When Interpreters Encounter Academics

Building Interpreter Training Capacity in Public Universities in Africa

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Abstract: The interpreter training programme at the University of Nairobi (UoN) was launched as a pilot project within the framework of the Pan-African Masters Consortium in Interpretation and Translation (PAMCIT) in 2010. During its early years (2010-2013) the programme relied heavily on pedagogical assistance from institutions based mainly in the Global North. In this chapter we analyse the use of North-South cooperation in a quest for excellence in interpreter training. We further conceptualize interpreter training as a phenomenon located at the intersection of two professional fields, academia and interpreting, and present the challenges associated with the conversion of types of symbolic capital specific to each field. As such, the reflections laid out in this chapter illustrate the importance of broad stakeholder involvement and the inclusion of members of the academic and interpreting fields in interpreter training programmes in African universities.

Keywords: North-South cooperation; interpreter training; professional fields; quality assurance.

Résumé : En 2010, le master en interprétation de conférence à l'Université de Nairobi (UoN) est mis en place comme programme pilote dans le cadre du Consortium panafricain pour un master en interprétation et en traduction (PAMCIT). Pendant les premières années (2010-2013), le programme s'est appuyé fortement sur l'assistance pédagogique offerte par des institutions basées dans le Nord. Dans ce chapitre, nous analysons la contribution de la coopération nord-sud aux cursus d'interprétation à l'Université de Nairobi. Pour ce faire, nous abordons la formation d'interprètes comme un phénomène situé à l'interface de deux champs professionnels, l'interprétation et le monde académique, et analysons les défis que présente, dans ce contexte, la conversion du capital symbolique propre à chaque champ. Les réflexions dans ce chapitre visent ainsi à illustrer qu'il est important d'inclure des acteurs du domaine académique et des interprètes professionnels dans les programmes de formation établis au sein des universités africaines.

Mots-clés : coopération nord-sud ; formation en interprétation ; champs professionnels ; contrôle qualité.

1 Context

The University of Nairobi (UoN) launched its Master's in Conference Interpretation in June 2010. Its interpreting curriculum was developed in line with UoN institutional rules and regulations, partially based on the existing core curriculum of the European Master's in Conference Interpreting. Although, from the outset, UoN's list of languages included all official UN languages, as well as Swahili, German and Portuguese, the main working languages of students enrolled in the course during its pilot phase were Swahili, English and French.

Throughout the pilot phase of the programme (2010-2013) the practical training component of the interpreting course was taught mainly by practising conference interpreters who were not employed by the university. These external trainers included staff interpreters from the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) and the European Commission, as well as interpreter trainers from the University of Geneva. In addition, theoretical course units were taught by lecturers from the University of Nairobi, mainly from the Department of Linguistics. During each term, the practical training component of the course accounted for 25% of the classes given (one course unit or 60 contact hours), while theoretical course units (international organizations, terminology, theory of interpreting, etc.) made up the remaining 75% (three course units or 180 contact hours).

The different external trainers were each subject to a number of institutional constraints imposed by their own employer and were only able to provide pedagogical assistance when their interpreting or teaching schedule allowed it. UNON interpreters, who were mainly based in Nairobi, were able to maintain a certain regularity in their teaching. This regularity was, however, interrupted when they were sent on international missions lasting up to four weeks. Staff interpreters from the European Commission, on the other hand, could only be dispatched to Nairobi for short periods of pedagogical assistance, generally lasting up to one week. Staff from the University of Geneva, including one of the authors of this chapter, also travelled to Nairobi on an irregular basis for pedagogical assistance visits lasting anywhere between a few days and five weeks. As such, students generally benefited from far more than 60 contact hours with professional interpreters during each term, however, these hours were distributed very irregularly.

Despite differences in academic and professional profile, all professional interpreter trainers providing pedagogical assistance to UoN shared two attributes: they were experienced professional conference interpreters working mainly from and into official EU or UN languages, and they had little to no knowledge of Swahili (the main working language of many of the students enrolled in the course) or of the situation on the local, non-UNON interpreting market in Nairobi and in the wider region. Consequently, students enrolled in the programme received only limited formative feedback on their performances from or into Swahili and little guidance regarding opportunities, working conditions and language requirements on the local market.

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In this chapter we will analyse the UoN pilot programme as an example of North-South cooperation in interpreter training and focus in particular on the links between training quality and stakeholder involvement.

