mediated interactions. From the results of his analysis, it appears that the third category of interactions is the one that gave rise to the most challenging problems.

The reason, according to Rosenberg (in Andres and Falk 2009: 20), is that conversations are not really three-way communications but rather two parallel conversations, with the interpreter acting as an emissary, which causes lots of confusion.

Finally, Rosenberg's study shows that telephone interpreting puts the interpreter's skills and competences to the test, due to its different intrinsic factors, including the lack of the non-verbal component of communication, possible audio problems and the difficulty in managing the turn-shifting.

It appears from the different studies that the most important advantage of telephone-mediated interpreting consists in the fact that it allows for immediate access to professional interpreters who can be reached at all times in addition to making immediately available a wide variety of languages. These two aspects not only represent an advantage from an economic point of view, as has been written previously.

The practice of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting has proliferated in various fields and in many nations over the last few years. Mobile telephone-mediated interpreting has a distinct advantage in providing immediate and real-time access to interpreters.

In addition, mobile telephone-mediated interpreting is the most economical option as it helps cut the cost of travel for interpreters and the cost associated with operating and maintaining on-site interpreting services in various public facilities. This is confirmed by Phelan (2001:32) as follows: "The main motivation is financial – it is cheaper to employ an interpreter over the phone rather than pay for travel and accommodation".

According to Andres and Falk (2009), telephone-mediated interpreting presents not only a benefit from an economic standpoint, but also a way out in the face of the impossible. And to prove that, they give an example that unfolds as follows: Let us assume that there is a car accident and those involved in it speak a language other than the one used locally; and one of them has to call an ambulance to come to their rescue and save their lives. If an interpreter is not immediately available, not only to interpret the call, but also to accompany the ambulance staff to the scene of the accident, the result would be a delay that could prove fatal or greatly impede rescue efforts. The availability of telephone-mediated interpreter would contribute to drastically

reducing waiting times. The around-the-clock availability of telephone interpreters has been confirmed by Valentine (1994), Mintz (1998) and Gracia-García (2002).

Also, in the event of an emergency call, the hospital can immediately have recourse to telephone-mediated interpreting services by an interpreter available on the phone in any language that is used by those needing rescue. This way, the ambulance will reach the scene of the accident in the shortest possible time following the interpreter's instructions, who will also be able to assist and offer linguistic support during the rescue operations.

Kelly (2008) shows additional advantages of telephone-mediated interpreting, arguing that the interpreter's presence in the room can be, in the case of interpreting services provided in the healthcare settings, a source of embarrassment for the patient, especially in the case of medical examinations in which the patient has to undress or provide personal and detailed information to the doctor. He further notes that being able to work from home also brings considerable advantages for the interpreter himself: being in his own home, he can use all the tools at his disposal to ensure a good quality of service. The interpreter can, he adds, use his own computer to do real-time search for terms or make use of online dictionaries available to him without interfering with the work of the other parties involved.

2.6 Disadvantages of telephone-mediated interpreting

According to some scholars, telephone-mediated interpreting adds up to a heavy burden on interpreters. Lee (2007)'s study reveals a situation which some interpreters typically create that consists in taking on a broader role than they are assigned to perform: they feel particularly active in managing the conversation and this leads them to act as communication coordinators to a greater extent than is usually the case with face-to-face interpreting. From Lee's standpoint, this could be due to the fact that, being on the phone and not being able to take advantage of the non-verbal component, the interpreter feels compelled to make sure that communication runs smoothly and that the messages the interpreter conveys are adequately received by adopting strategies that are not normally used in face-to-face interpreting. In this regard, Lee (in Ozolins 2011: 40) points out:

Most tend to assume the additional task of managing the communication. When they face a problem or misunderstanding, they often intervene by offering an explanation or even

gently pushing the primary parties [...] to achieve the goal of communication successfully and efficiently.

In the same vein, Lee and Newman (1997) and Wadensjö (1999) argue the turn-taking control burden may affect the interpreter's rendition in case of the interpreter's failure to properly manage the turns whenever those he serves speak in long utterances he is unable to retain or when he finds himself obliged to repeatedly interrupt those he is serving to ask for clarifications or repetitions.

Another disadvantage raised by scholars lies in the fact that telephone-mediated interpreting requires a consecutive mode in most cases, because of technological limitations. According to Hewitt (1995), this consecutive mode consumes more time. Other main disadvantages that emerge include the lack of eye contact between interpreter and interlocutors, the lack of the non-verbal component of communication, the occasional presence of technical problems (Ozolins 2011, Andres and Falk 2009). According to some scholars, when any party engaged in the call does not speak clearly or uses an accent causing troubles to the interpreter, being able to see the speaker's facial expressions and mouth can make it possible for the interpreter decode the conveyed message even in case of poor sound quality. In this connection, Wadensjö (1998:254) states that "[...] the more inarticulately primary interlocutors speak, and the poorer the sound quality of the audio equipment they use, the greater the interpreter's disadvantage in terms of not having access to non-verbal features accompanying talk in interaction."

Aside from the above disadvantages, scholars point to another challenge facing telephone interpreters that arises from the fact that, often enough, the interpreter is called upon on very short notice, as a result of which there is not enough time for the interpreter to prepare adequately for the type of communication to interpret, which differs significantly from the preparation time usually available to the on-site interpreter before a conference.

In addition, we have to assert that a great deal of mental flexibility is required of the interpreter, who may have to work in extremely different contexts in short intervals of time. It cannot be denied that the contexts from which the telephone-mediated interpreter receives the call, especially the one coming from a healthcare setting, can often be full of tension from an emotional point of view: for example, let us see the aforementioned case of a car accident, or

even the communication of a patient's death after undergoing an operation. In this case, the interpreter is required to be professional and avoid letting himself be carried away by emotions or anxiety as he needs to continue to provide an excellent service.

Furthermore, as has been extensively analysed in previous chapters, we need to consider the effects of the lack of the nonverbal component in communication. We have previously observed that the non-verbal component is an integral and fundamental part of the message. And the inability of users of telephone-mediated interpreting to have access to the non-verbal component has them failing to gain a complete and accurate understanding of the message. It is clear that there are cases in which the non-verbal component is less important than in others, but the more the interpreter is able to have access to the non-verbal component of the message, the more his rendition is accurate. According to Wadensjö (in Ozolins, 2011:38), whenever those involved in the call cannot see each other, it becomes difficult for them to know when a speech turn has come to an end and, as a result, they end up speaking over each other, making more difficult the telephone interpreter's task.

As also concerns the lack of non-verbal information, Kelly (2008:83) argues that interpreters can compensate for it through practice and experience. She suggests the interpreter's ability to develop his listening skills may, in some cases, help make up for the lack of visual information. Kelly (2008) cites as an example the experiences of some blind interpreters who, in spite of a significant physical disability, tell of how they have always been able to carry out and effectively complete face-to-face interpreting assignments. However, Kelly (2008) states that there are specific cases where the use of telephone interpreting is not advisable: referring to the healthcare context, she cites one example and that is the one involving children, who may consider the use of the telephone or earphones as a game and therefore a distraction.

Another challenge lies in managing conversational shifts in a telephone conversation. This particularly happens in emergency situations or in situations which touch on sensitive issues: in such cases, participants in the conversation may tend to be excited and fail to respect the regular course of conversational turns. In this case, the onus is on the interpreter to calm the participants down whenever possible and call them to order for the conversation to go smoothly. It should be noted that even in normal everyday telephone conversations there are often problems managing

communication due to audio delays and overlapping conversational shifts. For this reason, such challenges are more likely to be inevitable when it comes to interpreter-mediated telephone interactions. Therefore, the telephone interpreter must not give in to emotions, trying to resolve such emergency situations. In this regard, Andres and Falk (2009: 21) point out: “This lack of non-verbal information could lead to an increase in stress for the interpreters as confusion and misunderstandings can have profound implications.”

It should be recalled that the call for a telephone interpreter may come at any time of the day even during the night and from any setting. As illustrated in the example regarding telephone interpreting in the healthcare setting, there are frequent cases of emergencies where interpreting services are required. As a result, the interpreter may be called upon to serve with a call coming directly from the street, made by a person involved in a traffic accident. In this case, the environment where the call is coming from is not conducive to the quality of the audio reaching the interpreter. It is very likely that the call will be disturbed by noises and sounds made by cars driving at higher speed on the road, or by the voices of passers-by who stop to watch. All of this can adversely affect the interpreter, which is why the telephone interpreter must constantly increase his capacity to concentrate and listen selectively in order to grasp, in the shortest possible time, the main information conveyed in the conversation.

In addition, there are other disadvantages closely related to the use of telephone-mediated interpreting. For example, if the interpreter works remotely and is connected to the phone, he cannot be able to help users with any additional services, such as filling out forms in a foreign language. In a different angle, Andres and Falk (2009: 22) say another major disadvantage is the low remuneration those involved in telephone-mediated interpreting enjoy. They add the low remuneration is a subject of complaint for most interpreters, leading many of them not to accept telephone interpreting assignments. They reiterate: “Telephone interpreters are paid significantly less than FTF interpreters. As a result, there is low job satisfaction among telephone interpreters.” A final disadvantage highlighted by Wadensjö (1999, in Andres and Falk 2009), is the feeling of alienation and emergence from the conversation experienced by interpreters: this would result from the physical separation between the interlocutors.

