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初探電競錦標賽情境下的口譯：

以英雄聯盟太平洋職業聯賽為個案研究

Exploring Interpreting Activities in an Esports Tournament Setting:

A Case Study of League of Legends PCS Tournament Games

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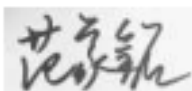
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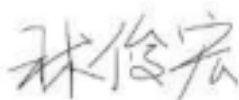
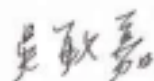
本論文係李治翰（R09147009）在國立臺灣大學翻譯碩士學位學程完成之碩士學位論文，於民國 113 年 7 月 23 日承下列考試委員審查通過及口試及格，特此證明。

The undersigned, appointed by the Graduate Program in Translation and Interpretation on July 23, 2024, have examined a Master's Thesis entitled above presented by CHIH-HAN LEE (R09147009) and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

口試委員 Oral examination committee:



（指導教授 Advisor）



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摘要

本研究探討翻譯服務提供者（ISP）於英雄聯盟太平洋職業聯賽中所扮演的角色、負責的工作以及面對的挑戰。本研究利用半結構式訪談蒐集數據，共計 21 位受訪者，其中除了 ISP 之外也包含諸如電競選手、教練、經理、賽事方以及媒體等翻譯服務使用者（ISU）。訪談結果發現，ISP 所負責的工作種類包含傳統口筆譯服務、行政後勤工作以及內容創作與發展業務。ISP 所扮演的角色包括傳聲筒、助理、保姆、教育者、溝通文化調停人員、助教、公關專家、地區代表和情緒減弱增強的中介。

本研究使用改良式紮根理論（M-GTA）分析所蒐集到的回應，目標為說明 ISP 的工作於電競賽季演變的過程。M-GTA 所得之分析結果也與過往研究比對討論，比較電競 ISP 與傳統運動口譯員和企業內口譯員之異同。討論結果顯示，由於電競賽事著重於其表演價值和其娛樂性質，電競 ISP 須具備該產業導向的技能與知識，來扮演產業所期待的角色和面對相應而來的挑戰。

本研究的主要貢獻為描述電競產業中的口譯情形，討論 ISP 所扮演的複雜且重要的角色。電競 ISP 需要在電競賽場中成為溝通的橋樑，破除各文化之間的障礙，為選手、教練、粉絲提升參賽觀賽的體驗。本研究也發現，ISP 要想達成上述目標，便需要特定職業訓練，同時獲得適當的資源分配，才能為整體電競產業提供長久切專業的服務。

關鍵詞：電競口譯、改良式紮根理論、口譯員角色

Abstract

This study investigates the roles, tasks, and challenges faced by interpreting service providers (ISPs) in the League of Legends (LoL) Pacific Championship Series (PCS) tournament setting. Through semi-structured interviews with 21 participants, including ISPs and interpreting service users (ISUs), i.e., esports athletes, coaches, team managers, tournament organizers, and media, this research explores the diverse work of ISPs in this burgeoning industry. The findings reveal that ISPs perform tasks ranging from general translation and interpretation to administrative and logistical support, and content creation and development. They assume various roles such as conduits, assistants, caregivers, educators, communication and cultural mediators, assistant coaches, public relations specialists, regional representatives, and emotion buffers/amplifiers.

This study utilizes the Modified Grounded Theory Approach (M-GTA) to analyze data and generate a narrative describing the evolution of ISP work across different stages of the esports season: individual operations, regional games, and international games. A comparison with existing studies on sports interpreters and in-house interpreters highlights both similarities and differences in the esports context. The findings suggest that the show-centric nature of esports events, with its focus on entertainment and spectacle, shapes the roles and challenges of ISPs, demanding a unique set of skills and understanding of the esports ecosystem.

This study contributes to the understanding of the emerging field of esports interpreting, highlighting its multifaceted nature and the significant role it plays in facilitating communication, bridging cultural barriers, and enhancing the overall esports experience for players, teams, and fans. It underscores the need for dedicated training programs and resource allocation to support the professional development of esports interpreters and ensure the smooth operation of the industry.

Keywords: Esports interpreting, M-GTA, interpreter's roles

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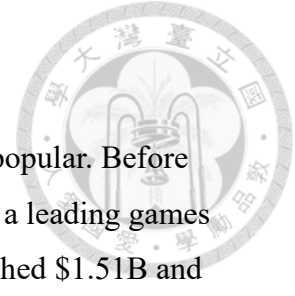
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Chapter 1: Introduction



Esports, also known as competitive gaming, has become more popular. Before discontinuing its dedicated report to esports industry in 2022, Newzoo, a leading games analytics firm, indicated that the global market size of the industry reached \$1.51B and projected that the industry will later hit \$2B in 2025 (Nordland, 2023). In the report by Newzoo, the market size of the esports industry is delineated based on its definition of esports, which includes professional or semi-professional competitive gaming in an organized format, such as tournaments or leagues, with specific objectives or prizes, including championship titles or monetary rewards. The market valuation, as outlined in Newzoo's report, is confined to revenues and viewership derived exclusively from professional competitive gaming content (Newzoo, 2021).

The inaugural esports tournament was held at Stanford University in 1972, with 24 competitors engaging in a game named "Spacewar!" (Besombes, 2019; Esports.net, 2023a; Hu, 2019; Larch, 2023; Migliore, 2021; Scholz, 2019b). In this game, two players each controlled a spaceship, participating in a dogfight while evading meteorites. The prize for victory was a one-year subscription to the renowned magazine Rolling Stone (Wikipedia, 2023). Contrasting with the 1972 tournament, which was limited to a small, physically present audience due to technological constraints, 21st-century esports events are broadcasted live and celebrated by fans both online and in-person (Newzoo, 2021). For instance, the 2020 League of Legends (LoL) World Championship, also known as Worlds, set a record for the highest live viewership hours on Twitch and YouTube, amassing 91.9 million hours (Newzoo, 2021).

The development of esports in Taiwan commenced in 2008, marked by several significant events, including the establishment of the Taiwan eSports League (TeSL), the triumph of Taipei Assassins, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. TeSL's inception in 2008 signified Taiwan's entry into the esports industry (CTEA, 2023). Broadcasting competitions among its three founding teams—Wayi Spider, Gamabears (later renamed GashBears), and ESL Wolves (subsequently disbanded)—TeSL played a pivotal role in propelling Taiwanese esports into mainstream media. This exposure not only expanded the fan base but also fostered a more professional environment for esports

athletes (CTEA, 2023). The trajectory of Taiwan's esports was further shaped by the Taipei Assassins, a professional League of Legends (LoL) team, when they clinched the Worlds championship in 2012. Their victory not only attracted international attention (Liu, 2021) but also popularized the concept of esports among the general public in Taiwan (Chou, 2018). The growth of the esports industry was further supported by educational institutions and the Taiwanese government. Notably, Juang Jing Vocational High School launched its esports program in 2011 (Weng, 2018), contributing to the development of successful esports athletes, such as Hu Shuo-Chieh (gaming name SwordArt), who signed a record-breaking US\$6 million esports contract in 2020 (Browning, 2021; Liang, 2020). Additionally, the Legislative Yuan amended the Sports Industry Development Act in 2017 to encompass esports, and the Ministry of Culture incorporated esports as an alternative for mandatory military service (Su, 2020). Furthermore, global events like the COVID-19 pandemic inadvertently boosted the Taiwanese esports industry.