2 Introduction

The UoN pilot programme is striking in its strong reliance on pedagogical assistance from the Global North and we have therefore decided to focus on this aspect of the project in this chapter. A more detailed analysis of all the main challenges faced by the students, trainers and managers involved throughout the pilot phase can be found in Delgado Luchner (2015). Arguably, the idea that interpreter training programmes in Africa should learn from experiences gained in interpreter training in European universities makes intuitive sense. The wheel of interpreter training has been turning for several decades (the programme in Geneva was created in 1941, while in Paris the École Supérieure d'Interprètes et de Traducteurs – ESIT – launched their's in 1957, etc.), and it might thus seem foolish to seek to reinvent it.

In this regard, the example of the University of Nairobi is significant: it was the first training programme in Africa that relied on North-South cooperation for teaching and also the first interpreting course that was launched as part of what was to become the Pan-African Masters Consortium in Interpreting and Translation (PAMCIT).

After a phase of expansion and consolidation lasting from 2009 to 2017 the PAMCIT currently includes universities in Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, and Senegal. We are convinced that partnerships will continue to be a prominent feature of interpreter training programmes in Africa in years to come, and that understanding the factors involved in these partnerships can be useful for the participating actors. Indeed, cooperation among institutions, including'donors' who support training programmes, is included in PAMCIT's description of its own aims:

> *PAMCIT is a professional network where students, trainers, language professionals, academics and researchers have come together in this quest for excellence, through donor-supported capacity-building in PAMCIT universities, thus improving conditions for quality training of interpreters and translators in Africa and employment opportunities for the integration of trained translators and interpreters into the workforce on the African market.* [1]

Two main questions come to mind in this context: *What does excellence in interpreter training mean?* and *How can North-South cooperation be leveraged to contribute to it?*

3 Academic Excellence and North-South cooperation

In the absence of universally applicable criteria for interpreter training excellence, several institutions have developed their own quality assurance frameworks. The

1. *Cf.* 'About PAMCIT', document provided by the Permanent Coordinator of PAMCIT, personal communication, April 2017.

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European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) Consortium, for instance, has developed a list of core criteria for interpreter training quality (EMCI Consortium, 2015). These include provisions with regard to course structure (post-graduate level, duration between one and two academic years, at least 400 hours of training with a minimum of 70% devoted to practice), staffing (course must be designed and at least 80% of classes taught by conference interpreters, preferably with accreditation from AIIC, the *Association internationale des interprètes de conférence*, an international organization or an equivalent national body), course content (inclusion of consecutive, sight translation, simultaneous and simultaneous with text; an introduction to the theory of interpreting, conference procedure, ethics, public speaking and international/regional organizations), assessment (student selection based on an aptitude test followed by regular assessments during the course, a final professional examination that includes an assessment of all of the student's language combinations in both consecutive and simultaneous). The PAMCIT itself has recently developed its own set of 'Pedagogical Principles and Recommendations' [2], which contain similar guidance with regards to training structure, content and staffing.

A key difference between the EMCI and PAMCIT frameworks is that the latter contains explicit provisions for the training and continuing education of trainers, thus acknowledging the fact that Conference Interpreter training is a new phenomenon in many of PAMCIT's member universities and that the human resources necessary for these programmes must be built gradually. PAMCIT's principles and recommendations also contain more detailed provisions regarding the selection of training materials, exercises, and the structure of in-class feedback, that can serve as guidance for trainers who have not yet undergone formal pedagogical training.

Both the EMCI and the PAMCIT criteria are grounded in the understanding that interpreting is a complex cognitive skill, best acquired through regular deliberate practice (Moser-Mercer, 2008; Motta, 2016), and that classroom exercises should closely mimic professional reality (Setton and Dawrant, 2016; Gillies, 2007; Donovan, 2005). They both emphasize practice over theory as far as course content is concerned and stress the importance of relying on practising professional interpreters as trainers for practical course units.

As the PAMCIT's pilot project, the Master's in Conference Interpretation at the University of Nairobi was launched before the 'Pedagogical Principles and Recommendations' described above came into existence. Indeed, the lessons learned during the pilot phase no doubt provided a basis for the development of these principles. In order to understand these lessons, a feature of this pilot phase that deserves particular scrutiny in this chapter is the use of North-South cooperation for training and capacity building.

