



Personal and Professional Ethics in Interpreting: Conflict or Harmony?

Saleh M. Al-Salman

Arab Open University & University of Jordan

Abstract

This article explores the conflict between the personal and the professional modes of ethics in professional interpreting. The parameters against which an interpreter's performance may be judged as ethical or otherwise include: accuracy, confidentiality, impartiality/objectivity, accountability, and integrity. Theoretically, professional interpreters are assumed to mediate between the source and target languages without real or potential conflict of interest that may adversely affect the delivery of their services. To examine this question, the data analyzed in this article were collected through a questionnaire, a review of tape scripts of interpreted materials, and personal interviews with interpreters. 35 professional interpreters, both consecutive and simultaneous, contributed. The analysis indicates that the personal mode of ethics is often triggered by ethnic, nationalistic, political, or ideological considerations. Adherence to the professional mode of ethics, on the other hand, is demonstrated in subduing the personal mode in favour of the established ethical values of the profession as intercultural mediation.

Keywords: ethics, interpreting, conflict, harmony, accountability, confidentiality, impartiality, integrity.

Introduction

The professional judgment of some groups seems to have been influenced by the complex nature of current world affairs, which have impacted their choices. For example, lawyers, journalists, news reporters, arbitrators, among others, are prone to indirectly engage in international conflicts which may have some bearing on their own judgments, contrary to the prescribed code of professional ethics governing the professional practices of the group members (cf. Al-Salman, 2008; Desjardins, 2003; Robinson, 2002).

The present study focuses on the profession of interpreting to probe into the nature of the conflict between the two modes of ethics, professional and personal. The paper investigates how a possible conflict can impede the flow of accurate and reliable output in the work of professional interpreters. This requires identifying the parameters against which an interpreter's input may be judged as ethically sound. Such parameters include, but are not limited to: (1) accuracy, (2) confidentiality, (3) impartiality/objectivity, (4) accountability, and (5) integrity. The paper shows that unlike “unaccredited/uncertified” interpreters, the “accredited/certified” group tends to abide by the above criteria without noticeable faltering.

Professional competence in interpreting presupposes accuracy and faithfulness in rendering the source language (SL) text. Likewise, integrity thrives on impartiality, non-discrimination, honesty and professional commitment in all professional practices. As such, interpreters ought to avoid any real or potential conflict of interest that may adversely affect the delivery of their services.

2. Hypotheses

This paper tests and validates the following set of hypotheses against the two independent variables of (1) accreditation/certification, and (2) professional experience.

- 2.1 As a rule, interpreters -- regardless of their political, ethnic, or ideological background-- are fully committed to their code of professional ethics.
- 2.2 Some interpreters are prone to give precedence to personal ethics and resulting gains, material or otherwise, over professional ethics.

2.3 The professional code of ethics comes first, but in matters of personal, national, and ideological considerations, conflict between the two modes is likely to surface.

2.4 There is a positive correlation between the interpreters' "accreditation" and "professional experience" on the one hand, and their adherence to the code of ethics on the other.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample

A sample of 35 professional interpreters contributed to this study. The subjects were selected largely from members of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC), representing many countries in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the Americas, and were involved in different modes of interpreting, consecutive and simultaneous, in different contexts and situations. Each respondent was contacted directly by the author via e-mail, (see Appendix).

3.2. Corpus

The data were collected through a three-way method, comprising: (1) a questionnaire, (2) reviewing tape scripts of interpreted materials, and (3) face-to-face interviews, or on-line discussions with interpreters.

4. Data Analysis

The corpus of data was analyzed according to the participants' three-way responses of: (Agree, Disagree, and Undecided), elicited through the 15-item questionnaire. Two types of variables were identified: **(A)** dependent, including: (1) accuracy, (2) confidentiality, (3) impartiality/objectivity, (4) accountability, (5) integrity, and **(B)** independent variables, including: (1) accreditation/certification: accredited/certified vs. unaccredited/uncertified, and (2) experience: 1-5 years, or 6 + years.

To validate and verify the data collected from the questionnaire responses, the second method of data collection was implemented. This involved reviewing samples of audio/video recordings of relevant tasks performed by interpreters.