Before proceeding with the next chapter, there is a need to touch on the last prominent aspect of telephone interpreting where an issue from an ethical perspective comes into play. It is very likely that, on calls where a telephone interpreter is requested, moments are created where only the user who made the call and the interpreter remain in contact, waiting for the third party to connect. In this regard, Kelly (2008) is categorical: she argues, in fact, that the interpreter should never address one of the interlocutors if the other has yet to be present or connected to the phone as well. He says the interpreter must avoid any kind of emotional involvement or conversational preference with any of the interlocutors.

In this regard, Ozolins (2011: 46) advises as follows:

While this may be considered a general issue of what to do when interpreters are left alone with one participant, the occurrence of this on the telephone does raise specific issues relating to what the norms are for telephone discourse: [...] refusing to partake in a conversation may carry more weight on a telephone than in a face-to-face situation where body language and positioning may do the work for the interpreter. Holding in silence is not comfortable, for either party. [...] Systematic studies are urgently needed both to provide a basic description of telephone interpreter behaviour in these waiting times, and to work through practice and ethical ramifications of different courses of action.

According to Ozolins (2011), therefore, further study and research are needed to set general standards of conduct for telephone-mediated interpreters.

Most scholars (Mintz 1998; Kelly 2008; Andres and Falk 2009; Ozolins 2011) agree that, to make it possible for telephone-mediated interpreters to properly do their job, two aspects are extremely important: the use of technically impeccable equipment and good training in telephone interpreting for all those involved in the field.

In addition, Lee (in Andres and Falk 2009) suggests that the study of the characteristics and techniques used in telephone interpreting should be integrated in ad hoc modules in the curricula of future professional interpreters. With telephone-mediated interpreting becoming more and more a chosen mode of interpreting in some contexts, it is necessary that new interpreters are trained in it as well, so that they can adequately face the new working context once they have finished their university career. In this regard, Andres and Falk (ib.: 24) also point out: “TI [telephone interpreting] may, in the long run, prove to be a genuine alternative to face-to-face interpreting and something interpreters can adapt to, given sufficient training and practice.”

2.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the focus was put on telephone-mediated interpreting, while focusing on some of the challenges, advantages and disadvantages associated with it. The literature shows, despite a number of similarities with other types of interpreting, TI is a fully-fledged type of interpreting, and can be applied in different contexts. Undoubtedly, there are some situations that are more suited to the use of TI such as in case one relies on shoestring, but needs interpreting services. In other situations, however, such as lengthy interactions, the use of TI is discouraged because, as stated not only by Kelly (2008a), but also by Grabau and Gibbons (1996) long periods of rendition may result in the interpreter falling prey to stress. In any case, when using TI, the equipment must be of the highest quality. In addition, it is desirable that interpreters have extensive experience in this area as well as adequate related training.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on outlining the study design and methods as well as various approaches and procedures used in this study that include selection of participants, data collection and data analysis. The methodology used made it possible to identify challenges facing mobile telephone interpreting and propose solutions for the benefit of those who currently provide or intend to provide mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services.

3.2 Research design

This research is considered to be exploratory compared to its dichotomy with a descriptive study (Mouton & Marais, 1996:42). The research consensus is that exploratory research aims at conducting a systematic inquiry into a nearly or completely unexplored field. Amongst those researchers who express an agreement with this is Durrheim (2008:44) who confirms it saying that exploratory research is “used to make preliminary investigations into relatively unknown areas of research.”

With regard to this particular case, it is safe to assume that mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda remains an untapped field to such an extent that “completely unexplored field” or, if we have to refer to it in a much less derogatory sense – “relatively unknown area” - is indeed a well-deserved name for it. The aim of exploratory studies, like this one, is to attempt to gather more information on a subject. Mouton and Marais (1996:43) prove us right to use the exploratory method in the following words: “Because exploratory studies usually lead to insight and comprehension rather than the collection of accurate and replicable data, these studies frequently involve [...] the use of informants.”

3.3 Research methods

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied. As we learn from Preece (1996:41), quantitative method focuses on counting or measuring whilst qualitative method seeks to ascribe a quality.

Largely for this study, we have applied a qualitative method, which is justified by the fact that we have been forced to use a small study population, because very few telephone-mediated interpreters are found in Rwanda. In addition, no one in Rwanda is known to use telephone-mediated interpreting services. Even though it would be necessary to quantify the extent of challenges as recounted by telephone-mediated interpreters, using as many data as possible to be able to identify the occurrence of each of the challenges, we have seen fit to put up with the limited quantity of data available that shows the number of those interpreters who face a specific challenge that is recurrent. To offset the insufficient number of participants, however, we have chosen to rely on open-ended questions with a view to collecting elaborate data from telephone-mediated practitioners in Rwanda. To get there, open-ended questions addressed to those practitioners have been given preference. Gathered data as a result of use of such questions will guide us in gaining a better understanding of the challenges that crop up much to someone's chagrin as a result of engaging in mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda.

3.4 Selection of participants

Our only criterion for the recruitment of participants was that those participants should be engaged in providing telephone-mediated interpreting services in Rwanda. For recruitment purposes, we employed the snowball sampling technique. When applying this technique, we first contacted one of the telephone-mediated interpreters we knew, then asked him to tell us his fellow telephone-mediated interpreters he would know, who in turn, volunteered to connect us with other telephone-mediated interpreters they knew.

To get responses that we needed in our study, use was made of the non-probability sampling which, according to Durrheim and Painter (2008:139), excludes random selection processes. This is especially true given that our sampling is purposive, because it is influenced by our judgement. This is confirmed in particular by Oliver (2006:45) who argues that:

purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research.

It is in this respect that I presented questionnaires to mobile telephone-mediated interpreters who had offered to respond to our questions. All those interpreters were based in the City of Kigali, except for one who lived in Rwanda's Western Province in the city of Rubavu.

Despite the purposive sampling lending itself to the accusation of being a judgmental or convenience sampling, it has nothing to do with it, because, given the limited number of those who provide mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services, the sample is representative.

At the start, we planned to have ten participants, but ended up including nine interpreters, because one of them withdrew from the study for reasons he was unwilling to explain to us.

3.5 Data collection instruments

Initially, we aimed to use semi-structured interviews in a face-to-face fashion and questionnaires consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions made collection of interpreters' particulars possible, in which case it was necessary to have information on the age, years of experience, performance settings and hours during which the participants' services are mostly required. Open-ended questions were geared toward getting the participants to expand on challenges they face. Our primary focus was on using semi-structured interviews, asking more open-ended questions, and being able to have ample opportunity to engage in discussions with the participants and use questionnaires for only two participants who had expressed the wish to respond, using questionnaires. Following restrictions on movements due to COVID-19, however, we were compelled to adjust our course, and solely go for questionnaires, all the more so as the participants were of the opinion that the use of questionnaires was the only alternative possible given the situation. Thus, was born the need to send questionnaires to the participants by email.

The questionnaire consisted of 17 questions. Even though the questionnaire was drafted in English, three respondents surprisingly chose to provide their answers, using the French language. As a result, we had to translate their responses into English whenever reference is made to them in the study.

To collect as much data as possible, despite being unable to conduct face-to-face interviews, we asked the participants to respond to the questionnaire, giving as much details possible so much so

that they could even offer details which, in their opinion, would be required of them as part of follow-up questions should we have face-to-face interviews with them. This is because, with the field of telephone interpreting being still very much in its infancy, their detailed responses will help lay the foundation for further research.

The 17-item English questionnaire was developed, regard being had to previous studies, and was sent to the participants, using their private emails. The questionnaire included two sections: (i) participants' demographic profile (Q1) and (ii) the practice of telephone-mediated interpreting (Q2–15) and (iii) their perceptions of the challenges and potential solutions (Q16–17).

Also, the questionnaire mainly consisted of closed questions (Q1 and Q16) and open-ended questions (Q2-15 and Q17) for the participants to provide detailed information.

3.6. Data analysis

The first objective of the study was to carry out an in-depth study of the challenges facing telephone-mediated interpreters in Rwanda. For this reason, use is made of exploratory data analysis method that is based primarily on a bottom-up methodological approach which makes it possible to gain insight into phenomena and focuses on the initial exploration of data that help develop a deeper understanding of such data.

Also, we chose to make use of questionnaires to collect information on mobile telephone-mediated interpreters' experience when providing mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services in order to achieve the above-mentioned objective.

Data were analysed in a way allowing for encapsulating every response given by every interpreter that relates to the study objectives. Also, the most representative aspects of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting were analysed. As a result, the analysis focused on various aspects, including the management of turns in telephone-mediated interpreting (as highlighted by Wadensjö, 1993, see chapter Two).

In addition, we focused on frequent phenomena stemming from the very nature of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting such as overlaps and difficulties facing the interpreter when it comes to managing shifts.