Public universities are institutionally embedded in their respective national political context. As such, the relationships between public universities from different countries are to some extent conditioned by the relationships between their respective countries. Academic cooperation between universities in Switzerland and in EU

2. *Cf.* 'Pedagogical Principles and Recommendations', PAMCIT quality criteria document provided by the Permanent Coordinator of PAMCIT, personal communication, August 2017.

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countries, for instance, can be understood through the lens of the European Research Area (ERA) and the traditionally close bilateral relations between Switzerland and the European Union. [3] Similarly, relationships between public universities in Europe and public universities in African countries are best understood through the lens of capacity building or North-South cooperation. Indeed, historically, academic partnerships between Europe and Africa are linked to development cooperation, rather than the idea of a shared research space, which has shaped North-North partnerships in academia. However, in borrowing the trope of 'North-South cooperation' universities also borrow its pitfalls.

The 'North-South cooperation' trope appeared in development work in order to break with earlier terms such as 'knowledge transfer', which implies that knowledge travels largely in one direction, or 'technical assistance', which stresses the comparative weakness of the recipient. Nevertheless, since North-South cooperation in practice often remains largely unidirectional, it has been argued that this terminological shift was merely part of a tendency towards euphemization in development aid (Alber, 2002; Easterly, 2007).

Similarly, the wider framework of 'participatory development', which gave rise to concepts such as North-South cooperation, has come under criticism for hiding a reality of largely unchallenged power hierarchies (Mansuri and Rao, 2013). Indeed, one of the premises of development aid is a linear understanding of history, resulting in the assumption that certain countries are lagging behind and need to 'catch up', while other countries are 'ahead' (Rist, 2015). This understanding, however, closes the door to genuine negotiation: there is no 'meeting in the middle' in development, since this would imply that 'advanced' countries willingly accept to go 'backwards' in terms of economic development. Participatory approaches to development (*cf.* for example Mikkelsen, 2005), hailed as the answer to development aid's ills in the 1990s, carry within them this fundamental contradiction: as long as the aim of cooperation is to change practice in the South while only marginally affecting practice in the North —where the knowledge to be transferred supposedly'resides' —mutuality remains an elusive goal.

Participatory approaches to development also led to greater emphasis being placed on the empowerment of individuals rather than the construction of infrastructure (Willis, 2011; Veltmeyer, 2011). Development agencies began focussing on primary education (Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, 2003) and then on higher education (Ilon, 2003; Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000), thereby casting universities in the Global North in the role of potential development actors.

While North-South partnerships between universities have proliferated since the turn of the century, the results of these partnerships have been mixed. Their overall chances of success have been described as 'very low' (Holm and Malete, 2010, p. 2), mainly because of a failure of partners to engage in a truly symmetrical relationship (Johnson and Wilson, 2006). As the institution in the North is generally the partner which is

3. For instance, research partnerships between Swiss and European universities came under direct threat when, in February 2014, the Swiss population accepted the federal popular initiative 'Against Mass Immigration', which aimed to limit immigration from the EU through quotas and threatened the continuing existence of bilateral treaties between Switzerland and the EU.

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directly accountable to donors (Haller, 2009), equality can in practice only apply to the administrative or academic contributions of the individuals involved (Droz, 2009).

Different case studies of academic North-South cooperation (Holm and Malete, 2010; Droz and Mayor, 2009; Johnson and Wilson, 2006; Chandiwana and Ornbjerg, 2003) illustrate how these cooperation projects between universities are indeed permeated by the same power asymmetries —between institutions, though not necessarily between individuals — that often characterize relationships between countries in the Global North and the Global South. Development projects, which are essentially localized encounters between the North and the South, have been described as creating highly heterogeneous social arenas (Olivier de Sardan, 1995), where actors with very different backgrounds, status and agency come together to work towards a set of both official and hidden objectives in a carefully negotiated process of transformation.

In North-South cooperation within the academic context, actors arguably have much more in common than in other types of development encounters (for instance NGO workers and subsistence farmers). Nevertheless, the academic field in developing countries is not immune to the constraints of its socio-economic environment. Many African public universities are faced with reductions in public funding, staff reductions which coincide with an exponential increase in student numbers, obsolete infrastructure, frequent strikes (of both staff and students), and a general lack of time and funding for research (Teferra and Altbach, 2003; Teferra and Knight, 2008; Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000; Droz and Mayor, 2009). North-South cooperation projects in the academic field are therefore best understood as sharing features of both the donor-recipient relationships typical of development projects and the peer-to-peer relationships found in research partnerships.