The face-to-face interviews and on-line discussions were only applied in cases of inconsistency in the input obtained from the first and second methods of data collection.

In tabulating the responses, each of the 5 dependent variables was checked against a 3-way scale of: **A**= “Agree”, **D**= “Disagree”, and **U**= “Undecided”. To perform statistical analysis, the response options for the questionnaire items were coded in numeric values: “Agree”= 1, “Disagree”= 2, and “Undecided” = 3. On the other hand, the two independent variables were coded as: “accredited” = 1, and “unaccredited” = 2; whereas the “experience” variable was coded as: (1-5 yrs.) = 1, and (6+ yrs.) = 2.

The model answers for the fifteen questions were based on the responses acknowledged by the professional code of ethics for interpreters, (see Appendix).

The data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 'SPSS' (Sleiger and Shohamy, 2001), utilizing the following tests:

4.1 Descriptive tests:

4.1.1 Frequencies

4.1.2 Percentages

4.2 Analytical tests:

4. 2.1 Independent Sample T-test

4. 2.2 Kruskal-Wallice, non-parametric test

4. 2.3 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

4. 2.4 Chi-Square with cross-tabulation

5. Results

The results were obtained after a rigorous analysis of the data. Two types of results were actualized: (1) descriptive results, and (2) analytical results.

5.1. Descriptive Analysis

A descriptive analysis of the “independent” and “dependent” variables is given in the tables below.

5.1.1 Independent variables

Table 1: The frequency and percentages for the independent variables

Variable		Frequency	%
Accreditation	yes	21	60.0
	no	14	40.0
	total	35	100.0
Experience	1-5 years	7	20.0
	6+ years	28	80.0
	total	35	100.0

The results obtained from Table 1 show that 60% of the respondents were accredited/certified by international professional interpreting organizations or associations. Incidentally, these associations are:

1. The International Association of Court Interpreters (AIIC)
2. The Argentine Association of Conference Interpreters (ADICA)
3. Australian Association of Certified Court Interpreters (ACCI)
4. National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)
5. Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario, (ATIO), Canada

6. Italian Association of Translators and Interpreters, (AITI), Italy
7. The California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA), USA
8. American Translators Association (ATA)
9. The National Association of Judiciary Court Interpreters (NAJIT)
10. Massachusetts Medical Interpreters Association (MMIA), USA
11. The Association of Translators and Interpreters of Alberta (ATIA), Canada
12. Argentine Association of Translators and Interpreters (AATI)

On the other hand, the results have also shown that 40% of the respondents were unaccredited. With regard to professional experience, 80% of the subjects had 6 or more years of experience, compared to 20% with 1-5 years.

5.1.2 Dependent Variables

The data were checked against five independent variables. These are: (a) accuracy, (b) confidentiality, (c) objectivity/impartiality, (d) accountability, and (e) integrity (Al-Salman, 2008).

5.1.2. a Accuracy

A faithful rendering of the SL speech into the TL requires accurate transfer of the content of the message in terms of: purpose, tone, style, and spirit. This entails conveying all aspects of the original message without distortion by adding, omitting, condensing, or changing anything (cf. Al-Salman, 2008).

Table 2: The frequency and percentages for the "Accuracy" items

Item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	35	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	35	100.0
2	2	5.7	3	8.6	30	85.7	35	100.0
3	2	5.7	4	11.4	29	82.9	35	100.0

Table 2 shows that all the respondents recognize that an interpreter should be always accurate in rendering the TL meaning. In addition, 85.7% of the respondents were against the claim that the interpreter's degree of accuracy is influenced by his/her personal tendencies and interests, whereas 8.6% of them were “undecided”, and 5.7% “agreed”. Furthermore, 82.9% of the respondents refused to compromise accuracy in their interpreting even if their political party was involved in a conflict, whereas 11.4% were “undecided” and 5.7% agreed

5.1.2. b Confidentiality

Confidentiality is defined as the non-disclosure of information acquired in the act of interpreting, and not taking personal advantage from confidential information gained in the course of professional service (cf. Al-Salman, 2007, 2008).