Also, the technical component related to the medium of communication, namely the telephone: specifically, interference problems.

All the responses were combined in Word files as a means of making it possible to conduct detailed analysis and categorize the responses into various themes (Guest et al. 2012) and compare such responses with the findings by other scholars as indicated in the literature review.

3.7. Conclusion

This study was conducted, using an exploratory approach with the application of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This was intended to engage in a systematic enquiry into telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda as a nearly or completely unexplored field. However, due to the small study population, the qualitative methods remained dominant throughout the study. In this regard, even though it would be necessary to quantify the extent of challenges as recounted by telephone-mediated interpreters, using as many data as possible to be able to identify the occurrence of each of the challenges, we have seen fit to put up with the limited quantity of data available that shows the number of those interpreters who face a specific challenge that is recurrent. To offset the insufficient number of participants, however, we have chosen to rely on open-ended questions with a view to collecting elaborate data from telephone-mediated practitioners in Rwanda. To get there, open-ended questions addressed to those practitioners have been given preference. Gathered data as a result of such interviews has guided us in gaining a better understanding of the challenges that crop up as a result of use of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter first describes demographic profiles of the participants, then presents and analyses the main findings from the participants' responses and views on their experience serving as mobile telephone-mediated interpreters. It also presents major aspects of telephone-mediated interpreting practice, including places used to provide telephone-mediated interpreting services, time of day when telephone-mediated interpreting services are provided, briefing ahead of calls, interpreting without visual information, managing the turn-shifting, interrupting the speaker, etc. In the analysis of these aspects as experienced by the participants, some corroboration is made with the data documented in the literature review.

4.2 Demographic details of participants

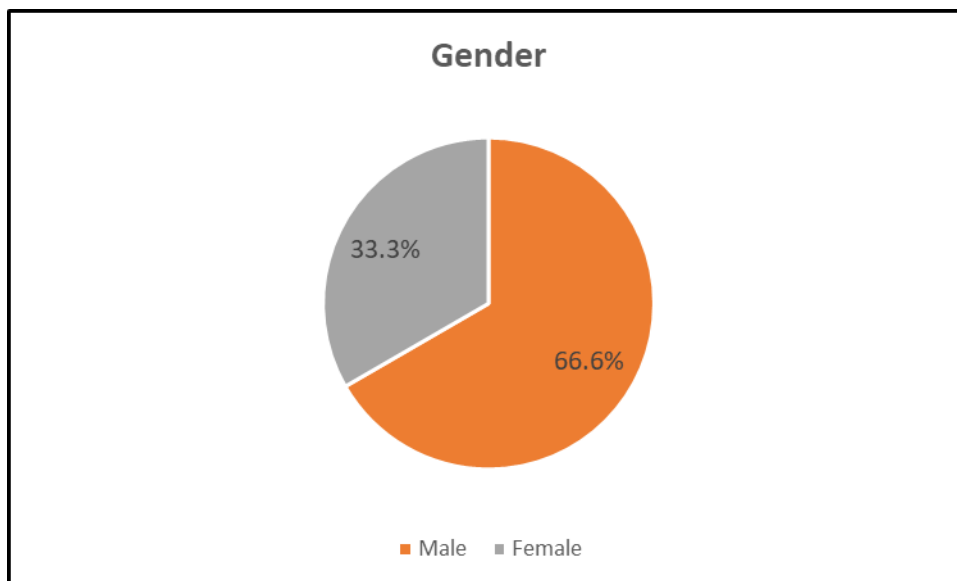
Nine telephone interpreters contributed to responding to the questionnaire. The sample size initially included ten participants, but one of them later withdrew from the study. Also, some participants failed to respond to some questions, which means that the number of respondents varied from one question to another. Of the nine interpreters who participated, one third (33.3%) were female while two-thirds (66.6%) were male.

Table 1 : Gender distribution of respondents

Characteristics	No	Percentage
Gender		
Male	6	66.6
Female	3	33.3

Source: Field data

Figure 1: Gender distribution of respondents



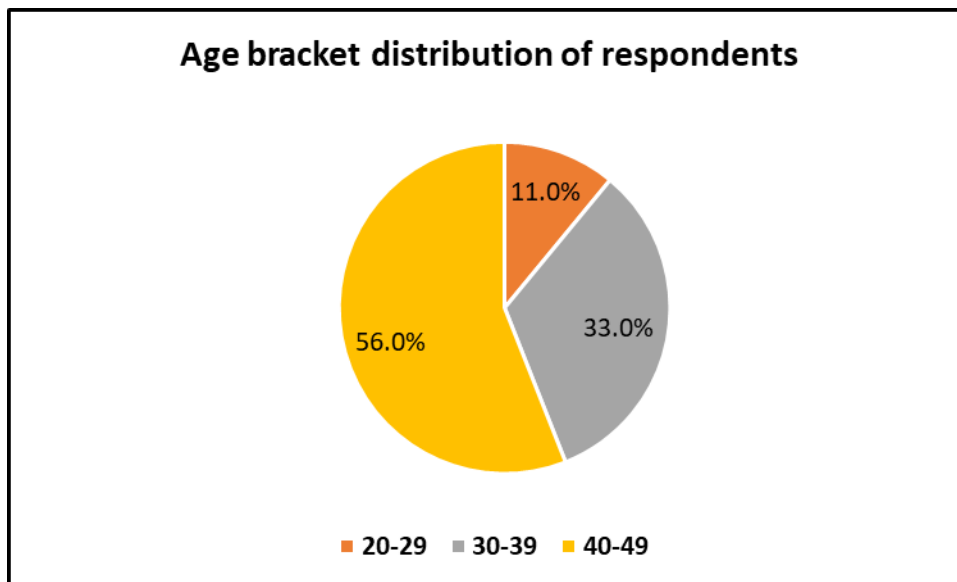
Source: Field data

Table 2: Age bracket distribution of respondents

Age brackets	No	Percentage
20-29	1	11
30-39	3	33
40-49	5	56
50 and over	0	0

Source: Field data

Figure 2: Age bracket distribution of respondents



Source: Field data

The participants in the study are found in various age brackets, with 11% being aged between 20-29, 33% aged between 30-39 and 56% being aged 40-49. Here, it should be noted that no participant was found in the last two age brackets included in the questionnaire as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

It appears from the table above that the majority of participants are found in the age bracket of 40-49 years, and there is no gainsaying that the involvement in telephone-mediated interpreting has to do with age for reasons which require further research.

4.3 Qualification in interpreting

As regards qualifications, none of the seven participants who responded to the question related to qualifications admitted having completed interpreting education, which means that all of them were self-made interpreters. Two participants, however, did not respond to the question, making it unclear as to whether they are qualified interpreters.

According to Kelly (2008a), however, quality telephone interpreting requires training and skills, because mobile telephone-mediated interpreting has unique specifics. The lack of qualification among mobile telephone-mediated interpreters adds to the concern expressed by Lee (2007) that it is less common for telephone interpreters to take on training, because less attention has been paid to telephone interpreting.

4.4 Experience in serving as mobile telephone-mediated interpreter

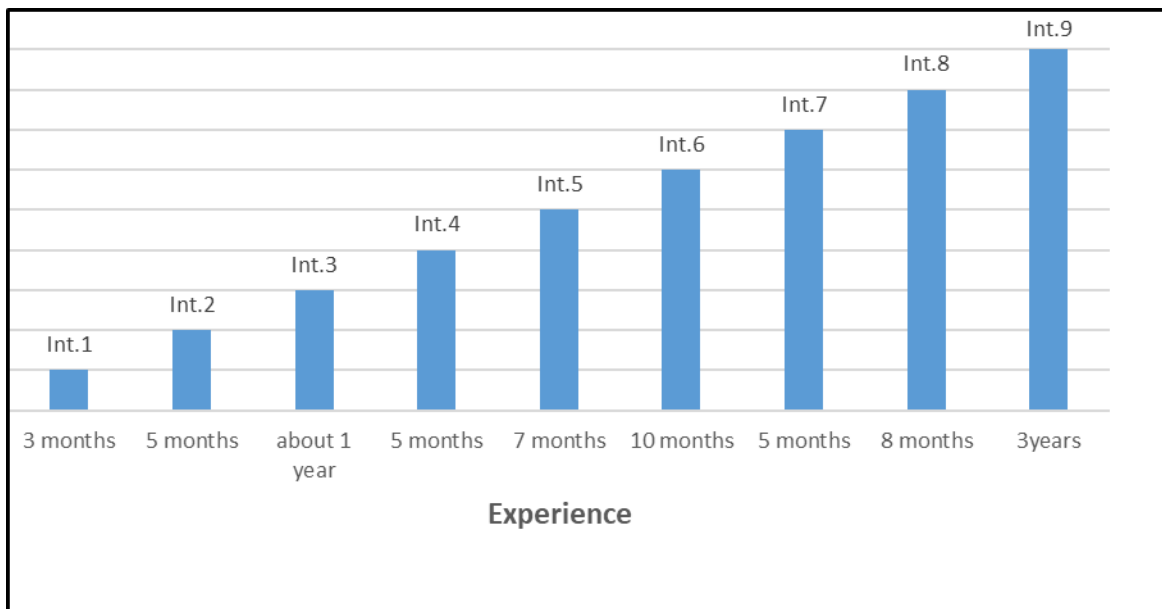
As concerns years of experience and in the light of the responses given by the participants, it has been found that eight participants do not have more than one year of experience as mobile telephone-mediated interpreters, with only one, namely the one based in Gisenyi, having three years of experience. Here, we are led to admit the limitations of our data collection instrument, namely the questionnaire, as we could not be able to ask follow-up questions, unless use was made of semi-structured interviews. Such follow-up questions would have enabled us to find out from the participants about the circumstances which had them embarking on telephone-mediated interpreting, which would have made it possible to determine whether or not their choice was prompted by COVID-19. This brings us to the conclusion that our study has not been immune from the effects of this pandemic. The table below shows the participants' length of experience.

