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### **CINEMATIC INSIGHTS: EMPLOYING MODERN FILMS TO TEACH ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT IN INTERPRETER AND TRANSLATOR TRAINING**

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The portrayal of translators and interpreters in literature and film has gained significant traction since the beginning of the millennium, coinciding with the rise of globalization, societal evolution, and transformations in media. This increase in visibility reflects the growing relevance of these professions, which are characterized by multilingualism and cultural mediation. Such attributes render translators and interpreters compelling subjects for exploring themes of personal and professional identity.

In recent years, numerous inquiries have emerged regarding the nature of translation and the role of the translator. These inquiries originate from a diverse audience, including aspiring translators, seasoned professionals, and individuals interested in translation careers. To address the gaps between expectations and the realities of translation practices, this paper aims to explore the pedagogical potential of feature films as illustrative resources. These films function as linguistic, educational, and cross-cultural tools that can be incorporated into both pre-service and in-service training for translators and interpreters. Additionally, the fictional turn in

translation studies permits a nuanced exploration of the interconnectedness between translation, culture, and society.

This research aims to analyze the various functions of the interpreter/translator's image as depicted in film, encompassing symbolic, metaphorical, character-defining, and meta-narrative dimensions. Fotini Apostolou characterizes interpreters as the ones ‘ enclosed in the marginalized spaces of their booths, are often perceived as a non-presence in the conference process, mere shadows of the speakers, who have to deliver the other’s textual body faithfully and objectively to an unknown audience without any involvement.’ [1, p.178] Meanwhile, it should be noted that the roles of community interpreters and commercial or conference interpreters differ, and they have very different responsibilities.[16] They are responsible for enabling professionals and clients with very different backgrounds and perceptions, and in an unequal relationship of power and knowledge, to communicate to their mutual satisfaction.

The primary role of an interpreter is to facilitate understanding during conversations between individuals who speak different languages. The main responsibility of an interpreter is communication, and every action they take should be connected to that goal. There are four types of communication barriers: linguistic, cultural, systemic, register, and experience barriers. To overcome these barriers, an interpreter develops skills and assumes four principal roles: ‘conduit’, ‘clarifier’, ‘cultural broker’, and ‘advocate’.

The most basic role of the interpreter is that of the ‘conduit’, whose rule is to ‘interpret everything that is said, exactly as it is said: add nothing, omit nothing, change nothing.’ The interpreter takes the role of ‘clarifier’ when he or she believes it is necessary to facilitate understanding. In this role, the interpreter adjusts register, makes word pictures of terms that have no linguistic equivalent, and checks for understanding. In the role of ‘cultural broker’ the interpreter provides a necessary cultural framework for understanding the message being interpreted. The interpreter assumes this role when cultural differences lead to a misunderstanding on the part of either the provider or the recipient. ‘Advocacy’ is any action an interpreter takes on behalf of, for example, the patient, outside the bounds of an interpreted interview.

The research presented will also address ethical considerations, professional codes of conduct, moral dilemmas, and personal conflicts that practitioners may encounter. Collectively, these elements are essential, as

the portrayal of interpreters and translators in the media often leads to misconceptions and stereotypical representations, which can adversely affect public perception. “The image of the interpreter in the films is completely different from the dictates of professional codes of ethics, which call for neutrality and uninvolvedness, in other words, for an absence of the individual interpreter, who has to remain a mediator in the communication chain.” [1, p.178] Ultimately, this study aims to enhance classroom experiences by utilizing cinematic narratives to stimulate discussions on these critical occupational issues.

Another aspect of this research involves proposing a potential intersection between Film and Media Studies, Translation Studies, and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Methodology. The objective is to document historical and contemporary film representations of translation practices while considering their influence on the evolution of film culture and the role of interpreters within it.

The research is predicated on several assumptions: students often lack the linguistic maturity and cultural background necessary to grasp the implications of foreign language media fully. As a result, they may miss the cultural messages embedded in fictional narratives. By fostering skills in careful perception and critical analysis of both linguistic and extra-linguistic elements, educators can help students appreciate both foreign cultures and the professional culture associated with translation.

As a widespread cultural form with international appeal, cinema has a unique relationship with translation, both literal and metaphorical. Films can illuminate how our beliefs shape our realities, prompting educators to focus on the lessons that these cinematic works offer to guide students. [7; 17] The duality of ethical and professional conduct expected in the interpreting and translating professions sets the stage for a discussion about how films can serve as a learning tool.