Table 3: The frequency and percentages for the "Confidentiality" items

Item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
4	35	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	35	100.0
5	5	14.3	7	20.0	23	65.7	35	100.0
6	2	5.7	0	0.0	33	94.3	35	100.0

The results show that the respondents realize that all information related to interpreting assignments should be kept secret. On the other hand, 65.7% of the respondents rejected the notion that an interpreter may disclose information that will serve the interest of his/her ethnic, sectarian, or political affiliation, with 20% “undecided” and 14.3% in favor. In addition, 94.3% of the sample members were found to disagree that “it is not considered unethical to share secret information with clients”, while 5.7% agreed.

5.1.2. c Objectivity/**Impartiality**

Objectivity, in the act of interpreting, denotes that interpreters shall not allow personal bias, favoritism, or any other subjective considerations to interfere with their ability to interpret accurately. (cf. Humphrey, 1999; Al-Salman, 2008).

Table 4: The frequency and percentages for the "Objectivity" items

Item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
7	6	17.1	5	14.3	24	68.6	35	100.0
8	7	20.0	8	22.9	20	57.1	35	100.0
9	10	28.6	8	22.9	17	48.6	35	100.0

Table 4 shows that 68.6% of the respondents rejected the idea that interpreters may be biased and therefore take sides in matters endangering their national identity. On the other hand, 14.3% were found to be 'undecided', and 17.1% agreed. Furthermore, 57% of the subjects denied that cases of armed conflict can affect an interpreter's handling of an interpreting assignment by injecting personal views, whereas 22.9% were "undecided", and 20.8% were in favor. Moreover, 48.6% of the sample members were against the idea that the interpreter's ideological tendencies may interfere with his/her value judgements in the interpreting process, while 28.6% were supportive, and 22.9% "undecided".

5.1.2. d **Accountability**

As a rule, an interpreter is held accountable and shall accept full responsibility for any actions or decisions taken in the event of providing quality professional service.

Table 5: The frequency and percentages for the "Accountability" items

Item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
10	31	88.6	2	5.7	2	5.7	35	100.0
11	7	20.0	7	20.0	21	60.0	35	100.0
12	3	8.6	1	2.9	31	88.6	35	100.0

The results show that 88.6% of the respondents acknowledged that an interpreter shall accept responsibility for all kinds of erroneous rendering of the SL speech into TL, but 5.75% of were to “disagree” and 5.7% were “undecided”. Moreover, 60% of the respondents did not approve that “during interpreting, interpreters may make decisions which coincide with their personal needs regardless of compliance with the professional code of conduct”, while 20% were supportive, and the other 20% were “undecided”. Furthermore, 88.6% of the respondents did not accept that “in cases involving human rights victims or asylum seekers, an interpreter's rendering is usually supportive of those groups”, but 8.6% were in favor, and 2.9% “undecided.”

5.1.2. e Integrity

Integrity refers to an interpreter's personal traits of honesty, moral soundness, and commitment, which stand in the face of bias or prejudice triggered by any personal or group interests or hidden agendas (cf. Shaw and Barry, 2004).

Table 6: The frequency and percentages for the "Integrity" items

Item	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
13	29	82.9	2	5.7	4	11.4	35	100.0
14	22	62.9	7	20.0	6	17.1	35	100.0
15	15	42.9	12	34.3	8	22.9	35	100.0

Table 6 shows that 82.9% of the respondents agreed that “an interpreter is required to deal honestly and fairly with all customers and colleagues regardless of his/her personal beliefs, ethnic or political affiliation”. However, 11.4% were found to “disagree” and 5.7% were “undecided”. Moreover, 62.9% of the sample members agreed that “an interpreter shall always candidly disclose all conflicts of interest when accepting interpreting assignments”, with 20% “undecided” and 17.1% against. Furthermore, 42.9% of the respondents reported that, in an interpreting assignment, if they happen to be in a delicate situation whereby a compromise is needed”, they will most likely abandon their personal ethics in favor of professional ethics, but 34.3% were “undecided” and 22.9% disagreed.