Table 3 : Experience distribution of respondents

Interpreter	Length of experience
Interpreter 1	3 months
Interpreter 2	5 months
Interpreter 3	about 1 year
Interpreter 4	5 months
Interpreter 5	7 months
Interpreter 6	10 months
Interpreter 7	5 months
Interpreter 8	8 months
Interpreter 9	3years

Source: Field data

Figure 3: Experience distribution of respondents



Source: Field data

As shown in table 3, of the nine telephone-mediated interpreters who responded to the questionnaire, only one had more than one year of experience, with the rest of participants having not more than one year of experience. Also, it appears that as the length of experience increased, the number of participants decreased.

4.5 Frequency of provision of telephone-mediated interpreting services

According to the participants' answers about the frequency of provision of telephone-mediated interpreting, all participants admitted being self-employed and none of them took it on as a full-time job. This means that they serve as telephone-mediated interpreters in addition to other occupations which may or may not have to do with other modes of interpreting or translation. We have realized that all the participants provide telephone-mediated interpreting services on a casual basis. This reflects the reality asserted by Crezee et al. (2015:76) that "the unpredictability of income is inherent in the freelance interpreter's work," and this is the case with telephone-mediated interpreting.

4.6 Places used to provide telephone-mediated interpreting services

The questionnaire also included a question that allowed for the identification of the places where mobile telephone-mediated interpreters work from when providing telephone-based interpreting services. None of the nine interpreters admitted providing mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services using a separate room at home that he uses as an office. In view of the responses received from the participants, it is apparent that mobile telephone-mediated interpreting has given rise to unlimited mobility of office for mobile telephone-mediated interpreters. This way, one of the participants went as far as to give the following response:

[[...] Mais j'avais une inquiétude liée au fait que l'événement [enterrement dans son village natal] prendrait plus de temps que prévu, et c'est ce qui s'est passé. Une vingtaine de minutes avant l'appel, je me suis efforcée de trouver un endroit soi-disant calme près du lieu de l'événement pour faire mon travail [interprétation par téléphone], mais cela a affecté ma performance car le bruit des personnes présentes pouvait interférer avec l'appel. (Interpreter 9)

[...] But I had one concern arising from the fact that the event [a burial ceremony in the interpreter's home village] would take longer than anticipated, which is what happened. Some 20 minutes before the call, I made it my job to find a supposedly quiet spot near the place of the event to do the job [telephone-mediated interpreting], but this affected my performance as the noise of people who were around could interfere with the call. (My translation)]

This participant's experience is just one more example of the flexible mobility available to those who provide mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services as asserted by Andres and Falk (2009:16) as follows: "Telephone interpreting enables interpreters to interpret from any location at any time and thus almost any language spoken in the world is made accessible."

4.7 Time of day when telephone-mediated interpreting services are provided

In view of the various responses received from the participants, the majority of participants say their services are and can be needed at any time of day, with most of them saying that on occasions they provide services very late at night. This comes as a confirmation of the assertion by Zietsman who says that "Obtaining the services of a telephone interpreter is as easy as picking up the phone." One of the participants said:

On occasions, I am called upon to provide interpreting services at 1 a.m., especially when those I have to serve are based in Australia in case they need to connect with people from any other corner of the world, especially from Africa. (Interpreter 2)

However, a fraction of participants revealed that they provide services at predetermined times between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. or 7 p.m., the reason being that, they say, they have contracts that specify times when their services may be required. One of them explained that the time of day when they are asked to serve remains dependent upon the time zone of the client, putting it the following way:

Whenever I serve my clients who are in the USA, I am required to be ready at any time between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., because their meetings with those I connect them with often take place between 8 a.m. EST and 1 p.m. EST, which is 6 hours behind Kigali. (Interpreter 1)

The table below indicates the time of day the participants are required to provide services:

Table 4: Time of day the participants are called upon to provide services

Interpreter	Time of day
Interpreter 1	Between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
Interpreter 2	At any time of day
Interpreter 3	At any time of day
Interpreter 4	Between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.
Interpreter 5	At any time of day
Interpreter 6	Between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.
Interpreter 7	At any time of day
Interpreter 8	At any time of day
Interpreter 9	Between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Source: Field data

It appears from the table above that the times when telephone-mediated interpreters provide services differ. The reason for this is that they serve various users who are found in different parts of the world, living in different time zones.

4.9 Briefing ahead of calls

The question asked to check whether or not the participants are briefed on the discussions ahead of time was included in the questionnaire to know if parties let interpreter know what they plan to discuss on the call as a way of giving the interpreter time to prepare in advance. Most of the participants stated that some parties do not give too much thought to the need to give the interpreter details of discussions well before the call as illustrated in the following quote:

My clients usually conduct a quarterly review of my performance and always ask me if there are any questions or concerns I can share with them. The very first concern I shared with them is that some reporters I connect them with could fail to provide me with details of discussions ahead of the call. Following this concern, they issued a notice to all reporters that they each have the obligation to let me know what they plan to discuss. So far none of the reporters has followed this call. (Interpreter 5)

Another participant commented on this:

In most cases, the only briefing I enjoy is the information on the call schedule. I have no choice but to accept to provide my services without being able to anticipate what type of assignment I am called upon to handle. (Interpreter 7)

This finding shows that some parties ignore the importance of briefing interpreters prior to commencing the assignment, which adversely affects the interpreter's performance. This is part of the nature of telephone-mediated interpreting, which results in the interpreters being denied the opportunity to know the content of the assignment ahead of the call.

This harsh reality has not gone unnoticed and has been echoed by Gracia-García (2002:14) who states that "Telephone interpreters are often thrown in at the deep end as they do not know what the situation will entail before they pick up the telephone."

However, one of the participants with three years of experience admitted to fight for this opportunity:

Chaque fois que cela est possible, je demande à ceux qui font appel à mes services de me donner des détails avant l'appel. Certaines personnes que vous servez estiment que

l'interprète sait tout et ne voient pas la nécessité de vous donner des détails. Il faut donc demander des informations si vous voulez réussir. (Interpreter 9)

[Each time it is possible, I ask those who seek my services to give me details before the call. Some of those you serve are of the opinion that the interpreter knows everything, and do not see the need to give you details. Please, you have to ask for information if you are interested in succeeding. (My translation)]

As is the case with on-site interpreting, telephone-mediated interpreters need to be given details to succeed in providing services.

4.10 Users of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services

As regards users of telephone-mediated interpreting, it appears from the participants' responses that people in Rwanda have yet to make use of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services. Responding to the question of who use their services, all the nine participants said that no resident of Rwanda has sought their services so far.

In this respect, one of the participants said:

Je ne sais pas pourquoi, mais les gens ici ne demandent pas les services d'interprétation par téléphone mobile. S'ils ne sont pas au courant de ces services, je ne sais pas. Je pense qu'il faut donner des messages pour informer les gens ici que ces services existent. Si je ne me trompe, ils peuvent en avoir besoin. (Interpreter 3)

[I don't know why, but people here don't ask for mobile telephone-mediated interpretation services. If they don't know about these services, I don't know. I think we need to give messages to inform people here that these services exist. If I guess correctly, they may need them. (My translation)]

4.11 Interpreting without visual information

As far as visual information is concerned, seven participants made it clear that telephone-mediated interpreting interferes with the quality of their performance, as they say failure to access or use visual information poses some challenges for them, making their task more difficult. One of the participants says this often happens when any of the parties speaks without any pauses, ignoring the presence of the interpreter. As a result, one of the participants argued, the interpreter finds himself forced to intrude into the discussions between parties. He puts it the following way:

Parfois, je me sens gêné de demander à l'un ou l'autre orateur de faire une pause pour me laisser la place d'interpréter, mais je n'ai pas le choix. (Interpreter 4)

[I sometimes feel embarrassed to ask the speaker to pause to leave room for me to interpret, but I have no choice. (My translation)]

This interpreter's experience lends further support to the assertion by Kelly (2008:37) who says that, unlike their on-site counterparts who can take advantage of visual information and use their gaze to request a break, telephone interpreters must necessarily step in to ask speakers to pause for them to be able to provide a rendition.

Two interpreters, however, say they have no concern with the lack of visual information, provided they are given details about the topic to discuss.