Several studies have examined the tension between fiction and reality in the portrayal of translation professionals, including works by Apostolou[1], Cronin[5], Cutter [6], and Dwyer [7]. In their introduction, Klaus Kaindl and Ingrid Kurz note that “literary descriptions of occupational realities were contrasted with findings from translation studies, with literature serving as a source for folk theories about translation and interpreting.” Research indicates that the majority of translator and interpreter practitioners ‘work in isolation without the benefit of supervision or peer collaboration,’ which ‘results in a workforce that is generally underprepared to make consistent and reliable ethical

decisions.’ [15] For instance, the paper by Masood Khoshsaligheh [13 ] explores the portrayal of translators in 16 Iranian feature films, highlighting their identity, socioeconomic status, and lifestyle. It reveals that translators are often depicted as self-disciplined individuals with minor roles, reflecting societal attitudes toward them. The paper by Gemma King examines Jacques Audiard’s *Un Prophète*, spotlighting the protagonist’s role as a “treacherous interpreter” who manipulates trust in translation, showcasing the complex portrayal of translators and interpreters as powerful figures in multilingual contexts within contemporary French cinema.[12] However, Nitsa Ben Ari observes ‘the “fictional turn” in translation studies’ and has recognized that ‘translators/interpreters have been moved from behind the curtain to center stage. Whether this is a result of poststructuralist or postcolonial scholarship, the fact remains that translators/interpreters now figure as protagonists in film, theater, and especially popular literature.’ [3]

The active use of contemporary films, which can depict real-life scenarios, ethical dilemmas, and cultural nuances relevant to interpreting and translation, suggests that educators can harness these narratives to provoke discussion and critical thinking among students. The focus is on improving students’ understanding of the ethical standards and professional behavior required in their future careers. By analyzing characters and situations in films, students can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of their roles.

Traditionally, the literature on ethics in translation and interpreting posits that professionals are primarily accountable to their clients or, in the case of literary translation, to the authors of the source texts. Therefore, educational programs for translation and interpreting students should emphasize an understanding of professional accountability and the ethical implications of their decisions. As highlighted in the literature, incorporating ethics into the curriculum encourages critical reflection, prompting students to think about the consequences of their actions rather than simply dictating right from wrong.

To bridge the persistent gap between theory and practice, this research advocates for an integrated approach to ethical training within the discipline. A variety of case studies found in selected films can provide a rich basis for diverse activities that embed ethics into the curriculum. By using authentic and fictional scenarios, along with interactive tasks, educators can demonstrate the relevance of ethical considerations and the importance of reflecting on the impact of one’s behavior on others.

To optimize learning outcomes, educators should consider the following criteria when selecting film clips for classroom use:

- Choose brief clips (2 to 8 minutes) that maintain engagement without causing fatigue.
- Select clips that are self-contained in plot and topic.
- Opt for meaningful scenes that convey clear narratives, making them easier to analyze.

Factors that can enhance interest and stimulate discussion include:

- Unexpected plot developments
- Continuity of events
- Composition and structure
- Humor
- References to cultures, people, or celebrities
- Positive or negative depictions
- Extraordinary events or characters
- Cross-cultural elements
- Professional relevance
- Illustrations of specific registers

When designing assignments based on film content, educators should adhere to several key principles:

- Provide theoretical input on professional ethics and codes of conduct from relevant associations.[4;8;9;11]
- Discuss potential strategies for navigating difficult ethical situations.
- Develop pedagogical tools that foster an environment where students can make informed ethical decisions.
- Maintain a balanced approach, being mindful of personal views while facilitating open discussions.

Proposed classroom interaction formats include debates, role plays, simulated scenarios, and translation tasks. Writing assignments may include critical essays, pros and cons essays, or personal reflections on ethical issues.

To contrast appropriate professional conduct, educators can reference established standards, such as those outlined in the American Translators Association Code of Ethics and Professional Practice. This includes principles such as respecting client confidentiality, declining work beyond one's competence, and maintaining professional objectivity.

Table 1 lists films that feature interpreters and highlight professional ethics or other professional issues. These films explore various aspects of interpretation and communication, highlighting both the personal and professional challenges faced by interpreters and those who navigate between languages and cultures. Furthermore, they explore a range of themes related to the role of interpreters, including confidentiality, the moral complexities of communication, and the impact of language barriers in critical situations.