5.2 Analytical Results

Table 7: The (T-test) results for the differences due to accreditation

Variable	Accredited	number	mean	Std. dev.	T- value	Sig.	K.W. sig.
Accuracy	Yes	14	2.71	0.366	-2.291	0.036*	0.018*
	No	21	2.95	0.159			
Confidentiality	Yes	14	2.52	0.428	-3.986	0.001*	0.000*
	No	21	2.98	0.073			
Objectivity	Yes	14	1.81	0.595	-4.726	0.000*	0.000*
	No	21	2.73	0.544			
Accountability	Yes	14	2.45	0.426	-2.860	0.007*	0.002*
	No	24	2.83	0.344			
Integrity	Yes	14	2.10	0.605	-3.584	0.001*	0.002*
	No	21	2.70	0.393			

* significant

5.2.1 The results of the T-test show that there are statistically significant differences according to the independent variable of “accreditation” in favor of the accredited group in all five dependent variables. Likewise, the Kruskal-Wallis test, a non-parametric test, confirms the results of the T-test. This means that the “accredited” group of the sample tends to reflect idealism in interpreting more than the “unaccredited” one.

Table 8: The (T-test) and Kruskal-Wallis results for the differences due to experience

Variable	experience	number	mean	Std. dev.	T- value	Sig.	K.W. sig.
Accuracy	1-5 years	7	2.62	0.405	-1.879	0.103	0.014*
	6+ years	28	2.92	0.215			
Confidentiality	1-5 years	7	2.43	0.371	-3.608	0.001*	0.000*
	6+ years	28	2.89	0.288			
Objectivity	1-5 years	7	1.81	0.539	-2.426	0.021*	0.013*
	6+ years	28	2.50	0.699			
Accountability	1-5 years	7	2.38	0.448	-2.217	0.034*	0.024*
	6+ years	28	2.75	0.381			
Integrity	1-5 years	7	2.00	0.609	-2.578	0.015*	0.019*
	6+ years	28	2.57	0.504			

* significant

5.2.2 **The** T-test reveals statistically significant differences in favor of experience (6+ years) as an independent variable. A positive correlation was reflected in four of the five dependent variables, excluding “accuracy”. However, the Kruskal-Wallis test shows that there are significant differences in all five dependent variables. This means that interpreters with 6+ years of professional experience tend to reflect a higher degree of idealism than those with 1-5 years.

Table 9: The correlation coefficient between the dependent variables

	Accuracy	Confidentiality	Objectivity	Accountability	Integrity
Accuracy	-				
Confidentiality	0.651 0.000*	-			
Objectivity	0.725 0.000*	0.612 0.000*	-		
Accountability	0.649 0.000*	0.612 0.000*	0.773 0.000*	-	
Integrity	0.582 0.000*	0.583 0.000*	0.672 0.000*	0.647 0.000*	-

* significant

5.2.3. The correlation co-efficient results show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the dependant variables of the questionnaire.

Table 10: The cross-tabulation for the accreditation*experience

		Experience		total	Person Chi-square	Sig.
		1-5 years	6+ years			
Accreditation	No	7	7	14	13.125	0.000*
	Yes	0	21	21		
	total	7	28	35		

* significant

5.2.4. The Chi-Square test shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the two independent variables of “accreditation” and “experience”.

After tabulating and analyzing the questionnaire results, the second step was to validate them. This process entailed retrieving the audio/video recordings of relevant interpreting tasks performed by some of the sample interpreters. This measure targeted only interpreting tasks done from English into Arabic or vice versa, and particularly those participants: (1) without accreditation, and (2) with minimum experience. Interestingly enough, the results showed that all 21 “accredited/certified” interpreters were “experienced” as well. However, another 7 were “well-experienced” but “uncertified”, and the other 7 were “accredited” but with “limited experience”.

On listening to the recordings of the less privileged group of the “unaccredited” and “less experienced” interpreters, cases of inaccurate rendering were identified. This was due to adopting ill-chosen interpreting strategies resulting in instances of *omission, substitution, and distortion* of the intended meaning. Apparently, in most of the cases, the ear-voice-span (EVS) was poorly utilized. In addition, the interpreters failed to cope with the speaker due to hesitations and false starts, ending up with failure to render proper TL equivalents. Also, some of the omissions reflected insufficient familiarity with subject area, which may be attributed to the lack of experience and adequate professional training.