4 Stakeholder Involvement in the Case of University of Nairobi's Master's in Conference Interpretation

The brief UoN pilot programme presents many of the asymmetries found in academic cooperation projects in other disciplines. In particular, stakeholders found it difficult to obtain the financial and human resources for interpreter training directly from UoN. Basic infrastructure, such as interpreting booths and computers, was made available by UNON at an early stage of the project (Delgado Luchner, 2015) and subsequent maintenance of this infrastructure was poor. In addition, given that partnerships in the UoN pilot phase were geared towards building a new programme, the relationships between UoN and other institutions resemble donor-recipient relationships more than partnerships, further increasing the asymmetry between North and South.

However, the field of interpreting studies is characterized by an additional fault line that runs deeper than the North/South divide: interpreter training programmes are a contact zone (Pratt, 1991) or zone of uncertainty (Inghilleri, 2005) where professional interpreters encounter academics.

As the EMCI and PAMCIT recommendations show, excellence in interpreter training is closely associated with the idea that students should learn their skills from professional interpreters, although theoretical course units or research projects might

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be supervised by career academics with or without interpreting experience. As such, two groups of teaching staff from two different professional fields enter into contact in interpreter training programmes. We understand professional fields in the Bourdieusian sense as communities that share an explicit or implicit understanding of what constitutes professional norms and accepted behaviours ('*doxa*'), and value specific attributes in their members ('symbolic capital'), such as skills or titles (Moore, 2012; Bourdieu, 1984, 1977, 1994). The symbolic capital that is valued in a field always takes the form of credit or trust: a freelance interpreter might be recruited as a trainer based on their AIIC membership, which is considered to be a form of symbolic capital that promises a high level of professional skill (*cf.* EMCI Quality Assurance criteria). Symbolic capital can further be transformed into economic capital: a doctorate might give access to an increase in remuneration in the academic field, while adding a new working language might improve job prospects for interpreters.

The academic field values specific forms of symbolic capital (degrees and titles, quality and number of publications, general and domain-specific knowledge, participation in conferences, access to research funding, prizes, awards, international and interdisciplinary collaborations, a large network) and organises itself hierarchically in accordance with these. The interpreting field, on the other hand, does not generally recognize these sources of academic capital as valid currency. Rather, the field values, amongst other factors, an individual's level of interpreting skills, the wealth of their professional experience, their language combination, their professional accreditations with international organizations or their membership in professional associations, the status and number of clients they work for (in the case of freelance interpreters), or the position they hold within their employer organization (for staff interpreters).

A Master's course in interpreting is located at the intersection of these two professional fields, which makes the integration of an interpreter training course into the wider academic environment particularly challenging. The practical skills valued by the profession and its members differ from the academic requirements generally associated with a Master's degree; the number of hours required to achieve proficiency in interpreting goes beyond the contact hours generally offered at Master's level; trainers need to be recruited according to their language combination and their professional interpreting experience, rather than 'merely' on their academic credentials; students will be admitted on the basis of entrance exams that include an assessment of their working languages, rather than 'only' on the basis of prior degrees. We might therefore think of the integration of interpreter training courses into a university faculty as an attempt to reconcile two different types of symbolic capital belonging to two different fields.

Cooperation projects between interpreter training programmes in Europe and Africa are thus characterised simultaneously by a geographic (North-South) and a professional (academia-interpreting) heterogeneity. These two variables intersect, dividing stakeholders into four different groups (interpreters from the South and the North, academics from the South and the North), who each possess only part of the relevant experience and knowledge to build local capacity in interpreter training. Consequently, if one or several groups are absent from a project, there may be gaps in

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the collective knowledge of stakeholders, which might in turn make it difficult to implement relevant training courses for interpreting students in Africa.

In the Nairobi pilot programme most actors fell into two groups: interpreters from the North and academics from the South. While some academics from the North were also present, the perspective of professional interpreters from the South remained painfully absent; in particular, interpreters acquainted with the local and regional interpreting market (Delgado Luchner, 2015;). As a result, none of the trainers involved in the pilot phase could adequately cover Swahili, and students with that language in their combination received insufficient guidance.