**Table 1. List of Recommended Films**

| # | Film                                    | Short synopsis                                                                                                                                                                           | Professional/ethical issues to be discussed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Arrival (2016)</b>                   | A linguist is enlisted to communicate with extraterrestrial beings, emphasizing the challenges posed by language barriers.                                                               | Ethical considerations for communication and interpretation in high-stakes situations.                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2 | <b>A Fantastic Woman (2017)</b>         | A transgender woman faces both personal and social challenges after the death of her partner.                                                                                            | Issues of identity, language, and the ethics of interpreting in sensitive cultural contexts <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 3 | <b>Babel (2006)</b>                     | Multiple interconnected stories across the globe explore themes of communication and misunderstanding.                                                                                   | Misinterpretations and the consequences of language barriers in critical situations.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 4 | <b>Charade (1963)</b>                   | A woman is chased by different adversaries following her husband's death and must depend on a charismatic stranger for assistance.                                                       | The role of interpretation in deception and the ethics of trust in communication. Cases of malpractice in conference interpreting.                                                                                                                                                   |
| 5 | <b>Desert Flower (2009)</b>             | The life story of Waris Dirie, a Somali woman who escapes a life of female genital mutilation to become a model                                                                          | Interpreting cultural practices, the ethics of representation, and the challenges faced by women in different cultures. The malpractice of involving a culturally biased non-professional interpreter in a medical setting.                                                          |
| 6 | <b>Everything is Illuminated (2005)</b> | A young American travels to Ukraine to find the woman who saved his grandfather during WWII, aided by a local guide who is a philology student, his vision-impaired granddad, and a dog. | The ethics of cultural representation, the interpretation of history, and the impact of language on identity are vital concepts. This includes recognizing instances of professional conduct violations and language inconsistencies attributed to self-employed semi-professionals. |

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|----|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7  | <b>Hotel Rwanda</b> (2004)             | A hotel manager sheltered more than a thousand Tutsi refugees during the Rwandan genocide.                               | The role of interpreters in humanitarian crises and the moral implications of their work.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 8  | <b>Lost in Translation</b> (2003)      | An American actor and a young woman develop an unexpected connection while exploring Tokyo's culture.                    | Miscommunication, cultural sensitivity, and the emotional effects of language barriers. The advantages and disadvantages of adhering to the code of professional conduct and behavior. Discuss the impact that translation and interpretation can have on people's lives. |
| 9  | <b>Sleeping Dictionary</b> (2003)      | A young British officer falls in love with a native woman while stationed in a Malay village during colonial rule        | The complexities of cultural translation, power dynamics, and the ethics of relationships across cultural lines. Love never gets lost in translation                                                                                                                      |
| 10 | <b>Spanglish</b> (2004)                | A Mexican immigrant becomes a housekeeper for an affluent American family, navigating language and cultural differences. | Moral dilemmas and the professional conduct of non-professional interpreters. The challenges of bilingualism, cultural identity, and the ethics of interpreting for others                                                                                                |
| 11 | <b>Terminal</b> (2004)                 | A man from a fictional Eastern European country is stranded in an airport and must navigate bureaucracy.                 | The role of interpreters in facilitating communication across cultures.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 12 | <b>The Interpreter</b> (2005)          | A U.N. interpreter becomes embroiled in a conspiracy after overhearing a plot to assassinate a leader.                   | Confidentiality, the responsibility of interpreters to report threats.                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 13 | <b>The Silence of the Lambs</b> (1991) | A young FBI trainee seeks the help of an imprisoned cannibalistic serial killer to catch another killer                  | The ethics of using interpreters in sensitive investigations and the psychological toll on them                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 14 | <b>Translators</b> (2019)              | A group of translators working on a high-stakes project must navigate personal and professional conflicts.               | The importance of accuracy, integrity in translation, and the pressures of deadlines.                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 15 | <b>Zero, Dark, Thirty</b> (2012)       | The hunt for Osama bin Laden is depicted through the eyes of a CIA operative.                                            | The ethical dilemmas surrounding intelligence gathering and the role of interpreters in sensitive operations raise important questions. This prompts reflections on the work and ethics of military interpreters.                                                         |

In conclusion, this research hopes to inspire further investigation into this crucial aspect of translator and interpreter training. As noted by Mona

Baker and Carol Maier [2], achieving a balance between an educator's ethical judgment and maintaining an open space for reflection remains one of the significant challenges in education within this field.

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## TEACHING SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETATION ONLINE IN THE WARTIME: KHARKIV EXPERIENCE

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I teach both translation and interpreting within our Bachelor and Master programmes and I can say that the last five years have been a real challenge to the students and the staff, starting with the COVID-19 lockdowns and continuing with the full-scale war. While many Universities in Ukraine have gradually returned to offline or at least hybrid teaching, Kharkiv remains permanently online, as it is too close to the border with the aggressor and thus, the risk of hybrid learning would be too great to take it. Our Department can boast a special classroom with all the necessary equipment to carry out teaching Simultaneous Interpretation, and before the war all such classes were placed there, to our students' benefit. Unfortunately, since February 2022 we haven't had an opportunity to use it anymore and have moved online.

At first, we used Zoom for both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. The former was absolutely ok, but the latter was rather problematic. Still, the task we were facing was just to manage somehow to survive a couple of months, so we combined Zoom and Google Classroom where we put recordings of the original texts. The students went to the Classroom, played the recordings, fulfilled the task of simultaneous interpreting, saved the new recordings in the Classroom, and returned to Zoom, where I played their files sharing them with the whole class and commented on their results, we discussed some problematic points etc.