Some participants' quotes illustrating views about the lack of visual cues are presented below:

One day, I had to interpret a call in which one of those involved was explaining to others how the camera works. He was referring to some parts of the camera, with the camera in his hands. Those others and I could not see the camera, and I must recognize that I had trouble rendering the message, because I was not familiar with different parts of the camera. (Interpreter 8)

You see, interpreting without seeing those you are serving causes stress and nervousness. (Interpreter 7)

The above-mentioned quotes show that telephone-mediated interpreting becomes more complicated when the call involves use of visual materials, leading to nervousness and stress. This provides ammunition to various scholars, including Rosenberg (2007) who argue the interpreter's ability to clearly hear and see clients is key to interpreting accurately.

4.12 Managing the turn-shifting

In the opinion of all the participants, one thing is inevitable when it comes to telephone-mediated interpreting and that is, they argue, the fact that it is hard to ensure turns-at-talk run smoothly. Some go as far as to say that overlaps are irremediable in telephone-mediated interpreting because, it is an inevitable effect of face-to-face encounter. This reality has also been confirmed by Wadensjö (in Ozolins, 2011:38), who states that parties, whether they intend to or not, are forced to speak over one another, adding that "This, in turn, can complicate the telephone interpreter's interpreting task."

According to Kelly (2008:36) as well, sometimes turn-taking control turns into a daunting task for the telephone interpreter. Responding to the question, one of the participants concurred with her saying:

One day, I had to provide interpreting services in a meeting that involved three persons. One of them was an employee who learnt over the phone that his contract would be terminated. The person did not want to stop talking and continued to talk over his boss. I tried to ask him to pause, but he was unwilling to give way.

Some participants explained the reason why turn-taking control is no mean feat, saying that this challenge arises as a consequence of lack of access to parties' gestures.

4.13 Interrupting the speaker

Five participants responded that they do not hesitate to interrupt the speaker in case of failure to understand what is said. They say, the need to interrupt the speaker often arises, because of the equipment, especially when connection is bad. However, two participants said they use their best efforts to avoid interrupting the speaker, adding that this is because interrupting the speaker may give the impression that they are not good at the job, and lead the parties to question their skills. Along the same line of reasoning, one of the two participants responded:

I never interrupt the speaker, I always make sure my rendition is coherent so that those I serve cannot think that there is something amiss. Otherwise, nobody can claim that they are able to render all the speakers' words 100 percent. (Interpreter 5)

The other two participants did not provide details as to whether it happens to them to interrupt parties. One of them responded that his decision to interrupt the speaker is dependent upon the type of interaction involved.

Table 5: Interruption of speaker

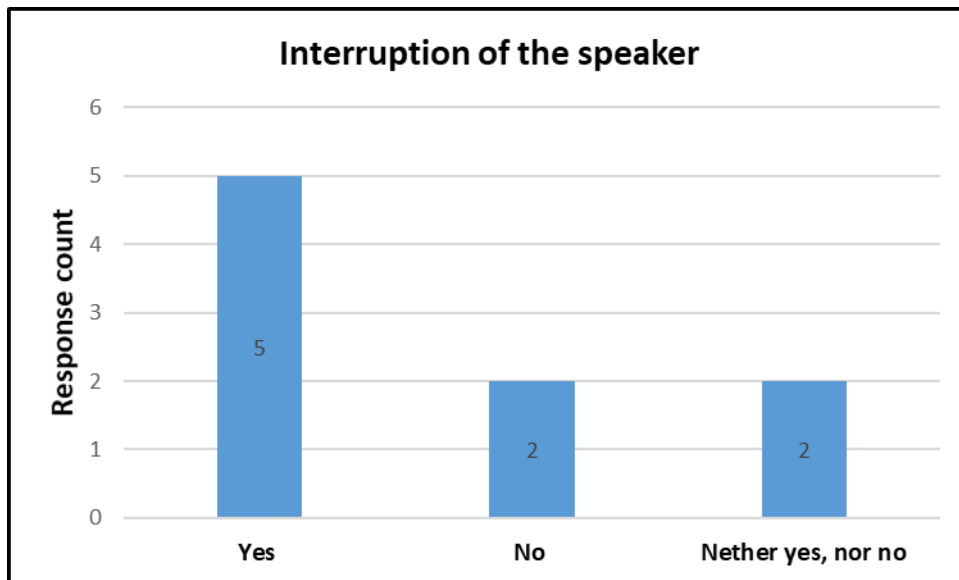
Interruption of the speaker	No
Yes	5

No	2
Neither yes, nor no	2

Source: Field data

The table above shows that some telephone-mediated interpreters ignore or deliberately disregard the need to interrupt the speaker, and the question arises of what happens when any of the parties produces long utterances, going as far as to forget the presence of the other party. Without question, this kind of failure by the interpreter to interrupt the speaker may end up adversely affecting the interpreter's rendition.

Figure 4: Interruption of speaker



Source: Field data

4.14 Confirming information with the speaker

In view of the participants' responses with respect to this aspect of telephone interpreting, it appears that six participants argue that they are sometimes compelled to check with the speaker about the correct comprehension of his utterances. Two participants, namely those who admitted hating interrupting the speaker, responded that confirming information can send a wrong signal to the parties. One reason they cited for the refusal to confirm information with the speaker was the fear that parties would question their ability. One of them said:

I only confirm information with the speaker when I experience technical issues with my phone. In such cases, no one can put the blame on me. Otherwise, as I said regarding the interruption of the speaker, it can lead my client to think that I am unable to live up to the task. (Interpreter 7).

However, one participant responded:

You see, there are times when I fail to capture what is said by the speaker, but I ask him to repeat for me. (Interpreter 1)

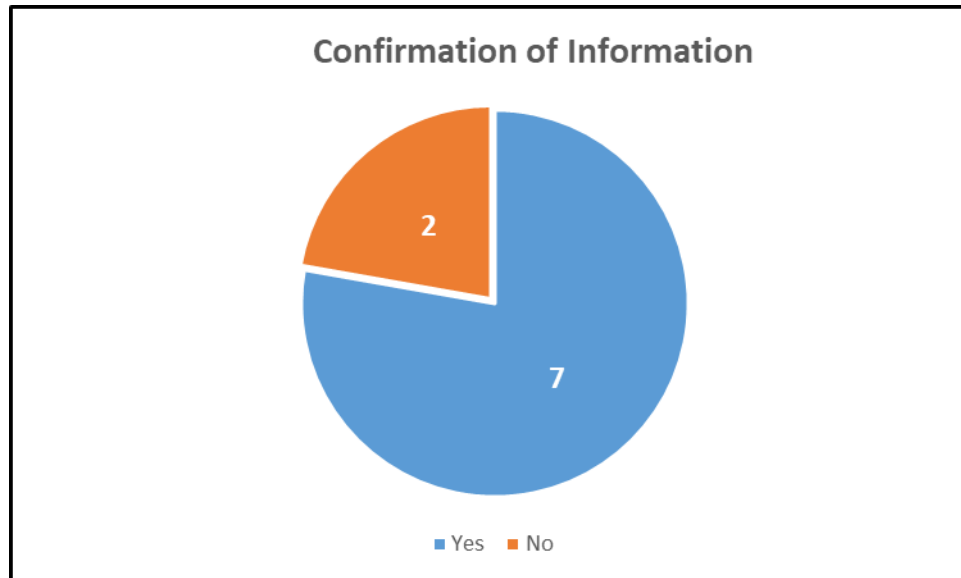
Table 6: Confirmation of information

Confirmation of information	No
Yes	7
No	2

Source: Field data

It appears from the table above that mobile telephone-mediated interpreters know full well that the confirmation of information is key to making it possible for them to live up to their task. As is the case with the interruption, the question arises of what happens when the interpreters refrain from asking for clarifications, which may have them being unfaithful to the speaker.

Figure 5: Confirmation of information



Source: Field data

4.15 Getting feedback from clients

According to six participants, feedback is a scarce commodity because, they state, most of parties ignore that honest comments can help interpreters improve their work. One of them said that the only word he hears from the parties is the appreciation for a job well done, but he does not believe that his rendition is always that perfect. He responded:

Chaque fois que l'appel prend fin, la majorité - sinon la totalité – des participants à l'appel me remercient pour le bon travail accompli. Je ne sais pas si c'est parce que je travaille avec eux depuis environ 5 mois, à tel point que je connais les questions dont ils discutent toujours. Je ne sais pas si c'est vrai, parce que je ne crois pas que mon interprétation soit toujours aussi parfaite. Mais lorsque le client continue à faire appel à mes services, cela signifie qu'il apprécie ma prestation. (Interpreter 4)

[Whenever the call comes to an end, most – if not all, of those involved in the call thank me for the good job done. I do not know if it is because I have been working with them for about five months to such an extent that I am familiar with issues they always discuss. [However] I do not know if that is true, because I do not believe that my rendition is always that perfect. But as the client continues to seek my services, it means that they appreciate my performance. (My translation)]

Another participant (Interpreter 6) among those send us a screenshot of a message by Slack, an instant messaging platform, he had received from the client in the form of feedback from the

Accuracy Chief at an organization that uses his services after a call of performance review. In transcribing the message, we decided to withhold the participant's name for confidentiality purposes. The message reads as follows:

Hi [...]! Thanks for your time today! It was nice chatting with you! Here are the notes from our call:

Your interpretations are always clear and precise. We appreciate your months of interpreting for us and trust you. You ask follow-up questions when you need something clarified. You're very flexible and patient when there are connection problems or when we're delayed. You're engaged, responsive and prepare well for your calls.