Indeed, the recruitment of trainers is one of the key areas where North-South cooperation can have undesirable outcomes: the budgetary constraints of universities in Kenya provide a strong incentive for an institution to rely on volunteer work from interpreters based in Europe or employed locally by an international organization (pedagogical assistance), rather than building capacity for training through direct recruitment of local freelance interpreters as part-time trainers. However, only the latter have a thorough understanding of the local interpreting market.

When local experts are excluded in favour of pedagogical assistance, North-South cooperation can compromise, rather than contribute to, excellence in interpreter training. In the UoN case in particular, the absence of local interpreters also led to a disconnect between the assumed importance of Swahili and its real use on the market: while the lecturers and trainers involved in the project seemed to expect the Swahili/English language combination to be particularly relevant for the local market, the linguistic reality of Kenya means that most Kenyans are proficient in both of these languages or in neither (Mbithi, 2014). A false analogy between Swahili-English multilingualism in East Africa and French-English multilingualism in West Africa was already present in the initial needs analysis that led to the creation of the PAMCIT network (Muylle, 2008), and further cemented by selecting individual member universities as centres of excellence for particular languages (Delgado Luchner, 2015).

In reality, conference interpretation between English and Swahili is of marginal relevance in East Africa. Swahili is an official language of the African Union but it is rarely used in meetings. English remains the dominant language in Kenya's education system and the language of choice for formal communication amongst educated Kenyans (Michieka, 2012). Unlike neighbouring Tanzania, where Swahili is used as a medium of instruction from primary school to university (Telli, 2014), Kenya never underwent a 'total Swahilization' (Miguel, 2004). Kenyans who master Swahili and do not master English are likely to be encountered in a community or court interpreting context, rather than a conference interpreting context. Even in these contexts, Swahili remains a vehicular language; interpretation would therefore be required between local languages (mother tongues) and English, rather than Swahili and English (Kiguru, 2009). Conference interpretation between Swahili and English is therefore likely to be found only in conferences bringing together participants from Tanzania and other countries in the region – even in these cases English is likely to be mas-

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tered as a second (or third) language by Tanzanian delegates, reducing the need for interpretation from and into Swahili.

North-South cooperation is also often characterised by a high degree of informality (Olivier de Sardan, 1995) and the presence of *ad hoc* solutions that stand in stark contrast to an often bureaucratic and rigid university environment. In the UoN case study, the arrangements for practical course units (different forms of pedagogical assistance) are an example of the informal or intermediate structures often found in development projects. While in the case of UoN these arrangements no doubt allowed the programme to start earlier than would otherwise have been the case, we believe that the availability of professional trainers from outside UoN staff also delayed the recruitment of an in-house trainer. The literature on Higher Education in Kenya provides us with some relevant indications in this regard: over-staffing has repeatedly been identified as a problem at the University of Nairobi (Ngome, 2003; Mwiria et al., 2007), making it more difficult to argue for the creation of additional academic posts, including for new programmes. This phenomenon of over-reliance and ultimately dependency on support from the North has been widely documented for development cooperation projects (Olivier de Sardan, 1995; Djankov *et al.*, 2008).

However, recruitment difficulties are also due at least in part to the professional divide permeating interpreter training: in a university, obtaining the service of a part-time trainer, who would be allowed to continue working as an interpreter, is more difficult than recruiting a traditional academic. The idea that interpreter trainers should continue to use their skills on the market in order to remain relevant as trainers is widely accepted in the area of interpreting studies, and is acknowledged in both the EMCI and the PAMCIT quality criteria. However, it is not a common feature of the academic environment as a whole. Indeed, non-academic professional experience is not a highly relevant source of symbolic capital in the academic field, where positions are awarded according to academic experience. Academia constitutes a highly hierarchical and bureaucratic environment that can be particularly constraining for individual agents, in particular those who do not possess the attributes and symbolic capital relevant to this field.