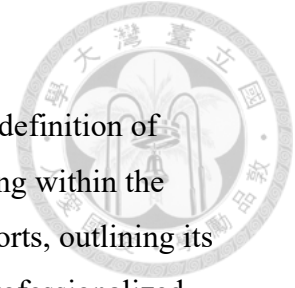
As people spent more time engaged in gaming and consuming esports-related content during quarantine periods, the industry witnessed an increase in popularity and participation (TAICCA, 2021) and the recruitment of players like SwordArt by international teams, aimed at enhancing competitiveness (GOL, 2023), has led to an emerging need for interpreting services. Evidence of this demand is seen in the creation of interpreting job positions within professional esports teams (Jang, 2021). Moreover, the necessity for interpreting services is also evident in large esports tournaments and streaming environments, where communication across languages becomes crucial for the seamless conduct of events and the engagement of a global audience. For example, when T1, a Korean leading LoL team, was interviewed during press conferences at the 2023 Worlds, consecutive interpretation between Korean and English was provided (PresenaEsports, 2023). Furthermore, LCK Global, the official LoL YouTube channel that disseminates Korean LoL esports content, has employed the services of Jeeseun Park, a renowned Korean interpreter working with Riot Games, LoL's developer. Park interprets interviews conducted in Korean into English (LCKGlobal, 2022). The scope of content interpreted by such interpreting service providers typically includes post-game interviews and press conferences (LCKGlobal, 2022; PresenaEsports, 2023).

Additionally, in-game communication between players and coaches, known as voice comms, is also made accessible to a broader audience through streaming platforms, where they are presented with translated subtitles (TodayontheKoreanServer, 2023).

Though the cases of Korean interpreters may already provide a preliminary understanding of how interpreters work in esports settings, how interpreters work in other regions appears to be different while looking at post-game interview footages of LoL regional finals in different regions. LoL has 8 different regional leagues, namely LoL Champions Korea (LCK), LoL Pro League (LPL), LoL EMEA Championship (LEC), League Champion Series (LCS), Pacific Champion Series (PCS), Vietnam Champion Series (VCS), Campeonato Brasileiro de LoL (CBLOL), and Liga Latinoamerica (LLA), and each league shall have a winner at the end of each season to enter the Worlds to compete for the Worlds championship title (LoLEsportsStaff, 2024). At the Grand Finals of each league, which are the games to determine the winner of the season, there are post-game interviews conducted to interact with the winning team. The footages of the post-game interviews are uploaded by the official channels of LoL to streaming platforms like YouTube. The footage from various interviews indicates that the lingua franca of each region predominantly guides the conduct of conversations. For instance, during the 2023 LCK Summer Grand Finals, interviews conducted in Korean at the venue were simultaneously interpreted into English for the online audience (LCKGlobal, 2023). Similarly, at the 2023 LPL Summer Grand Finals in China, the interviewer and interviewees communicated in Mandarin, with simultaneous English interpretation provided for the online viewers (LPL, 2023). However, a contrasting scenario was observed at the 2023 PCS Summer Grand Finals in Taiwan, where, despite the post-game conversations at the venue occurring in Mandarin, no interpreting service was offered (LoLPacificChampionshipSeries, 2023). These varied approaches to language interpretation in esports events, even within tournaments of the same game and of comparable significance, have prompted an investigation into the field of esports interpreting. This study aims to delve into how interpreters operate within the industry, exploring the diverse working conditions and the challenges they face in different tournament settings.

In the field of esports, scholarly research has predominantly focused on defining esports, debating its status as a sport, and categorizing the industry. Similarly, interpreting studies have concentrated on sports and media settings, particularly examining interpreters' roles and functions. On the other hand, as of October 2023, there was a lack of research specifically dedicated to interpreting within esports. Despite past studies touching upon aspects relevant to esports interpreting, a distinct gap was identified in the literature regarding this specific area. This study seeks to address this gap by detailing the work conditions of interpreters in esports environments, offering valuable insights for those considering a career in this niche field. It aims to explore the challenges and complexities interpreters face in esports, thereby enhancing understanding of the industry's dynamics. Ultimately, this research aims to provide an exploratory examination of interpreting activities in esports settings, filling a significant void in existing literature and laying a foundation for both T&I practitioners and scholars to better grasp the nuances of the competitive gaming field.

Chapter 2: Literature review



The primary objective of this literature review is to explore the definition of esports, history, professionalization, tournament designs, and interpreting within the esports industry. This review delves into the historical trajectory of esports, outlining its transformation from informal competitive gaming to a sophisticated, professionalized domain. Furthermore, this chapter will highlight the pivotal milestones and technological advancements that have propelled esports into the forefront of contemporary entertainment and sporting culture. Subsequent sections will shed light on the implications of this professionalization, emphasizing the growing necessity for specialized services, such as interpreting, to bridge the gap between various linguistic and cultural barriers within the esports ecosystem. Through a comprehensive investigation of existing literature, this review aims to provide insights into the dynamic interplay between the historical evolution of esports, its professionalization, and the demand of the role of interpreting in facilitating effective communication and fostering growth for the industry.

2.1 Esports Introduction

This section introduces definition and genres of esports, the history of esports, the professionalization of esports, and the categorization of esports industries. By reviewing the past literature on the mentioned topics, this section aims at providing the basic understanding about esports before narrowing down to the scope of discussions to identify the research gap in both esports studies and interpreting studies.

2.1.1 Esports definition and genres

In delineating the concept of esports, it is crucial to emphasize that merely playing video games does not necessarily equate to engaging in esports; however, active participation in esports does entail playing video games (Marelić & Vukušić, 2019). Although a unanimous academic consensus on the definition of esports remains elusive, various perspectives have been presented in the literature to advance the understanding of this term. Building upon sports scientist Claus Tiedemann's redefined notion of "sports,"

Wagner (2006) posited that “eSports” is an area of sport activities in which people develop and train mental or physical abilities in the use of information and communication technologies. In contrast, Jenny et al. (2017), while endorsing a more comprehensive interpretation, contested Wagner’s definition, contending that it failed to accurately encapsulate the essence of esports. Jenny et al. (2017) argued for the exclusion of the mental component, advocating for a more straightforward definition centered on competition. They characterized esports as “organized video game competitions.” Newzoo’s reports from 2021 and 2022, aiming to precisely define and size the esports market, characterized esports as professional or semi-professional competitive gaming conducted in an organized format, such as tournaments or leagues. This definition emphasizes the presence of specific goals or prizes, which may include winning a championship title or securing prize money (Newzoo, 2021, 2022). The author of this study has selected the definition put forth by Jenny et al. (2017), as the goal of the study is to explore the work condition of interpreters under esports tournament settings. A more comprehensive and inclusive definition of esports would seem more reasonable than narrowing down the discussion with factors of athletes’ mental and physical capabilities or specifying the involvement of professional and semi-professional teams.

Not all game genres are qualified as esports (Pizzo et al., 2018; Funk et al., 2018). According to Bonny and Castaneda (2017), esports genres could be roughly categorized into multiplayer online battle arena games (MOBA), role-playing games, and shooting games. Based on such categorization, Jang and Byon (2020) argued that even though some esports games fit easily into certain genres, the extant esports genres required further definition as specific esports games may simultaneously possess features of different extant genres. For example, LoL clearly falls into the genre of MOBA, where players select champions with different skills, team up as five, and fight against another team to destroy each other’s base in a given map; the gameplay of Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO) leaves no room for confusion when categorized as first-person shooting (FPS) esports games, which players try to win matches via shooting at each other from a first person perspective; Starcraft II cannot be categorized as other genres than real time strategy (RTS) esports games, where players manage resources, build facilities, train troops, and fight against another player in a given map. In contrast, esports

games like Player Unknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) and Overwatch are more complicated in terms of the genres they fall into. For instance, PUBG is a battle royale esports game that large number of players are placed in a given map to fight against each other until there is only one standing. However, PUBG also involves gun fights that are conducted like FPS games. In addition, Overwatch, officially characterized as an FPS game, is described as a MOBA-inspired shooting game, where players select characters with different skillsets to engage in gun fights in a given map (Jang and Byon, 2020). Looking at the abovementioned games, Jang and Baron (2020) suggested that further definitions and categorizations of esports genres were needed and proposed three esports genre-related groups: imagination, physical enactment, and sport simulation. The imagination group included esports games based on imaginary worlds, rules, and characters. The physical enactment group included esports games requiring players' cognitive skills, fast reaction times, and vigilant monitoring as the game's primary features. The sport simulation group included esports games that emulate real-life sport events' rules, teams, or players (Jang and Baron, 2020). To conclude, even though different researchers had different views on the definition of the esports genres, it is clear that not all video games could be called esports titles.