The third method of data collection was conducted through face-to-face interviews and on-line discussions in cases of inconsistency in the feedback obtained from the first and second methods of data collection outlined above. For example, three of the “accredited/certified” interpreters gave deviant responses on some of the questionnaire items, while showing near-perfect performance in their interpreting assignment. On conducting the on-line dialogue with the target interpreters, they reported that they are well aware of the responsibilities of a successful interpreter, having themselves been certified and experienced interpreters. However, to be transparent enough in responding to the questionnaire items presented to them, they gave responses consistent with their personal conventions, beliefs and attitudes, contrary to the provisions of the professional code of ethics for interpreters. As they themselves, their people, and nations were the victims of ethnic cleansing, discrimination, and persecution, they were prepared to see things differently when it comes to endangering or impinging on their own ideological, ethnic or sectarian affiliation. From their vantage point of view, such unfortunate circumstances make them identify with some cases of armed conflict, oppression, and issues

pertaining to human rights and asylum seekers. As some of the interpreters put it, some separatist movements calling for independence, freedom, national liberation and self-rule are not necessarily aggressive, and, therefore, should not be categorically labeled as stigmatized or outlawed. In their opinion, immigrants fleeing their countries following acts of violence, ethnic cleansing, persecution, poverty and hunger are not necessarily law-breakers, but are victims of armed conflicts. They added that such groups should be treated as humanitarian cases emerging in the aftermath of unjustified wars, and, therefore, should be embraced by the UN and its specialized organizations under the chapter of human rights maintenance. In few cases, however, interpreters' violations were triggered by material interests and personal gains which, in their opinion, warrant non-compliance with the code of ethics.

6. Discussion of Results

The results show that the findings of the present study are not necessarily consistent with the research hypotheses outlined in 2.1-2.4 above. In other words, some of the prescribed hypotheses, viz. 2.1, proved to be incongruent with the results. For example, the professional code of ethics for interpreters stipulates that interpreting, as a highly sophisticated, demanding, and transparent process, demands interpreters to ensure quality of service for all parties involved. This requires all members of the profession to abide by the code of professional rights and responsibilities governing the rendering of services characterized by accuracy, confidentiality, impartiality, accountability, and integrity, among others (Al-Salman, 2008).

Contrary to this premise, the results did not confirm the first hypothesis (2.1) stating that "interpreters, regardless of their political, ethnic, or political background, are fully committed to their code of professional ethics." For example, the fact that 11.4% of the respondents were identified as "undecided" and 5.7% of them "agreed" to compromise accuracy in their interpreting is quite revealing. Other interpreters, shocked by the thought of a possible breach of the code, denounced such practices by saying, "it is far from easy, especially for a person with strong conventions and ideals". The results pertaining to the questions on "objectivity/impartiality" came more surprising when 14.3% were found to be "undecided", and 17.1% were to "agree" that an interpreter may be biased and therefore take sides in matters endangering his/her national identity and/or ideological tendencies, when only 48.65% of the

respondents agreed to the contrary. Another major blow was leveled when 40% of the respondents were equally divided between “agree” and “undecided” on the question: “Interpreters may make decisions which satisfy their personal needs regardless of compliance with the professional code of conduct”. And when the question of: “interpreting in cases involving human rights victims or asylum seekers” was addressed, some responses -- 8.6% “agree” and 2.9% “undecided”-- were supportive of those groups regardless of the provisions of the code. With regard to the interpreter’s “integrity” in handling interpreting assignments regardless of the interpreter’s beliefs, ethnic or political affiliation, again, the results did not reflect strict adherence to the prescribed code of ethics, when 20% were “undecided” and 17.1% “disagreed” that “interpreters shall always candidly disclose all conflicts of interest when accepting interpreting assignments.” Above all, the results reflected an even more assertive trend of disapproval when only 42.9% of the respondents confirmed that any compromise between personal and professional ethics is rejected, whereas 34.3% were “undecided” and 22.9% were ready to abandon professional ethics in favor of personal ethics.