We must acknowledge, however, that individual actors from outside academia often managed to find *ad hoc* solutions for problems arising during the pilot project at UoN. For instance, for the first group of students, enrolled in the programme from 2010 to 2012, UNON staff interpreters organized practical classes throughout the four terms of the Master's course, even though, according to the curriculum, classes were to be suspended during the fourth term, which was to be set aside for the Master's thesis. These professional interpreters recognized that the number of contact hours on the curriculum was insufficient to help students develop the level of expertise in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation required for a regional or international organization. Indeed, based on research into expertise development, the number of hours of practice required to reach a professional level in interpreting has been estimated to be between 5,000 and 10,000 (Moser-Mercer, 2010). Individual initiatives and the personal dedication of actors therefore made it possible to implement solutions faster than institutional constraints would have allowed, in particular because

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pedagogical assistance was provided on a *pro bono* basis and additional contact hours therefore had no budgetary consequences for UoN.

Nevertheless, informal solutions that rely on the goodwill of individual actors and are not reflected in formal procedures tend to disappear when these individuals leave a project. In the UoN case, the continuous involvement of UNON interpreters was limited to the first intake of students, whereas training for the second intake depended largely on input from institutions in the North, namely the European Commission and the University of Geneva (Delgado Luchner, 2015). In both cases, however, practical training took place outside, rather than within, the framework set by the official curriculum.

5 Conclusion

North-South cooperation in interpreter training is located at the interface of two professional fields, interpreting and academia, that are each further subdivided geographically into North and South. Individual actors from each of these fields possess knowledge and experience that is potentially relevant for successful cooperation in interpreter training. Structuring cooperation in terms of professional fields therefore allows us to establish a map of the relevant areas of knowledge and experience that need to be taken into account in setting up new interpreter training programmes in Africa.

The following areas of knowledge and experience appear to us to be the most relevant to PAMCIT's overall aim of training excellence geared towards employability on the African market: experience in curriculum design, interpreting, and interpreter training, as well as knowledge of interpreting theory and research, institutional rules and regulations, local and international languages, and the local/regional interpreting market.

In the case of the Nairobi programme, three main groups of actors were involved in the UoN pilot phase: professional interpreters from the North with or without prior teaching experience (UNON, European Commission), academics from interpreting programmes in the North with interpreter training experience (EMCI, University of Geneva), and academics from the South (UoN) without prior exposure to interpreting studies but with teaching and research experience in other fields (linguistics, literature, etc.). The fourth group of relevant actors, professional conference interpreters from Kenya and or the wider region, was only marginally involved during the early stages of the programme. The reasons for this initial exclusion of AIIC and non-AIIC interpreters based in Africa are complex and go beyond the scope of the present chapter. Some indications can be found in the 'Report of the first pan-African conference on the training of translators, conference interpreters and public service interpreters in Africa' (United Nations Office at Nairobi: Conference Services, 2009). As a consequence of this lack of involvement of professional interpreters familiar with the local context, project stakeholders had gaps in their collective knowledge and experience. The matrix below (Figure 1) illustrates the areas of knowledge and experience that we consider most relevant to interpreter training in African universities. The greyed out section in the bottom left corner of the map shows the gaps encountered in the case of

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the University of Nairobi, due to the lack of involvement of professional interpreters based in Africa.