2.1.2 A brief history of esports

The development of esports was constructed by three interconnected streams of development, namely the development of games, technology, and institutions (Besombes, 2019; Esports.net, 2023a; Larch, 2023). The advancement of technology has significantly contributed to the development of games, as exemplified by the rapid expansion of Internet coverage in Korea. This broader Internet access facilitated the establishment of PC bangs or internet cafes, which in turn nurtured the gaming culture within the country (Kym, 2004). Concurrently, the development of games has spurred innovation in the technology sector by highlighting hardware and software limitations, thereby fostering advancements to support increasingly creative gaming experiences. For example, the release of Donkey Kong, featuring a boyfriend trying to save his girlfriend from the villain Donkey Kong, led to the development of Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) that carried more popular games like Super Mario Bros, a plumber taking on the mission to save his princess, following the release of Donkey Kong (Tan, 2019). The development

of games also led to the establishment of gaming teams and tournaments (TwinGalaxies, 2023a). Similarly, the performance of the teams and tournament attracted more resources for the development of the game, providing a better environment for it to prosper and boosting demands for better hardware and software from the technology industry. For instance, in the case of LoL, players were invited onto the stage to play in front of a large group of audience in a stadium, and online spectators through streaming platforms (Xu, 2023). The esports history followed a relatively linear trajectory prior to the year 2000, meaning that the most popular game category of a period being succeeded by the next, until technological advancements enabled the simultaneous success of multiple games (Scholz, 2019b).

Following the inaugural esports tournament, the “Spacewar!” competition at Stanford University in 1972 (Besombes, 2019; Esports.net, 2023a; Larch, 2023; Migliore, 2021; Scholz, 2019b), numerous predecessors in hosting esports competitions emerged. Among them was SEGA, a leading Japanese game company, which played a pivotal role in the early development of esports. In 1974, SEGA held local tournaments at 300 locations across Japan, and sixteen finalists traveled to Tokyo’s Hotel Pacific for the grand final and competed on SEGA’s latest TV type amusement machines (Horowitz, 2022). The world saw the golden period of games starting from 1978 with the introduction of “Space Invaders” by Taito, a Japanese company specializing in producing video games and arcade cabinets then (Archer, 2023). “Space Invaders” is a game played on arcade machines, with players controlling a spaceship to defend their base by shooting aliens coming from the top of the arcade screen (shoot’em up games). The goal of the game is to defend as many waves of aliens as possible to achieve high score, forming the “high-score keeping” feature (NUBEO, 2023). Following shooting arcade games that included high-score keeping feature, games like “Asteroids” added new features to the development of games: players could enter their initials to keep their score on arcades (TheArcadeBlogger, 2023). In 1980, Atari, a video game system manufacturing brand, held one of the earliest and largest esports tournaments with “Space Invaders”, attracting more than 10,000 participants in the United States to compete for the championship title (darth-azrael, 2017). The high-score keeping combined with name initials led to the founding of score keeping organizations like “Twin Galaxies,” an organization founded in

1981 by an arcade owner called Walter Day (TwinGalaxies, 2023a). They traveled around the US to help keep track of and publish the highest scores of certain games, while promoting the play of arcade games. The score keeping organization later established its video game competition team (TwinGalaxies, 2023b), U.S. National Video Game Team, which carried on Twin Galaxies' mission and ran competition against teams of other countries.

In the 1990s, though there were still several high-score keeping games tournament being held (CAPSL, 2018; Esports.net, 2023a; Larch, 2023), fighting games tournaments apparently stole the thunder. "Street Fighter II" was the game changer that appeared in 1991, a PVP game featuring players controlling their characters to throw punches and kicks at each other (Baker, 2016, 2017; Esports.net, 2023a; Larch, 2023). Rather than focusing on competition based on high scores, arcade cabinets for fighting games drew crowds interested in observing how players employed various strategies to defeat their opponents in person (Haider, 2023). Fighting games, notably "Street Fighter II", paved the way for large-scale esports tournaments such as the international "Evolution Championship Series (EVO)", first held in 1996. This tournament has continued to the present day, fostering a global community that encompasses over 10 million casual gamers, esports enthusiasts, and industry professionals (EVO, 2023).

As the cost of PCs decreased and internet connectivity became widespread, other popular game genres and esports associations swiftly emerged (Noon, 2020). FPS online games like "Doom (1993)", "Quake (1996)", and "Counter Strikes (1999)" took over the western gaming community, and thus gave birth to large esports tournaments like "Quakecon (1996)", "Professional Gamers League (1997)", and "Cyberathlete Professional League CPL (1997)" (Scholz, 2019a; Zach, 2022). On the other hand, players in East Asian countries, particularly in Korea and China, preferred the MMORPG games and RTS games instead, including games like "Lineage (1998)", "Warcraft (1994)", "Age of Empires (1997)", and "Starcraft (1998)" (Hu, 2019; Zach, 2022). The surge in players in the field resulted in increasing popularity in esports and led to the founding of organizations backed by governments. For example, Korean e-sports Association (KeSPA) was founded in 2000 to promote and regulate the competitive gaming world (Hu, 2019; Moriarty, 2020).

During the first decade of the 21st century, the esports industry experienced stable development with tournaments being held globally. However, post-2008, the esports landscape underwent substantial changes due to the financial crises, the release of new games, and advancements in technology (Scholz, 2019). The 2008 subprime financial crises forced private sponsors to withdraw financial resources that the esports industry relied on for distributing prizes to tournament winners, resulting in a shrinking prize pool of the esports industry (Scholz, 2019). For example, World Cyber Games (WCG) 2010, the world's first international e-sports competition with a multi-game title started in 2001, had a prize pool of only \$250,000, down from \$500,000 in 2009 (EsportsEarnings, 2023; Scholz, 2019a). While it was exposed that the esports industry was too dependent on external financial support, games like "Starcraft II" and "League of Legends" became beacons that guided esports businesses to build sustainable business models (Scholz, 2019b). These lasting games were designed with competitive play and viewers in mind (Partin, 2020; Smith, 2019). The development of livestream platforms enabled esports games to incorporate more fans into the ecosystem to scale up the industry, therefore drawing more financial resources (Nino De Guzman, 2016; Partin, 2020; Scholz, 2019b; Smith, 2019). Platforms like Twitch and YouTube became home to esports content and drove the development of esports and led to the diverse landscape that are seen today.

2.1.3 Professionalization of esports

Professionalization lacks a universally agreed-upon definition, with scholars offering varied descriptions from different perspectives. Instead of discussing about the professionalization of an assignment or task, Parsons (1939) focused on the person carrying out tasks that could be described as a professional. People who worked a professional job were those possessing "professional authority" derived from superior "technical competence" and "specificity of function" (Parsons, 1938). Freidson (1972) emphasized the ambiguity of terms like "profession," "professionalization," and "professional" but suggested that a profession implied a highly organized occupation with a long-term career outlook. Abbott (1991) characterized it as the process of "certain white-collar occupations moving toward strong occupational control." Despite the absence of a precise definition, these insights laid the groundwork for understanding

professionalization, focusing on technical competence, occupational identity, and organizational structures.