The results are partly indicative of a trend which sets the stage for splitting away from the professional code of ethics for interpreters. This provides clear evidence that less than perfect responses, in varying degrees, have been recorded in all 15 items of the questionnaire. Such results lend support to hypothesis 2.2 which states that: “some interpreters are prone to give priority to personal ethics and resulting gains, material or otherwise, at the expense of professional ethics.” Similarly, the results are consistent with hypothesis 2.3 which reads: “The professional code of ethics comes first, but in matters of personal, national, and ideological considerations, conflict between professional and personal ethics may arise”.

The results were, however, strongly supportive of the role of the independent variables of “accreditation/certification” and “professional experience” in affecting the interpreter’s attitudes and reactions. This enforces the thesis expressed in hypothesis 2.4 that: “there is a positive correlation between the interpreters’ “accreditation” and “professional experience”, on the one hand, and their adherence to the code of ethics on the other. Interestingly enough, hypothesis 2.4 --emphasizing the role of the independent variables-- proved to be “statistically significant” by the results of the two tests, namely the T-test and the Kruskal-Wallice test.

The results have also shown clearly that, in theory, interpreters realize that full adherence to the professional code of ethics is a priority. For example, in her response to item 15 of the questionnaire stating: "During an interpreting assignment, if I happen to be in a delicate situation whereby a compromise is needed, I will most likely abandon my personal ethics in favor of professional ethics," a lady respondent coupled her "agree" response with the following comment: "I try to have compatible ethics. I don't believe that professional ethics are any different from personal ethics; otherwise, I would be in the wrong place. If what I do professionally is not compatible with my personal ethics, I might as well opt another trade."

The tendency to show more commitment to the professional code of ethics was ascertained by the category of interpreters who were labeled as: "accredited/certified" and/or "more experienced". This being the case, interpreting organizations and firms are called upon to adopt a recruitment policy whereby only "certified" interpreters may be tasked with an interpreting assignment. In other words, a formal evidence of "certification/accreditation" from an internationally recognized interpreting association, institution, or agency should be secured. Consequently, in order to guarantee quality interpreting consistent with the professional code of ethics, interpreting organizations are advised to recruit interpreters who are (a) accredited/certified, and (2) more experienced. It should be noted, however, that in a few cases where "accreditation" and "experience" have been satisfied, deviant responses were still detected. Such cases were motivated by bias or prejudice emanating from the individual interpreter's intrinsic and personalized value judgements and therefore reflecting poor adherence to the values of objectivity, accountability, and integrity.

At another level, the face-to-face interviews showed that:

- 1) Some "unaccredited" interpreters were not fully aware of the details of the professional code of ethics and thus may violate it unknowingly.
- 2). Some interpreters, especially the "unaccredited" and/or with "limited experience", did not have the right qualifications, i.e., a degree in interpreting. They also did not receive formal training in specialized institutions or translation agencies, but happened to make it

on their own through work experience as translators and not necessarily as professional interpreters.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The present piece of research sends a clear message to the interpreting circles: companies, organizations, associations and agencies, warning them against possible malpractices in the rendering of interpreting services. Three categories of consecutive and simultaneous interpreters have been identified: (1) “accredited/certified”, with adequate training, experience and expertise, enabling them to render interpreting services with professionalism, transparency, responsibility and integrity, and (2) unaccredited, and with limited work experience, seeking to trespass on the realm of interpreting without proper academic qualifications and professional training, and (3) qualified interpreters, with adequate professional training and certification, but not fully cognizant of and compliant with the code of ethics due to their personal involvement or sensitivity to matters linked to their ethnic, ideological, or political background.

The results reflected the orientation of each of the three groups, signaling traces of conflict between personal and professional ethics in interpreting. It was clear, however, that group 1 interpreters, with high qualifications and commitment, were able to draw a line between the two modes of ethics which are mutually exclusive. Being strictly guided by non-personalized and highly recognized ethical values, this group of interpreters demonstrated strict adherence to professional ethics. However, the other two groups (2 and 3), showed less commitment and adherence to the code, either due to poor qualifications and experience, as in group 2 interpreters, or else being motivated by personal interests, material or otherwise, as in group 3.