Two participants did not respond to the question.

Moser-Mercer (2005: 730) emphasizes the importance of feedback in this way:

Feedback processes [...] are crucial to the fast-paced flow of simultaneous interpreting. They are largely responsible for successful semantic anticipation in ongoing discourse without which both the consecutive and simultaneous interpreters' task becomes much more demanding.

4.16 Feeling stressed as a result of interpreting

Responding to the question of whether telephone-mediated interpreting gives rise to stress, three participants said that stress is an inherent aspect of interpreting. They stated that this is because they are always called upon to serve on short notice, without any idea of the content of the planned discussions. One of them pointed out:

My job is no easy task. We are required to know a little bit of everything in all domains. Even at this time when I am responding to this questionnaire, a message may come in that invites me to provide services this afternoon. It makes me feel nervous when I am unaware of the extent of the job that awaits me. (Interpreter 2)

According to Andres and Falk (2009: 21), the state of stress may derive from another aspect of telephone-mediated interpreting, namely: "[...] lack of non-verbal information could lead to an increase in stress for the interpreters as confusion and misunderstandings can have profound implications."

Ko in Andres and Falk (2009: 18), however, seems to disagree with this assertion, arguing that "TI [telephone interpreting] is not necessarily more stressful and demanding than FTFI [face-to-

face interpreting] provided the right equipment is used and the interpreters have sufficient practice.” In this case, two participants prove him right in that they said stress crop up when the interpreter is not well prepared. One of them said:

I have been providing such services [telephone-mediated interpreting] for nearly one year, and today, I cannot feel any stress when interpreting. This is because I always make sure I am briefed before discussions. In case I am not prepared, I ask the client to reschedule the call. (Interpreter 6)

The other four participants confined themselves to assert that telephone interpreting is stressful without giving further details.

4.17 Tools used

All the participants reported using mobile phones, relying on WhatsApp platform, to carry out their job. They say they choose to use WhatsApp, because, they assert, WhatsApp makes it possible for them to hear parties’ sound clearly, and does not consume much data. They added that they choose to use the mobile telephone for it offers the advantage of allowing for taking on assignments anytime wherever they are.

One of the participants responded:

Use of mobile telephone presents an advantage. As you know, telephone interpreting services always come in as a last-minute request. With my mobile telephone on me and Internet connection, I am ready to take on any proposed assignment at any time wherever I am. (Interpreter 8)

As far as the use of mobile phone is concerned, another participant reported:

I initially provided translation services only, but telephone interpreting has later proved to be an opportunity for me as it makes it possible for me to earn some money, using my [mobile] telephone. Otherwise, it would be impossible for me to engage in interpreting. (Interpreter 8)

The advantage of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting has also been confirmed by Andres and Falk (2009:16) as follows: “Telephone interpreting enables interpreters to interpret from any location at any time and thus almost any language spoken in the world is made accessible.”

Two participants added that they are obliged to use headsets with good sound quality to hear clearly. And one of them said:

At the beginning, I had to use my phone without headsets, and could have trouble hearing speakers. Seeing that, I tried to find another telephone to use, thinking that the issue resulted from my phone, but the difficulties persisted. Then I chose to use headsets to see if there would be an improvement. You know, it worked, and difficulties no longer arose. (Interpreter 7)

4.18 Salient challenges

Concerning the challenges, we saw fit to put our study to use, by guiding the participants in connection with the challenges. To make that happen, we provided a list of the most salient challenges as uncovered by some scholars referred to in the chapter on Literature Review. This enabled us to check whether challenges faced by other telephone-mediated interpreters based in various corners of the globe are the same as those faced by Rwanda-based mobile telephone-mediated interpreters. This way, we asked the participants to choose from the four biggest challenges proposed in the questionnaire, asking them to reason their choice. Participants were asked to choose only two challenges. Identified as the greatest challenge was the lack of face-to-face contact, followed by technical problems. The fact of qualifying telephone-mediated interpreting as strenuous work was the least cited aspect of telephone-mediated interpreting.

Choosing from the proposed biggest challenges, one interpreter said:

I have been serving as translator for 10 years, doing various kinds of translations, which helped me gain experience. And back in August 2020, I ventured into interpreting as a result of an online invitation of interested telephone interpreters. However, I was off on the wrong track, because it was something new to me. Nothing is more difficult than two people found in separate spaces. One could speak before the other finished his turn. This was leading me to render incomplete message as I was obliged to take on the utterances of both speakers at the same time. (Interpreter 5)

Another participant explained further:

L'absence de contact visuel affecte la façon dont vous servez, car un jour, j'ai dû servir une personne qui expliquait à une autre comment prendre des photos. Elle expliquait comment utiliser les composantes du triangle d'exposition, en particulier l'ISO, pour prendre de bonnes photos. Il expliquait, en utilisant un appareil photo dans ses mains.

Comme il faisait référence à l'ISO, j'ai pensé qu'il s'agissait d'une des parties d'un appareil photo, et j'ai eu du mal à trouver son équivalent. Cela m'est peut-être arrivé parce que je ne connaissais pas les parties de l'appareil, mais je n'aurais pas confondu l'ISO avec l'une des parties de l'appareil si j'avais vu ses gestes avec ses mains. (Interpreter 9)

[The lack of eye contact affects the way you serve, because one day, I had to serve a person who was explaining to another how to take photos. He was explaining how to use the exposure triangle components, particularly the ISO, to take good photos. He was explaining, using a camera in his hands. As he was referring to ISO, I thought it was one of the parts of a camera, and struggled to find its equivalent. Perhaps this happened to me because I was not familiar with the parts of the camera, but I would not have confused the ISO with one of the parts of the camera if I had seen his gestures with hands. (My translation)]

The experience recounted by both participants substantiates the assertion by Wadensjö (in Ozolins, 2011:38), who states that parties, whether they intend to or not, are forced to speak over one another, adding that “This, in turn, can complicate the telephone interpreter’s interpreting task.” This is also testified by Lee and Newman (1997:33) who state that “remote interpreting is more stressful and draining than on-site work.”

Concerning technical problems, participants raised the issue related to the quality of internet connection which depends on the Internet provider. In this connection, some participants pointed fingers at some internet providers, but we chose to withhold the names of such providers to avoid being accused of pitting people against internet providers.

Talking about technical problems, one of the participants stated:

Tout au début, j'utilisais Internet fourni par [...], mais j'ai par la suite changé et migré vers [...] en raison des problèmes de connexion qui survenaient en raison d'une mauvaise connexion Internet. J'étais toujours obligé de leur demander [aux parties] de répéter pour moi car je ne les entendais pas bien. Après avoir migré, les problèmes ne se sont plus posés. (Interpreter 3)

[I initially used Internet from [...], but I later moved to [...] because of connection issues that could arise from bad Internet connection. I was always obliged to ask them [people involved in conversations] to repeat for me as I could not hear them well. After moving to that one, the issues no longer occurred. (My translation)]

Such technical issues have been raised by most scholars (Mintz 1998; Kelly 2008; Andres and Falk 2009; Ozolins 2011) who agree that, to make it possible for telephone-mediated interpreters

to properly do their job, one aspect is extremely important: the use of technically impeccable equipment. In this regard, Hewitt (1995), Lee and Newman (1997) and Gracia-García state that telephone interpreters face such technical challenges as those related to sound systems and background noise, likely to hamper comprehension.

As to whether telephone interpreting is strenuous, one of the participants replied:

[Telephone interpreting is tiring. This is due to the fact that it is always provided at a last-minute request. This leads you to feel nervous, thus affecting your brain, because it leads to the fear of failure and becomes a burden on it. This is because, you feel you are not prepared, and you do not know whether you are going to succeed. (Interpreter 6)]

The participant’s response supports the assertion of those scholars such as Mouzourakis (2000: 5) who agree that telephone-mediated interpreting is strenuous in that it remains one of the most intense cognitive activities.