The main drivers of esports professionalization are increased investment and the growth of streaming platforms (LegitSmoky, 2023). Rising investments contribute to the establishment of professional teams, leagues, events, venues, and training centers. This financial influx enhances the overall viability, visibility, and credibility of esports, attracting more viewers and increasing returns on investment. Simultaneously, the rapid development of streaming platforms like Twitch and YouTube broadens the reach of the esports industry, fostering a larger audience and attracting additional investment. This expansion fostered a larger audience and attracted more investment, creating a positive feedback loop that spurred further growth. This dynamic underscored the interdependent relationship between increased investment, the rise of streaming platforms, and the professionalization of esports.

Research on the professionalization of esports, including games like CS:GO and LoL, illuminates the practical dimensions of this evolving phenomenon. Xen (2017) posited that the emergence of “professional” tournaments signaled the commencement of professionalization within the esports industry, revealing parallels with traditional sports in aspects such as competitive spirit and institutionalization. Xen’s analysis, grounded in institutional theory and institutional work theory, delved into the professionalization process in CS:GO, highlighting the roles of key actors driving institutionalization. Xen (2017) concluded that various entities, such as organizations, communities, and players, engaged in two primary types of institutional work to foster CS:GO’s professionalization. The first, establishment work, aimed to augment the professionalism and legitimacy of CS:GO, elevating its presence in mainstream media. The second, shielding work, was directed towards safeguarding the interests of the players, organizations, and community. Xen (2017) asserted that these forms of institutional work were instrumental in advancing the esports industry’s development and furthering CS:GO’s institutionalization process.

In the context of LoL, Agha (2015) conducted an analysis on its professionalization, drawing parallels with the evolution of traditional sports industries, such as the National Football League (NFL). This comparison highlighted the establishment of leagues, seasons, and distinct player positions as pivotal steps in the

professionalization of the esports title. Central to this transformation was the role of Riot Games, the developer of LoL. As the authoritative body in the LoL arena, Riot Games was instrumental in standardizing international rules, instituting circuit points, and maintaining control over tournaments (Agha, 2015). Furthermore, Agha (2015) identified the unique feature of “Meta” in LoL as a significant factor contributing to its professionalization. “Meta,” which evolves in response to game updates, encompasses the most effective and efficient strategies for champion selection and gameplay to secure victories in matches. Alterations in the “Meta” trigger a domino effect within the LoL industry, necessitating the engagement of specialized talents to manage the implications of these changes. In brief, in the LoL industry, Riot played the authoritative role that standardized and controlled the operation of all LoL leagues, which contributed to the development of professionalization. In addition, the distinctive “Meta” mechanism forced teams to scout for higher level players that could swiftly adapt to different updates of the game, making the field more professionalized.

In summary, past research has underscored the importance of proactive actors in facilitating institutionalization, the presence of high-level organizations capable of setting international standards, and the distinctive features of esports games that require specialized talents, as key drivers in the development of professionalization in this field.

2.1.4 Categorization of Esports Industry

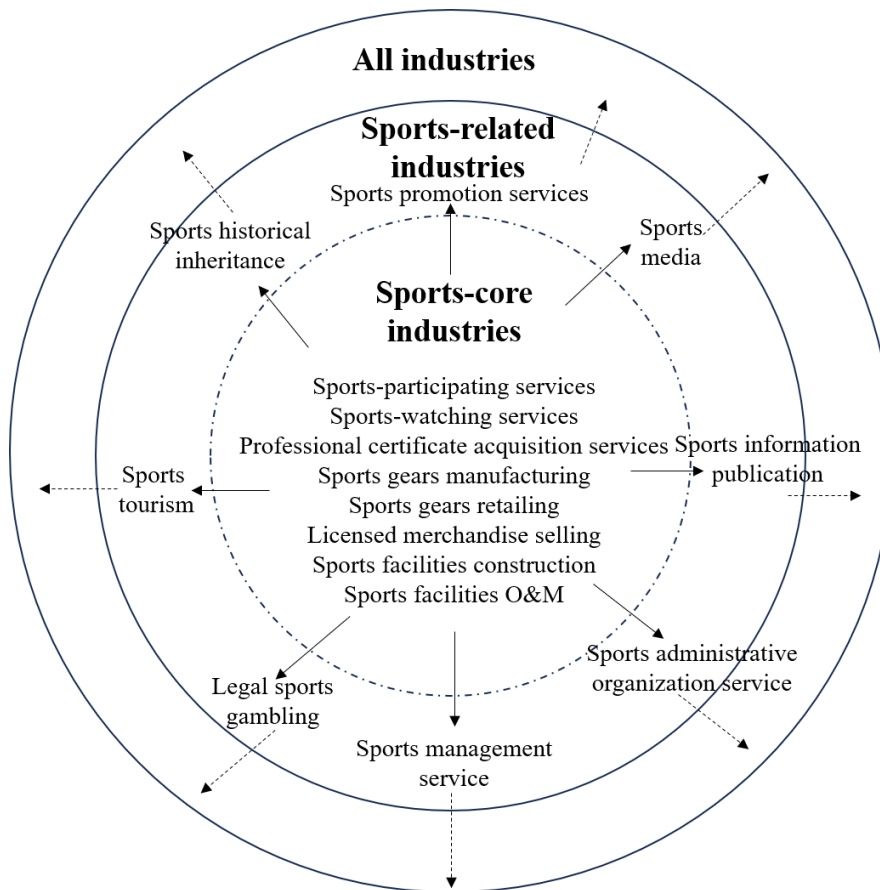
As the esports industry experienced increased investment and professionalization across its value chain, researchers have sought to categorize its diverse segments for efficient investment strategies and enhanced collaboration. Aside from the definitions of key terms in esports industries, researchers like Lee (2008) and Chou (2018) directed the research focus to the commercial field. Inspired by the categorization of the sports industry by Ye (2001) and the value chain description of the esports industry by Lee (2008), Chou (2018) identified key segments within the esports industry through qualitative interviews with stakeholders, which the present study has chosen to adopt when referring to stakeholders involved in the esports industry.

In the categorization of Ye (2001) of the sports industry, two main divisions are recognized and displayed in Figure 1: “core industries” and “sports-related” industries. Core industries are essential for the conduct of sports, indicating that without them,

athletes would be unable to engage in sporting activities. These industries include services for sports participation, sports-viewing, professional certification acquisition, as well as the manufacturing and retailing of sports gear. Additionally, they encompass the selling of licensed merchandise, construction of sports facilities, and their operation and management. The development of these core industries gives rise to related industries that further support and expand the sports sector. Sports-participating services are service providers that hold sports events for athletes to play sports. Sports-watching services are service providers that offer services to watch the athletes play sports. Professional certificate acquisition services are services that certify professional personnel for the need of sports occasions. Sports gear manufacturing industries consist of companies that manufacture sports tangible assets. Sports gears retailing industries are composed of enterprises whose profit mainly comes from selling manufactured sports gears. Licensed merchandise selling are companies that are being authorized or licensed by athletes, sports organizations, or event organizers to sell specific products. Sports facilities industries and sports facilities operation and management are industries that profit from building sports-related facilities and operating and managing the buildings (Ye, 2001).

Figure 1

The Categorization of Sports Industries



Note. The figure was translated by the author of this study from Mandarin to illustrate the categorization of sports industries. Adapted from “*Lun Yun Dong Chan Ye Zhi Fan Wei Yu Fen Lei*” [The Scope and Categories of Sports Industries] by Ye, G.-D. (2001), “*Yun Dong Guan Li Ji Kan*” [Sports Management Quarterly], P.19.