But if the author is to have a say in the matter, then he is of the opinion that under no circumstances should the professional code of ethics of interpreters be breached or violated. No matter what the rationale is, an interpreter should always be neutral, fully cognizant of and strictly adhering to the prescribed code of ethics regardless of narrow personal or group interests. Interpreters should avoid any real or potential conflict of interest that may adversely affect the delivery of their services (see model responses to the questionnaire items in the appendix).

In order to curb the malpractices of the less privileged group of interpreters, and in an effort to bridge this gap, we recommend the following:

- a) subjecting all interpreters to rigorous theoretical and practical training through formal education and course work in specialized academic institutions.
- b) applying strict measures on exit exams and graduation requirements for certified/accredited interpreters.
- c) demanding all interpreters to furnish evidence of formal certification/accreditation from internationally recognized interpreting institutions, associations, or agencies.

To conclude, the findings of the present research indicate that personal and professional ethics in the profession of interpreting may witness cases of conflict rather than total harmony. Efforts should be made to help implement the recommendations outlined above.

About the author

Saleh M. Al-Salman is a Professor of theoretical/historical linguistics and translation at the University of Jordan. He holds a Ph.D. in linguistics from State University of New York at Buffalo, 1981. He is currently the Director of the English Language Unit at the Arab Open University (Headquarters) in Kuwait.

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Appendix

(Questionnaire)

I.	Independent Variables
1.	<p>Are you “accredited/certified” by an official interpreting organization, association, agency? Yes _____; No _____. If yes, please name the organization.</p>
2.	<p>Years of professional experience: 1-5 years ____; more than 5 years ____.</p>
II	Dependent Variables
A)	Accuracy:
1.	<p>An interpreter should be always accurate in rendering the TL meaning.</p> <p>Model Answer: Agree: A</p>
2.	<p>The interpreter’s degree of accuracy is affected by his/her personal tendencies and interests.</p> <p>Model Answer: Disagree: D</p>

<p>3.</p>	<p>I am inclined to compromise accuracy in my interpreting if my political party is involved in a conflict.</p> <p>Model Answer: Disagree: D</p>
<p>B)</p>	<p>Confidentiality</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>All information related to interpreting assignments should be kept secret.</p> <p>Model Answer: Agree: A</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>An interpreter may disclose information that will serve the interest of his/her ethnic, sectarian, or political affiliation.</p> <p>Model Answer: Disagree: D</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>It is not considered unethical to share secret information with clients.</p> <p>Model Answer: Disagree: D</p>
<p>C)</p>	<p>Objectivity/Impartiality</p>

<p>7.</p>	<p>An interpreter may be biased and therefore take sides in matters endangering his/her national identity.</p> <p>Model Answer: Disagree: D</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Cases of armed conflict can affect an interpreter’s handling of an interpreting assignment by injecting personal views.</p> <p>Model Answer: Disagree: D</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>The interpreter’s ideological tendencies may interfere with his/her value judgments in the interpreting process.</p> <p>Model Answer: Disagree: D</p>
<p>D)</p>	<p>Accountability</p>

<p>10.</p>	<p>An interpreter shall accept responsibility for all kinds of erroneous rendering of the SL speech into TL.</p> <p>Model Answer: Agree: A</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>During interpreting assignments, interpreters may make decisions which satisfy their personal needs regardless of compliance with the professional code of conduct.</p> <p>Model Answer: Disagree: D</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>When interpreting in cases involving human rights victims or asylum seekers, an interpreter’s rendering is usually supportive of those groups.</p> <p>Model Answer: Disagree: D</p>
<p>E)</p>	<p>Integrity</p>

13.	<p>An interpreter is required to deal honestly and fairly with all consumers and colleagues regardless of his personal beliefs, ethnic or political affiliation.</p> <p>Model Answer: Agree: A</p>
14.	<p>An interpreter shall always candidly disclose all conflicts of interest when accepting interpreting assignments.</p> <p>Model Answer: Agree: A</p>
15.	<p>During an interpreting assignment, if I happen to be in a delicate situation whereby a compromise is needed, I will most likely abandon my personal ethics in favor of professional ethics.</p> <p>Model Answer: Agree: A</p>