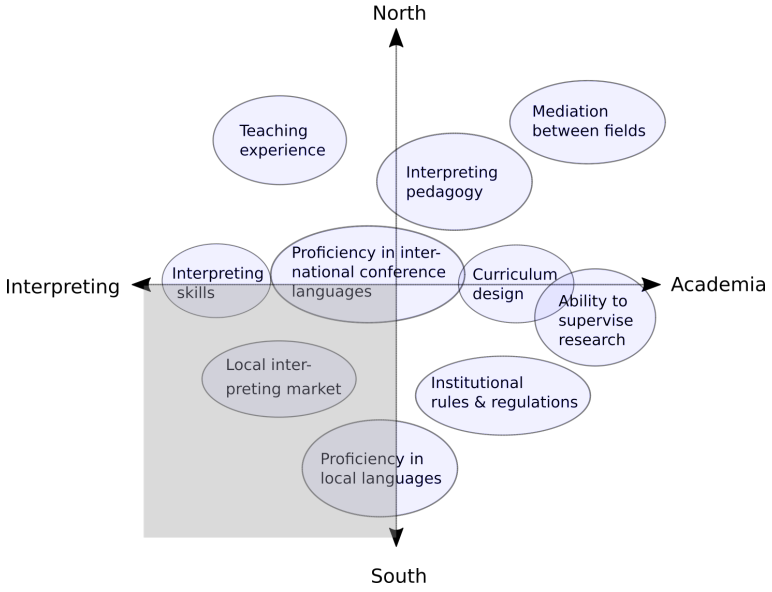


Figure 1 – Professional fields and their respective areas of expertise

It is important to note that the North-South and interpreter-academic dimensions are to be understood as a continuum rather than a binary opposition: an individual can fall into several categories at once. As such, the categories represent archetypes rather than individual actors. The authors of this text, for example, are both simultaneously practising interpreters, interpreter trainers and academics. Similarly, the positionality of UNON interpreters can be understood as simultaneously from the North (in terms of their origin, their training, and the larger institutional culture of the United Nations) and from the South (in terms of their duty station and immediate environment).

In the case of the Nairobi project, the absence of professional interpreters with a thorough understanding of the local context constituted a major blindspot of the programme: language coverage for Swahili was inadequate and the relevance of the English/Swahili combination was not ascertained on the basis of an analysis of the local interpreting market. In a previous work, Delgado Luchner (2015) has suggested that it might make sense to include public service interpreting and conference interpreting in the course offered at the University of Nairobi. This would allow students to use their full language combination during training (including their mother tongue, Swahili, as well as common conference languages such as English or French). Such a solution might have been developed from the outset, had local interpreting expertise been included in the programme.

Another particularity of the UoN cooperation was that it took place during the pilot phase of the programme. As such, we would argue that the term 'cooperation' is not

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an accurate description of the largely uni-directional knowledge transfer that took place during the initial stages of the project. One of the lessons learned from this cooperation project is that building capacity in a new academic discipline within in a large public university requires long-term investment. Partnerships designed only for a limited period of time, are therefore unlikely to yield lasting benefits. While many development projects are designed to last between 1 and 4 years, we would argue that a project that first involves building a new academic programme will only become a 'cooperation' project after an initial capacity building stage of 3-5 years. However, this period might be reduced by involving relevant actors from all groups in the process from the outset. This can only be achieved, however, if universities are willing to accept the symbolic capital of the interpreting field as a valid currency within their walls and to create part-time, flexible positions that allow professional interpreters, even those who might not have a doctorate or a record of academic research, to act as trainers.

Working towards interpreter training excellence in African universities requires a better integration of two professional fields, interpreting and academia. While the criteria for quality assessment developed by EMCI and PAMCIT provide valuable guidance with regards to interpreter training, they currently exist largely in isolation from the rules and regulations of the institutions hosting these training courses. In EMCI interpreter training programmes, this process of mediation and 'translation of symbolic capital'from interpreting to academia has been taking place informally, since the academics teaching on these programmes are more often than not practising, or at least trained, interpreters. As such, they understand both the academic environment and the specificities of interpreter training and can mediate between the two professional fields. In PAMCIT universities, however, interpreter training courses were inserted into institutions of higher education that were largely devoid of translation or interpreting studies scholars. The resulting gap between professional interpreters and career academics from other disciplines (linguistics, French, literature, etc.) created a zone of uncertainty without mediators (Inghilleri, 2005). This led to a lack of dialogue between academics and professional interpreters, as neither group fully acknowledged the relevance of the other.

Interpreter training programmes are hybrid creations. Their location at the interface of academia and the interpreting profession represents both their greatest potential asset and their most formidable challenge. An inclusive approach that takes into account as many relevant voices as possible therefore seems the most promising way forward. The mapping exercise suggested above can help stakeholders identify gaps in their collective knowledge and reach out to the actors who are most likely to be able to fill them.

6 Epilogue

As academics, we are naturally hesitant to provide our readers with a check-list of the factors that should be taken into account in implementing successful North-South cooperation in interpreter training, as this would be an over-generalization of the conclusions obtained from a single in-depth case study. We see our contribution rather

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in terms of providing food for thought to other interpreter trainers and academics with an interest in the field. Nevertheless, we are keen to share our experience and do understand that a list of such suggestions might be useful for actors wishing to engage in capacity building in interpreting in an African university. We have therefore made it available in a separate forum: Delgado Luchner, C. (2017) *10 Things to Consider for Interpreter Training in Africa.* Interpreting Ideas Blog, https://interpreting-ideas.com/2017/06/23/10-things-to-consider-for-interpreter-training-in-africa last accessed on 31 August 2017.

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