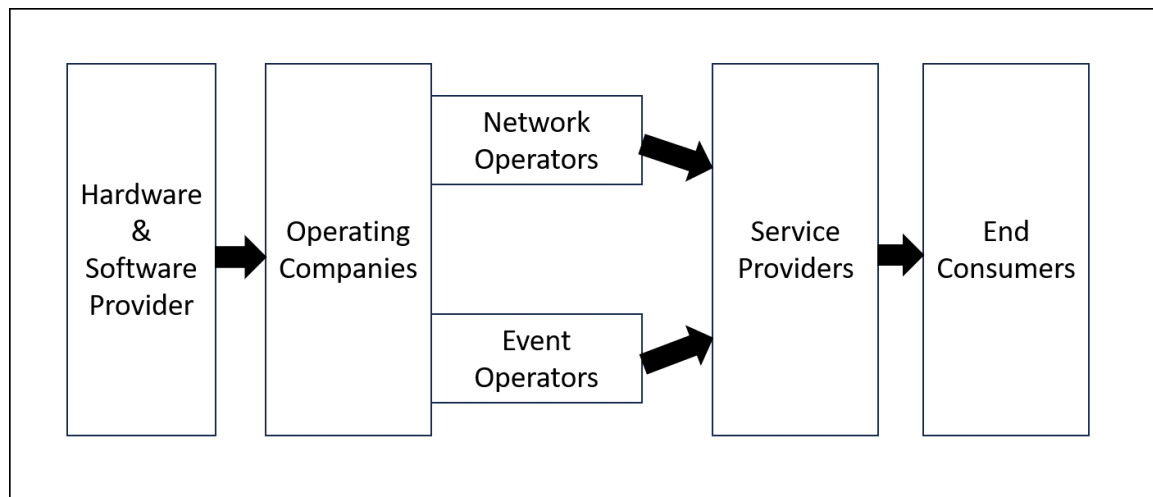
As shown in Figure 2, Lee (2008) dissected the value chain of the esports industry, categorizing it into three key segments: upstream, comprising hardware and software suppliers; middle stream, consisting of network operators and event operators; and downstream, encompassing media-related services and end consumers. The upstream stakeholders are the main sponsors who provide software or hardware for the esports events to advertise themselves or their products. The middlestream stakeholders leverage the sponsorship from the upstream to organize esports events and attract consumption from the downstream stakeholders, i.e., media-related service providers and end

consumers. The media-related stakeholders would pay the middlestream stakeholders for broadcasting rights and profit from end consumers or advertisements. He also emphasized that the industry's core value resides in the organization and promotion of events.



Figure 2

The Value Chain of the Esports Industry



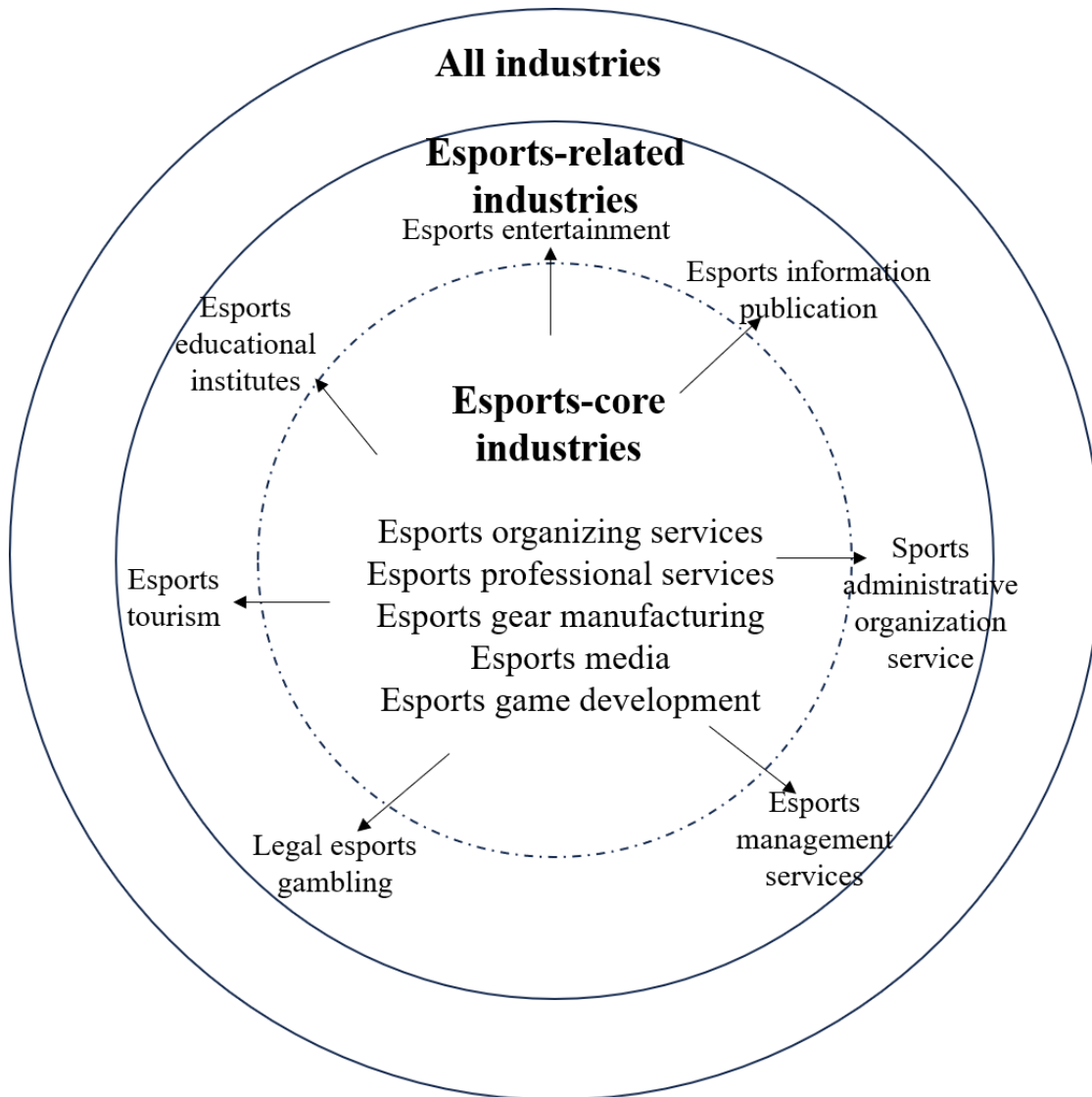
Note. The figure was translated by the author of this study from Mandarin to illustrate the value chain of esports industries. Adapted from “*Wo Guo Dian Zi Jing Ji Chan Ye De Fa Zhan Yan Jiu*” [Research on the National Development of Esports Industry], by Lee, T. (2008), Guangxi Normal University, Guangxi, China, P.9.

Chou (2018) integrated insights from these studies and proposed his own esports industry categorization, differentiating between core and related industries as demonstrated in Figure 3. The core industries are those that are fundamental to the esports industry, meaning the esports industry would not exist if the core industries were not in place. The related industries are those that relied on the core to help expand the esports industry. Within the core industry, specific segments include esports organizing services, esports professional services, esports gear manufacturing, esports media, and esports game development. The esports organizing services are esports event organizers that profit from organizing the events and providing event-watching services. Esports professional services consist of professionally trained personnel like esports athletes,

coaches, referees, and analytics. Esports gear manufacturing industries are mainly composed of PC companies that manufacture PCs and PC-related products, and they are often the biggest sponsors of esports events. Esports media are media companies that broadcast and report on the esports event via TV, the Internet, and magazines, especially via livestream platforms. Esports game development sector centers around the production, operation, and marketing of the esports games, such as Riot Games that runs LoL.