In the light of the number of participants who checked some or all of the proposed challenges, it can be assumed that the number of participants having checked the three challenges differs from one challenge to another as shown in the table below:

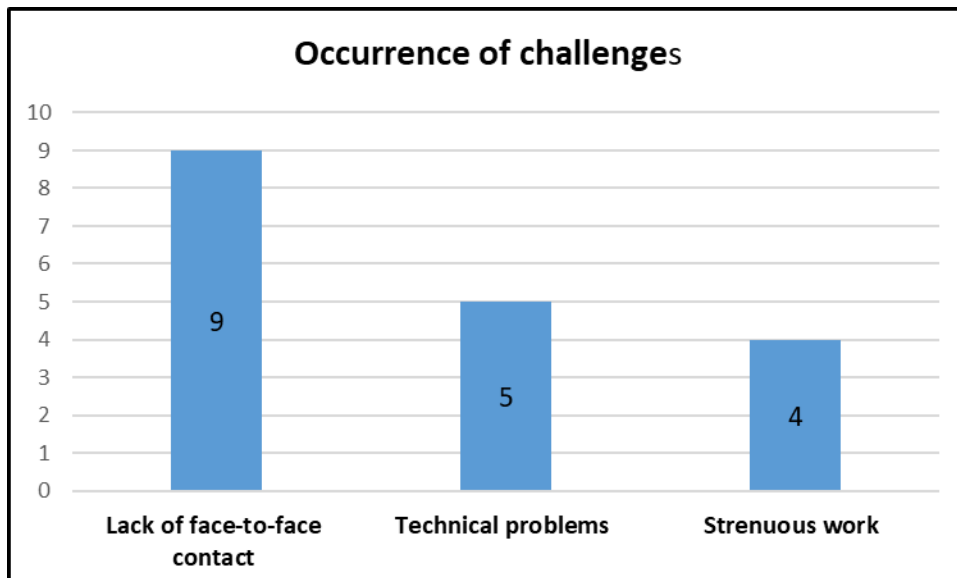
Table 7: Occurrence of challenges

Challenges	No of occurrence
Lack of face-to-face contact	9
Technical problems	5
Strenuous work	4

Source: Field data

The table above shows that lack of face-to-face contact is ranked first among the challenges the participants were asked to check. It seems that lack of visual cues is identified as the biggest challenge because, according to Gracia-García (2002:5), “accuracy can be achieved only if the interpreter has access to visual information.”

Figure 6: Occurrence of challenges



Source: Field data

4.19. Other challenges and proposed solutions

4.19.1 Other challenges

Responding to this question, participants provided different responses, but we choose to focus on the salient ones. We found that some participants repeated the challenges proposed in the question on the biggest challenges.

Asked to share any other challenges faced apart from those they had to choose from, and propose solutions, three participants responded that lack of unfamiliarity with the new mode of interpreting is the biggest challenge they face. Some responded that lack of familiarity results from lack of opportunities to find full-time telephone interpreting jobs. As regards the issue of unfamiliarity, one of the participants replied as follows:

I have been serving as telephone interpreter for very few months. Lack of experience adversely affects my performance. As far as I know, there are no materials available I can read to strengthen my skills in the field. (Interpreter 7)

As concerns, potential solutions to this challenges, one of the three participants responded:

The lack of familiarity can be resolved by experience. There is a need for me to seek various materials that are available today to read them and find out how to handle telephone interpreting. (Interpreter 5)

Another one of the three participants said:

Pour pouvoir interpréter correctement par téléphone, je dois lire très souvent pour comprendre comment les autres interprètes par téléphone résolvent les différents problèmes auxquels ils sont confrontés. J'ai trouvé des documents sur Internet et je continue à les lire pour renforcer mes compétences. (Interpreter 3)

[To be able to do telephone interpreting properly, I need to read very often to understand how other telephone interpreters resolve various challenges they face. I have found some materials from Internet, and I keep reading them to strengthen my skills (My translation)]

One participant noted that lack of training is a major challenge that impedes his performance as follows:

I decided to engage in telephone interpreting following an online invitation to apply. Luckily, however, the company that contacted me to serve taught me how to do the job from technical perspectives. But, I have come to realize that I lack training to improve my skills. I have taught myself, and I need more skills imparted by those experts in telephone interpreting. (Interpreter 1)

Two participants expressed the challenge that arises from the end of those they serve. One of them wrote:

I always provide services to mediate calls between people in DRC, especially in Kisangani. It is rare for the call to run as planned. Those in Kisangani always face connection issues as a result of which sounds do not come out clear. This forces me to constantly ask for repetitions. One day, those who have calls with them questioned my performance to such an extent that they asked those in Kisangani to assess my performance. (Interpreter 2)

4.19.2. Proposed solutions

As concerns potential solutions, all the participants agreed to say that there is a need to get fully prepared, make sure the telephone functions properly, have a good Internet connection, be in a

comfortable and quiet location, take notes and educate those who seek mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services. In the same vein, one participant had this to say:

You know, the only secret is to have a good Internet connection, and be in a comfortable and quiet location. (Interpreter 5)

It appears from this participant's response that telephone-mediated interpreters always need to ensure that they have a suitable equipment and good Internet connection.

Here, we must acknowledge that most of participants did not want to provide more details as it relates to the solutions that can help overcome the challenges they say they face. However, we think it makes a sense to rely on and scrutinize their responses to some of the other questions to draw their points of view which may help propose other solutions.

In that context, responding to the question as to whether telephone-mediated interpreters are briefed ahead of calls, one of the study participants responded as follows:

My clients usually conduct a quarterly review of my performance and always ask me if there are any questions or concerns I can share with them. The very first concern I shared with them is that some reporters I connect them with could fail to provide me with details of discussions ahead of the call. Following this concern, they issued a notice to all reporters that they each have the obligation to let me know what they plan to discuss. So far none of the reporters has followed this call. (Interpreter 5)

As is the case with on-site interpreting, telephone-mediated interpreters need to be given details to succeed in providing services.

As pointed out by the participants, telephone-mediated interpreters, the performance of telephone-mediated interpreter is sometimes stymied by the lack of the opportunity to be briefed ahead of the meeting. In this connection, the mobile telephone-mediated interpreter should make sure that he is given details before providing services. However, this objective cannot be sufficiently achieved by the mobile telephone-mediated interpreter alone, which implies the need to educate those who use his services in order for them to brief the interpreter on the discussions planned before using his services. The onus, in turn, is on the interpreter to fight for this opportunity.

Responding to the question about turn-taking, one participant recounted challenges associated with it, saying:

One day, I had to provide interpreting services in a meeting that involved three persons. One of them was an employee who learnt over the phone that his contract would be terminated. The person did not want to stop talking and continued to talk over his boss. I tried to ask him to pause, but he was unwilling to give way.

In the light of the turn-taking-related challenge, it goes without saying that it is imperative that the telephone-mediated interpreter should acquire skills required to manage turn-taking to shelter from instances where parties may make it difficult for him to perform his job.

With respect to the interruption of the speaker whenever required, one of the participants responded:

I never interrupt the speaker, I always make sure my rendition is coherent so that those I serve cannot think that there is something amiss. Otherwise, nobody can claim that they are able to render all the speakers' words 100 percent. (Interpreter 5)

In consideration of the above response, the obvious solution seems to be that mobile telephone-mediated interpreters have to learn not to be afraid to interrupt any party in case of need, especially when the party does not stop talking, and confirm information with parties.

In light of the participants' responses, it should be noted that no telephone-mediated interpreter is immune from myriads challenges arising as a result of the very nature of this mode of interpreting. However, it is important to note that mobile telephone-mediated interpreters can do something to play a part in overcoming such challenges.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

From the outset, we should make it clear that we have chosen to conduct this study out of the desire to explore the challenges facing telephone-mediated interpreters in Rwanda and look at potential solutions in the face of the challenges raised by the study participants.

The study has shown that Rwanda is home to telephone-mediated interpreters, the majority of whom are males, if we are to believe the result of our sample size. Rwanda-based telephone-mediated interpreters are found in various age brackets, but most of them are in their thirties and forties. As regards qualifications, none of the participants who completed the questionnaire admitted having completed interpreting education, which means that all of them were self-made interpreters. Two participants, however, did not disclose any detail about their qualifications, making it unclear as to whether or not they are qualified interpreters.

As concerns the length of experience, the study has revealed that none of the telephone-mediated interpreters based in Rwanda has more than three years of experience, and the findings have shown the length of experience for them varies between three and ten months. The limited length of experience begs this question: Has the emergence of telephone-mediated interpreting services in Rwanda to do with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic that has resulted in movements restrictions, the consequence of which has led people to have recourse to telephone-mediated interpreting services? With our study being unable to lift the veil from this question, we are of a view that further research can help answer the question.

The study has established that challenges abound much to the chagrin of those who provide telephone-mediated interpreting services in Rwanda. According to the study, most of the challenges facing telephone-mediated interpreters in Rwanda are no different from those facing telephone-mediated interpreters in other parts of the world. Along the same line of reasoning, the study identified major challenges that equally apply to other telephone-mediated interpreters, which can be described as common.

The first challenge which has been identified is the unpredictability of telephone-mediated interpreting, leading those involved in it to fit it in between other commitments to survive, and preventing the professionalization of this mode of interpreting, especially in Rwanda. This is all the more valid since the study has shown that none of the study participants practices it on a full-time basis, which reflects the reality asserted by Crezee et al. (2015) that the income from telephone-mediated interpreting remains unpredictable.

According to the study, the second challenge that is inherent in telephone-mediated interpreting lies in the places from where telephone-mediated interpreters provide services, allowing for flexibility in the provision of such services, but likely causing difficulties for the interpreter in that some factors can interfere with his rendition such as background noise or noise of people around him.

