

BENJAMINS

■
TRANSLATION

Be(com)ing
a Conference
Interpreter

*An ethnography of EU interpreters
as a professional community*

Veerle Duflou

■ LIBRARY

Be(com)ing a Conference Interpreter

Benjamins Translation Library (BTL)

ISSN 0929-7316

The Benjamins Translation Library (BTL) aims to stimulate research and training in Translation & Interpreting Studies – taken very broadly to encompass the many different forms and manifestations of translational phenomena, among them cultural translation, localization, adaptation, literary translation, specialized translation, audiovisual translation, audio-description, transcreation, transediting, conference interpreting, and interpreting in community settings in the spoken and signed modalities.

For an overview of all books published in this series, please see
www.benjamins.com/catalog/btl

EST Subseries

The European Society for Translation Studies (EST) Subseries is a publication channel within the Library to optimize EST's function as a forum for the translation and interpreting research community. It promotes new trends in research, gives more visibility to young scholars' work, publicizes new research methods, makes available documents from EST, and reissues classical works in translation studies which do not exist in English or which are now out of print.

General Editor

Yves Gambier
University of Turku

Associate Editor

Franz Pöchhacker
University of Vienna

Honorary Editor

Gideon Toury
Tel Aviv University

Advisory Board

Rosemary Arrojo
Binghamton University

Michael Cronin
Dublin City University

Dirk Delabastita
FUNDP (University of Namur)

Daniel Gile
Université Paris 3 - Sorbonne
Nouvelle

Amparo Hurtado Albir
Universitat Autònoma de
Barcelona

Zuzana Jettmarová
Charles University of Prague

Alet Kruger
UNISA, South Africa

John Milton
University of São Paulo

Anthony Pym
Universitat Rovira i Virgili

Rosa Rabadán
University of León

Sherry Simon
Concordia University

Şehnaz Tahir Gürçaglar
Bogaziçi University

Maria Tymoczko
University of Massachusetts
Amherst

Lawrence Venuti
Temple University

Michaela Wolf
University of Graz

Volume 124

Be(com)ing a Conference Interpreter

An ethnography of EU interpreters as a professional community
by Veerle Duflou

Be(com)ing a Conference Interpreter

An ethnography of EU interpreters
as a professional community

Veerle Duflou
Ghent University

John Benjamins Publishing Company
Amsterdam / Philadelphia



The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

DOI 10.1075/btl.124

**Cataloging-in-Publication Data available from Library of Congress:
LCCN 2016009021 (PRINT) / 2016010781 (E-BOOK)**

ISBN 978 90 272 5870 0 (HB)

ISBN 978 90 272 6705 4 (E-BOOK)

© 2016 – John Benjamins B.V.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by print, photoprint, microfilm, or any other means, without written permission from the publisher.

John Benjamins Publishing Company · <https://benjamins.com>

*This book is dedicated to the love and memory of
Valère Van Gerrewey.*

He was my companion and friend for almost twenty years and enabled my research by taking care of our household and innumerable practical matters in the years it took me to complete it. His unwavering interest and belief in the wonders of science, even during his terminal illness, were a source of inspiration and encouragement. By example he taught me to listen better and look more closely and to always keep marveling at the world we live in.

Table of contents

Acknowledgements	XIII
List of abbreviations	XV
List of tables	XVI
List of figures	XVIII
Executive summary	XX
 Part 1. Introduction	
Vignette 1. Before the meeting	3
 CHAPTER 1	
Situating the study	8
1.1 Exploring the gap: What does it take to be(come) a professional conference interpreter? 8	
1.2 Conference interpreting: A practice 11	
1.3 Studying what interpreters do 13	
1.4 EU interpreters: A professional community 15	
1.5 Being and becoming: From newcomer to full member of a community of practice 18	
1.6 Ethnography: A multi-faceted investigative approach 22	
1.6.1 Ethnography: A methodological toolbox 23	
1.6.2 Ethnography and theory 26	
1.6.3 Ethnography: A non-linear research process 28	
1.6.4 Ethnography: 'A tale from the field' 29	
1.6.5 Ethnography: Engagement with a community 30	
1.7 Structure of the book 33	
Vignette 2. Be(com)ing a practisearcher	35
 CHAPTER 2	
Collecting and analyzing ethnographic data: Listening to behaviour, watching knowledge	44
2.1 Ensuring the quality of interview data 44	
2.1.1 Selecting candidates for interviewing 44	
2.1.2 Recruiting interviewees 47	

- 2.1.3 Conducting interviews among interpreters: From trying to trace the chronology of socialization to enquiring into the nature of situated learning 49
 - 2.1.3.1 Being an 'active' interviewer 50
 - 2.1.3.2 Being an 'emic' interviewer: Managing preconceptions, bias and reactivity 57
 - 2.1.3.3 Creating 'space' for interviewees 58
 - 2.1.3.4 Ensuring a shared framework for interaction: The research interview as a discursive genre 59
 - 2.1.3.5 The interviewer-interviewee relationship: About roles & power 59
- 2.1.4 The truth status of interview data 61
- 2.2 Analyzing interview data 62
 - 2.2.1 Entextualizing dialogic interaction: Transcription as a first analytical step 62
 - 2.2.2 'What's this about?': Thematic coding 65
 - 2.2.3 'What's happening here?': The interview as speech activity 69
 - 2.2.4 Narratives and metaphors 71
- 2.3 Observing practice: Watching knowledge in action 71
- 2.4 EU interpreters' practice reified: Documents as reference points for action and discourse 74
- 2.5 Presenting data 75
- 2.6 Reflexivity 76

Part 2. Findings

Vignette 3. Nomads of the institutions 79

CHAPTER 3

Organizational frameworks: A portrait of two EU interpreting services 93

- 3.1 From interpreting service to DG: Some history 93
- 3.2 Two interpreting services: Organizational structure 95
- 3.3 EU-interpreting as a career: Being a human resource 96
- 3.4 Two organizational cultures 99
 - 3.4.1 Managing interpreting quality: Two approaches 100
 - 3.4.2 Assigning interpreters to meetings: Two approaches to programming 103
- 3.5 Interpreting EU meetings 106
 - 3.5.1 EU interpreting and multilingualism 106