Figure 3

The Categorization of the Esports Industries



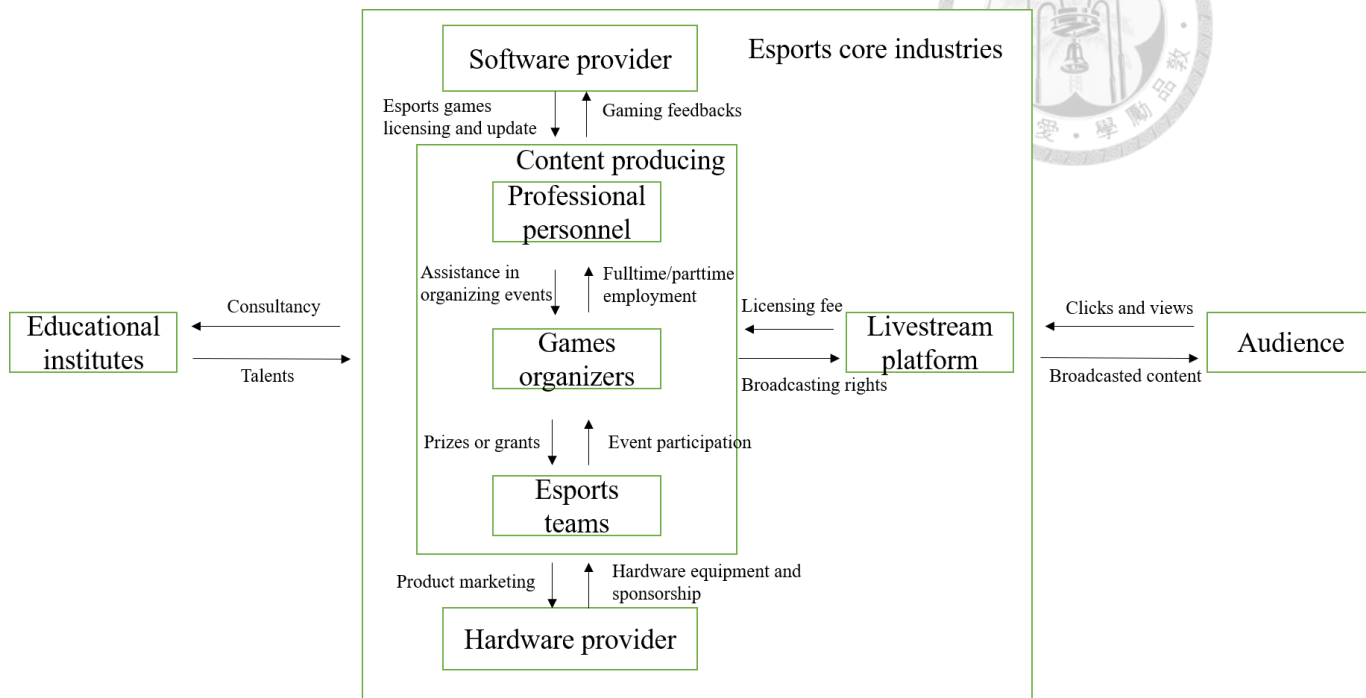
Note. The figure was translated by the author of this study from Mandarin to illustrate the categories of esports industries. Adapted from “*Tai Wan Dian Jing Chan Ye Lian Zhi Jian Gou - Yi Ying Xiong Lian Meng Wei Li*” [The Construction of eSports Industry Chain in Taiwan: The Case Study of League of Legend] by Chou, C.-h. (2018), National Chengchi University, Taiwan, AiritiLibrary.



Chou (2018) further described how esports value chain operated in Taiwan. In contrast to the value chain proposed by Lee (2008) that featured an upstream to downstream process, Chou (2018) indicated that there are bidirectional interactions between stakeholders of the value chain (see Figure 4). At the center are key players within the esports-core industry, with professional personnel, event organizers, and professional esports teams producing esports content on the basis of support from hardware and software producers. The content is broadcasted via esports media like livestream platforms to audience members or end users, and the latter return with clicks and views. The esports-core industry also relies on educational institutes to train talents and would offer consultancy in return.

Figure 4

The Value Chain of Esports industries in Taiwan



Note. The figure was translated by the author of this study from Mandarin to illustrate the categories of esports industries. Adapted from “*Tai Wan Dian Jing Chan Ye Lian Zhi Jian Gou - Yi Ying Xiong Lian Meng Wei Li*” [The Construction of eSports Industry Chain in Taiwan: The Case Study of League of Legend] by Chou, C.-h. (2018), National Chengchi University, Taiwan, AiritiLibrary.

The value chain and categorization of esports industry identified in Chou’s research is deemed suitable to the present study due to the comprehensive list of stakeholders and the identification of the most valuable segment on the industry chain. On one hand, the list of stakeholders mentioned in Figure 3 provided direction for the author of this study to search for organizations that would need interpreting services. On the other hand, the value chain portrayed in Figure 4 pointed out the most valuable stakeholders in the esports industry that accumulated the most resources to ensure a smooth operation, meaning there is a greater chance for interpreters to take part in facilitating more efficient and effective communication between stakeholders. Thus, the

author of this study reckons that the categorization and value chain outlined by Chou (2018) are suitable for the present study.



2.2 Esports Tournament Design

Tournaments are mechanisms used to rank the performance of the participants, usually in sporting contests whereby contestants are pitted against in each other in matchups to determine the best contestant (Bashir, 2023). In the realm of sports, tournaments can take various forms. These include round-robin leagues, where contestants compete against all other contestants before eliminations occur, knock-out competitions, where elimination follows each match between contestants, or hybrid formats that combine elements of both approaches (O'Donoghue, 2018). The structure of tournaments varies regarding factors like participation, revenues, entertainment value, and safety (O'Donoghue, 2018). In large sports tournaments, stakeholders may include governments, community, sports organizations, media, and delegations, where conflicts of interest take place and force event organizers to communicate over issues like politics, visibility, financial, organizing, relationships, operations, sport, infrastructure, human resource, media, interdependence, participation, and legacy (Parent, 2008).

Esports games are designed with unique tournament formats and settings (Pensica, 2021). Additionally, it's worth noting that even the same esports game may feature different formats and settings (Tan, 2022). One fundamental distinction of tournaments lies in whether they are open or closed, characterized by whether competing players are limited to invitationals only or not (Pensica, 2021). Another important distinction is the series of games played. Similar to the Worlds Series of Major Baseball League (MLB), esports teams also play a series of games to determine the winner of a match, usually in the format of best of 1 (Bo1), best of 3 (Bo3), best of 5 (Bo5), or best of 7 (Bo7) (Pensica, 2021). In addition to round-robin leagues and knockout games, common esports tournament structures include Swiss Seeding, featuring random grouping in the first round of competition, and winners versus winners, losers versus losers in the following rounds for elimination (Pinnacle, 2020). The main stakeholders that would appear in a tournament are game publishers, sponsors, tournament organizers, media, fans, players, and team personnel (Peng et al., 2020).

2.3 Interpreting in Esports and Traditional Sports

Similar to the globalization of athletes in traditional sports (Baines, 2013), esports athletes have been traversing the globe to compete for foreign professional teams (Browning, 2021; Jeon, 2021; Liang, 2020; Smith, 2019). In such a context, the need for interpreting services becomes apparent, particularly during post-game interviews or press conferences at esports tournaments (LCKGlobal, 2022, 2023; LPL, 2023), where stakeholders from diverse language backgrounds engage in conversations. Internal communication between foreign players and other key roles of esports teams may also require assistance from interpreters (Jang, 2021).