As shown in the study, another challenge relates to hours during which telephone-mediated interpreting services are provided, and most study participants admitted serving at any time of day, even very late at night. However, a fraction of participants revealed that they provide services at predetermined times between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. or 7 p.m., the reason being that, they said, they have contracts that specify times when their services may be required.

The study further shows that another challenge is that of being denied access to details ahead of calls, which prevents the interpreter from having enough time to prepare in advance. According to the study, some parties do not give too much thought to the need to give the interpreter details of discussions well before the call. This has already been asserted in the clearest terms by Gracia-García (2002:14) who states that “Telephone interpreters are often thrown in at the deep end as they do not know what the situation will entail before they pick up the telephone.” The study finds that lack of access to details adversely affects the interpreter’s performance.

The study shows many other challenges faced that include lack of visual information, turn-taking control, interruption of speakers, confirmation with the speaker, causing stress and lack of feedback.

As concerns the lack of visual information, the study reveals that failure to access or use visual information poses some challenges for the interpreter, making his task more difficult. As shown

in the study, such a challenge crops up, especially when parties speak without any pauses, ignoring the presence of the interpreter. This is further asserted by Kelly (2008:37) who says that, unlike their on-site counterparts who can take advantage of visual information and use their gaze to request a break, telephone interpreters must necessarily step in to ask speakers to pause for them to be able to provide a rendition. According to some study participants, however, lack of visual information is not a problem, provided they are given details about the topic to discuss.

As regards the turn-taking control, the study reveals that the interpreter is forced to take on an additional task to ensure turns-at-talk run smoothly and that overlaps are irremediable in telephone-mediated interpreting, because it is an inevitable effect of lack of face-to-face encounter that takes the form of parties speaking over one another.

With respect to interrupting the speaker, the study shows that the need to interrupt the speaker often arises, because of the equipment, especially when connection is bad.

With regard to the confirmation of information with the speaker, it appears from the study that the interpreter sometimes feels compelled to check with the speaker about the correct comprehension of utterances.

As for the stress as a result of telephone-mediated interpreting, the study indicates that stress is an inherent aspect of interpreting as they are always called upon to serve on short notice, without any idea of the content of the planned discussions.

In regard to getting feedback from clients, the study shows that most of parties ignore the need to provide the interpreter with comments to help him improve his work.

As far as the equipment used is concerned, the study shows that all the participants reported using mobile phones, relying on WhatsApp platform, to carry out their job.

As concerns the challenges, the study reveals that the experience recounted by some participants substantiates the assertion by Wadensjö (in Ozolins, 2011:38), who states that parties, whether they intend to or not, are forced to speak over one another, adding that “This, in turn, can complicate the telephone interpreter’s interpreting task.” This is also testified by Lee and

Newman (1997:33) who state that “remote interpreting is more stressful and draining than on-site work.”

As concerns technical problems, participants raised the issue related to the quality of Internet connection which depends on the Internet provider.

As far as other challenges are concerned, the study shows that lack of unfamiliarity with and training on this new mode of interpreting is the biggest challenge facing interpreters.

As regards potential solutions, the study shows that telephone-mediated interpreting requires the interpreter to get fully prepared, make sure the telephone functions properly, have a good Internet connection, be in a comfortable and quiet location and take notes.

5.2. Limitations

There are four aspects that reflect the limitations of this study. Firstly, the study relied on mobile telephone-mediated interpreters’ opinions, which are undoubtedly subjective (Hale & Napier, 2013). Secondly, we had no alternative but to only rely on the questionnaire, which made it impossible for us to establish rapport between the respondents and the researcher in addition to giving rise to a situation where it was difficult for respondents to fully express their opinions and impossible for the research to ask follow-up questions. Thirdly, our study population was very small and, as a result of it, we cannot pretend to have gained a holistic picture of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda, in which cases the findings cannot be generalisable. Lastly, the study only focused on interpreters only, without looking into the views of other parties involved in mobile telephone-mediated interpreting, including users of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services.

5.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations are formulated in response to the findings of our study on telephone-mediated interpreting:

Training of interpreter

Today, telephone-mediated interpreting is gaining ground, thus becoming a field that requires professionalization and which implies various requisites. In this context, we can rely on Kelly (2008: 84) who states that:

Telephone interpreters are essentially working in the absence of sight. Because they cannot process visual cues, professional telephone interpreters are specially trained to work in the absence of such cues. Telephone interpreters rely heavily on auditory information to pick up on many types of non-verbal cues and are trained specifically in listening skills and various techniques that are not covered in great depth by most training programs for on-site interpreters.

As shown in the study, telephone-mediated interpreting demands a set of skills and, as a result, it is desirable that training programs are put in place for the benefit of telephone-mediated interpreters. As some of those already engaged in telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda cannot enrol in the interpreting programs available in Rwanda, local-based interpreting schools should look at ways to offer short courses on telephone-mediated interpreting and/or include telephone-mediated interpreting course in their respective programs and allow people who so wish to enrol as non-degree students in order to take on such a course. And since one of the biggest challenges facing telephone-mediated interpreters lies in the lack of access to visual information, the course must be tailored to help interpreters be able to interpret various speech clues to offset the lack of visual information. This will contribute to the professionalization and standardization of telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda and help telephone-mediated interpreters to strengthen their skills, and make advances in the field.

Education of telephone-mediated interpreting service consumers

The education of users is key to helping telephone-mediated interpreters to succeed, because the very nature of this mode of interpreting is such that the interpreter's performance remains dependent upon users of his services. As the findings show, users of telephone-mediated interpreting services have to play a role in making things easier for the interpreter, especially by briefing the interpreter ahead of the call, and when it comes to the way they need to behave during interactions such as avoiding long turns.

Raising awareness of telephone-mediated interpreting services

As indicated in the responses to the question of who use their services, all of the participants responded that none of their clients is based in Rwanda. This leads us to the clear realization that people in Rwanda have yet to know the existence of telephone interpreting and need to be sensitized not only on its existence, but also on its advantages. People in various settings can benefit from it, particularly those in healthcare settings, because these are places where people with varied linguistic backgrounds turn to seek services, as a result of which they may need interpreting services involving even languages which are not spoken locally. Also, there are other settings where telephone-mediated interpreting can prove to be very useful. These include the immigration and emigration services and many other departments, the services of which are sought by people with different linguistic backgrounds from different parts of the globe.

Conduct of further studies

This study has shed light on the challenges facing Rwanda-based mobile telephone-mediated interpreters in the light of the opinions expressed by a small study population. Further studies are needed to help explore the field of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda, making use of a larger sample. Also, there is a need for such studies to include mobile telephone-mediated interpreting service consumers to pave the way for conducting face-to-face interview to get not only more objective points of view, but also a comprehensive understanding of the practice of mobile telephone-mediated interpreting in Rwanda.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 : QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear participant,

We thank you very much for accepting to take some of your time to complete this questionnaire. Please be advised that this questionnaire is intended for interpreters who provide mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services in Rwanda. This is a short questionnaire that will take you less than 30 minutes of time. However, we would be grateful to you if you could give us detailed responses to those open-ended questions included in it. As you are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic is preventing us from having face-to-face interviews with you, making it impossible for us to collect detailed responses from you. However, we would be grateful to you if you could respond to the questionnaire, giving as much detail possible so much so that you can even offer details which, in your opinion, can be required of you in response to follow-up questions should we have face-to-face interviews with you. This is because, with the field of telephone interpreting being still very much in its infancy in Rwanda, your detailed responses will help lay the foundation for further research for your benefit and for that of others interested in it. Also, your choice to complete the question is taken as a clear indication of your consent to participate in this study. We highly appreciate your consent to complete the questionnaire.

A. Interpreter's details

1. Please underline your age bracket and gender as appropriate:

A. 1. 20-29 2. 30-39 3. 40-49 4. 50 and over

B. 1. Male 2. Female

B. Telephone-mediated interpreting practice

2. Do you have a qualification in interpreting?

3. How long have you been serving as mobile telephone-mediated interpreter?

4. How often do you provide telephone-mediated interpreting services?

5. Which places do you use to provide mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services?
Can you recount any experience you once gone through using any such a place to provide such services?

6. What are the hours during which you often provide mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services?

7. Are you briefed ahead of calls? If no, why?

8. Who are the users of your mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services? Are they locally-based or from countries other than Rwanda?

9. What are the challenges you face as a result of lack of visual information?

10. How do you cope with turn-taking?

11. Do you interrupt the speaker if you fail to follow what is said? If yes or no, why?

12. Do you ever confirm information with the speaker where necessary? If yes or no, why?

13. Do you get feedbacks from clients? Please explain.

14. Do you ever feel stressed when interpreting?

15. What equipment do you use to provide mobile telephone-mediated interpreting services?

16. What do you think are the most challenges you face as a mobile telephone-mediated interpreter? (Check only two). Why?

- a. Lack of visual clues
- b. Material for preparation
- c. Managing turn-taking
- d. Technical problems

17. What are the other challenges, if any, you face as a telephone-mediated interpreter apart from those listed above?

Thank you again for your time.