While no published study has specifically identified the providers of interpreting services within the esports industry, video footage from esports tournaments suggests that such services were often furnished by in-house interpreters employed by game developers (LCKGlobal, 2022, 2023), staff interpreters affiliated with esports teams (Jang, 2021), interpreters associated with livestream platforms (Lightening, 2022), or even the streamers themselves (CaedrelClips, 2023). In settings such as post-game interviews, the content being interpreted often pertains to decision-making processes during games and the emotions experienced after a match. In these scenarios, interpretation is frequently conducted simultaneously for online audiences and consecutively for attendees present at the event (CaedrelClips, 2023; LCKGlobal, 2022, 2023; LPL, 2023). Conversely, in the context of press conferences, the interpreted conversations typically revolve around expectations for upcoming games or the future development of individuals or organizations. In this context, interpretations are often carried out consecutively (PresenaEsports, 2023).

While there is no published study focusing on esports interpreting, published studies on sports interpreting and media interpreting may help deepen the understanding of esports interpreting, as esports are considered a subcategory of sports (Esports.net, 2023b), and interpreting for post-game interviews and press conferences is a common practice in media interpreting (Pöchhacker, 2007; Sandrelli, 2017, 2018a, 2018b).

Sports interpreting studies have examined interpreted events occurring both externally and internally (Chang, 2023; Lee, 2019; Sandrelli, 2015; Yue, 2008). This distinction encompasses interpreting needs arising from conversations between

stakeholders who are not part of the same organization, as well as those resulting from communication between key players within an organization. For interpreted events between stakeholders of different organizations, studies like Yue (2008) looked at large scale sports events to deepen their understandings about interpreting in such settings. In the study of Yue (2008), simultaneous and consecutive interpreting tasks within press conferences and prearranged conferences for sports organizations were carried out by professionally trained interpreters, while liaison interpretation were handled by sports enthusiasts who volunteered to become language facilitators for foreign teams during the Sydney Olympics. The working condition of the former group varied depending on the venues they were placed in, while the working condition of the latter group did not fit in any general description because the enthusiasts were required to follow the athletes or coaches everywhere (Yue, 2008).

Arguing that sports interpreters do not fall under the categories of conference interpreters nor community interpreters, Lee (2019) and Chang (2023) suggested that interpreters working for professional or semi-professional traditional sports teams be categorized as an extension of in-house interpreters.

Referencing from Yessis's (1981) statement that sport has its own specialized terminology and language and Lee's (2016) elaboration on in-house interpreters, Lee (2019) identified that few discussions were made regarding the interpreting service in the more globalized baseball industry in Taiwan. To contribute to the identified research gap, Lee (2019) collected data by recruiting team interpreters, players, coaches from the same professional team in Taiwan for interviews, as well as practicing field observation at the spring camp of the mentioned team. Referencing from the list of the roles of in-house interpreters by Lee (2016), Lee (2019) concluded his list of roles that were played by sports interpreters on the Taiwanese professional baseball team. Beyond the traditional conduit role, sports interpreters are also assistant coaches, emotion filters, team administrative staff, and personal assistants (Lee, 2019).

Chang (2023) followed the path of Lee (2019) but placed her research focus on the field of professional and semi-professional basketball league in Taiwan. While also having conducted semi-structured interviews and field observation, Chang (2023) concluded that team interpreters on professional and semi-professional basketball teams

in Taiwan share similar work responsibilities but played different roles. She compared the concluded roles and responsibilities of her study with those of Lee's (2019) study, as well as those mentioned by Chen (2021), who analyzed the roles of sports interpreters of one professional basketball team in Taiwan. As shown in Figure 5, Chang (2023) compared her research results with the roles listed by Lee (2019) and the clearly defined responsibilities of sports interpreters by Chen (2021). Chang (2023) concluded a list of roles played by basket sports interpreters in Taiwan that are more similar to the roles of baseball interpreters by Lee (2019). However, the roles of administration staff and personal assistants were removed as Chang (2023) discovered that basketball interpreters in Taiwan are not accountable for these roles, which was similar to the findings of Chen (2021).

Figure 5

Comparison of Lee's (2019), Chen's (2021), and Chang's (2023) Categories of Team Interpreters' Roles

Roles by Lee (2019)	Responsibilities by Chen (2021)	Roles by Chang (2023)	Roles by Chen (2021)
N/A	N/A	Conduit	Conduit
Assistant Coach/Foreign Coaches' Right-Hand Man	Assistant Coach Team Trainer	Assistant Coach Coaches' Right-Hand Man	Mediator
Conflict Mediator/Emotion Filter	N/A	Conflict Mediator/Emotion Filter	Mediator
Team Administration Staff	N/A	N/A	Mediator
Personal Assistant/Foreign Players' Lifeline	Partner and Soul Mate of the Team Members	N/A	Mediator
N/A	Energy Guy	N/A	Mediator

Note. This figure demonstrates the different categorization of sports interpreters' roles by different researchers. Excerpted from “*Taiwan zhiye yu ban zhiye lanqiu lianmeng kouyi yuan juese zhi yanjiu*” [A study on the roles of team interpreters in professional and semi-professional basketball leagues in Taiwan] by Chang, Y. C. (2023), National Taiwan University Graduate Program of Translation and Interpretation, P.58



From the studies conducted by Lee (2019) and Chang (2023), staff interpreters in Taiwan's professional sports teams assume roles that extend beyond being mere interpreting service providers: interpreters are assistant coaches or foreign coaches' right hand man when they are either on the court or in the locker room communicating with local key players (Chang, 2023; Lee, 2019); they serve as conflict mediators and emotion filters in practice or game venues between coaches and athletes (Chang, 2023; Lee, 2019); interpreters take on team administration responsibilities in offices (Lee, 2019); sports interpreters even function as personal assistants and lifelines for foreign players that provide not only interpreting services at press conferences, but also everyday life assistance for foreign athletes or coaches outside of their organization.

For interpreting studies looking at sports television, the source of the interpreted content could be coming from important figures of an event like athletes or coaches, or content created by sports commentators (Torres-Diaz & Ghignoli, 2014). Instead of narrowing down the research scope to staff interpreters of professional teams, studies directing attention at interpreters in sports press conferences show that the functions of interpreters are relatively straightforward focusing on facilitating communication between different parties (Sandrelli, 2015). Interpreters primarily serve as intermediaries who facilitate and coordinate dialogues between individuals of different language backgrounds. However, the interpreting mode employed may vary regarding their working condition, such as the available equipment, the arranged seats of the interpreters and interpret service users, the primary interlocutors' language proficiency and familiarity with interpreting services, and the established interpreting protocol of the press conference (Sandrelli, 2015). The equipment at hand and the distance between the primary interlocutors and the interpreters result in different interpreting modes, such as whisper interpreting, dialogue interpreting, consecutive interpreting, and simultaneous

interpreting (Sandrelli, 2015). The primary interlocutors' language proficiency and familiarity with interpreting services, also whether there is an established interpreting protocol in place, would force the interpreters to play different roles during press conferences. The roles include the reporter, who relays messages between languages adopting the first-person point of view, recapitulatory, who relays messages between different languages adopting the third-person point of view, author, who produces coordinated talks rather than interpretation to improve the communication process, and prompter, who provides occasional language assistance for interpreting service users when necessary (Sandrelli, 2015; Wadensjo, 1998).

2.4 Interpreting in League of Legends

League of Legends, or LoL, is a famous MOBA esports game released by Riot Games in 2009 (Agha, 2015). The esports game revolves around two teams of five players each. The objective is to destroy the opposing team's Nexus, a core building located within their base. Players choose a champion with unique abilities and strengths, forming a balanced team with diverse roles such as tanks, damage dealers, and support (Agha, 2015). Over the years, LoL has garnered attention and formed a large user base: League of Legends has a player count of 180 million monthly active players as of 2022 (Samanta, 2024). Rather than relying on subscription fees for the game, Riot Games adopted a free-to-play model and monetized the esports game through alternative methods, achieving remarkable success. In January 2021, League of Legends (LoL) generated revenue of \$1.75 billion for Riot Games, primarily from in-game transactions, advertising, and sales income at tournaments (Cuofano, 2023).

While League of Legends (LoL) tournaments could theoretically be organized by any entity, those hosted by Riot Games have consistently attracted the largest global audience. For instance, the 2023 LoL Worlds, held in South Korea, achieved a peak concurrent viewership of 6.4 million and an average viewership of nearly 1.3 million over its 116-hour duration, excluding Chinese viewership (Daniels, 2023). Leading teams from the eight regional leagues of LoL attend tournaments held by Riot Games to win international championship titles. These Riot-held tournaments are usually hosted in the lingua franca of the location of the tournament, with interpreting services provided to

help facilitate communication between foreign teams and live audience and cater to the interpreting needs of overseas fans watching via livestreaming platforms.

From video footages released by LoL official YouTube channels, interpreting activities could be observed in three kinds of occasions: post-game interviews, press conferences, and livestream (LCKGlobal, 2022, 2023; LoLPacificChampionshipSeries, 2023; LPL, 2023; PresenaEsports, 2023). In press conferences, if the interviewed team is not from an English-speaking country, an interpreter would be stationed outside of the camera frame to conduct consecutive interpreting for the team (PresenaEsports, 2023). In post-game interviews, interpreting activities would take place when the interviewee is not comfortable speaking English. In such context, in addition to the host of the tournament, a bilingual host or interpreter would be present to facilitate communication between the interviewer and the interviewee either by whispering or interpreting consecutively (LPL, 2023). Interpreting activities also happen when the tournament is livestreamed in a language other than English, which is usually the case of the Grand finals of regional leagues (LPL, 2023). In these kinds of cases, simultaneous interpretation is provided for the online audience, regardless of the presence of on-site interpretation (LCKGlobal, 2022, 2023; LPL, 2023).

2.5 The present study

While the author of this study has been able to identify certain interpreting patterns and modes in LoL tournaments, the existence of a standardized mode for performing interpreting services and distinct boundaries for the role that interpreters play among the esports stakeholders remain unclear. For instance, there was no online simultaneous interpretation provided for the 2023 PCS Summer Grand Finals, whereas such services were available for the LPL and LCK tournaments. In addition, though scholars like Chou (2018) have outlined a clear landscape of the core categories and stakeholders, not attention has been allocated to the communication under the globalized setting where interpreters play a big part of. The successful global deployment of LoL has evidently relied on extensive localization efforts, as demonstrated by the numerous regional leagues and servers catering to players from diverse backgrounds worldwide. The presence of visible bilingual hosts and interpreters serves as evidence that previous

literature in esports studies has not adequately incorporated the language service sector into the esports landscape. Recognizing the limited discussion on esports interpreting in both esports and interpreting studies, this study aims to explore interpreting activities in the esports setting and the roles that interpreters play in the esports industry. This exploration will be conducted from the perspectives of interpreting service providers and other core stakeholders involved in esports tournament games.

The current study selects LoL as a case study due to its significant market value, a well-defined value chain, and an extensive history of tournaments. To begin with, LoL generated considerable revenue for Riot Games, amounting to \$1.75 billion by January 2021. This income stemmed from various sources, including in-game transactions, advertising, and tournament sales (Cuofano, 2023). Additionally, the value chain of LoL is notably robust, with stakeholders within the esports game easily identifiable through the esports industry categorization framework proposed by Chou (2018), as illustrated in Table 1. Moreover, by December 2023, the number of LoL tournaments had reached 3,669, ranking second only to CS:GO, which had 7,396 tournaments and was released a decade earlier than LoL (escharts.com, 2023). The high market value of LoL indicates a promising future for the game. Its well-structured value chain suggests increased interactions among stakeholders, and the frequent hosting of tournaments offers abundant data collection opportunities. Given these factors, this study considers LoL tournaments an apt subject for exploring the research questions.

Table 1

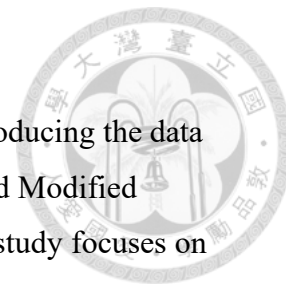
The Companies on the Value Chain of LoL in the Esports Core Industry

Esports core industry	LoL stakeholders
Esports organizing service	Riot Games
Esports professional service	Professional Teams (T1, JDG, BLG, etc.)
Esports gear manufacturing	Alienware (Dell), Logitech
Esports media	YouTube, Twitch
Esports game developer	Riot Games

Note. The table was created by the author of this study to demonstrate some of the renowned companies on the value chain of LoL that are in the industries categorized as esports-core industries by Chou in 2018.



Chapter 3: Methodology



This section outlines the methodology of the present study, introducing the data collection and analysis methods, namely semi-structured interviews and Modified Grounded Theory Analysis, or M-GTA (Kinoshita, 2007). The present study focuses on interviewing interpreting service providers, athletes, coaches, team managers, tournament organizers, and media to learn about their experiences of esports interpreting. The interview results will then be coded and grouped to form concepts and categories to address the following research questions:

1. What specific tasks and assignments does an interpreting service provider in a professional esports tournament have to perform within the PCS league? What challenges and struggles do they experience when assisting the communication process?
2. What role does an esports interpreting service provider play in the PCS games? Is their role closer to a bilingual host of the event, a journalist, a publicist for specific stakeholders, or an impartial Translator?¹ How do esports ISPs themselves and ISUs, i.e., players, coaches, esports team managers, media, and esports tournament organizers, perceive the ISPs in an esports tournament setting?

The following sections are the details of the process of semi-structured interviews, including introduction to the participants and interview questions, followed by an explanation of applying the M-GTA. The goal of the methodology is to generate a passage, describing the work of the esports interpreting service providers with the identified concepts and categories from the answers of the interviewees.

3.1 Data Collection and Participants

The present study aims to utilize semi-structured interviews to collect data from various sources in the esports industry, including esports service providers, esports athletes, coaches, team managers, event organizers, and media, to achieve data triangulation. Semi-structured interviews have long been one of the favorable ways to

¹ The capitalized “Translators” and “Translation” addressed herein and after refer to the “translation and interpretation practitioners” and the “general translation and interpretation assignments” that they work on.

explore the role of interpreters in the sports setting (Chang, 2023; Chen, 2021; Itaya, 2017, 2021; Lee, 2019; Yue, 2008), as they guarantee the respondents to answer the research questions directly, and provide a certain degree of flexibility for researchers to maneuver and probe for more unexpected details. The goal of the semi-structured interviews of the present study is to collect perspectives and opinions on the working conditions and roles of the esports interpreting service providers from the participants listed below.

The author of this study has recruited participants for the semi-structured interviews through referrals of personal connections and social media. Participants are recruited if they have provided interpreting services (the ISPs²) in an LoL PCS tournament game, or they have been interpreting service users (the ISUs³) from the esports core-industries, such as esports athletes, coaches, team managers, event organizers, and media. Streamers, who are potential ISPs, were not recruited for semi-structured interviews unless they were being employed by teams or event organizers to interpret in tournaments, as their work is not restricted to esports tournament settings. This study recruited 21 participants that have participated in interpreting activities in esports tournament settings, and their categorization is shown in Figure 6. Subsequent to the semi-structured interviews, the author of the present study found out that many ISPs also shared the experiences as the ISUs. Therefore, the list of participants is organized in a form of two overlapping circles. The diagram depicts mere ISPs (mISPs⁴) and mere ISUs (mISUs⁵) at opposite ends, with those holding dual perspectives, the PDPs⁶, represented in the overlapping area.

² ISPs: Abbreviation for interpreting service providers, referring to anyone who interprets in esports tournament settings regardless of their job titles.

³ ISUs: Abbreviation for interpreting service users, referring to anyone involves in an interpreted conversation but does not play the part as an ISP.

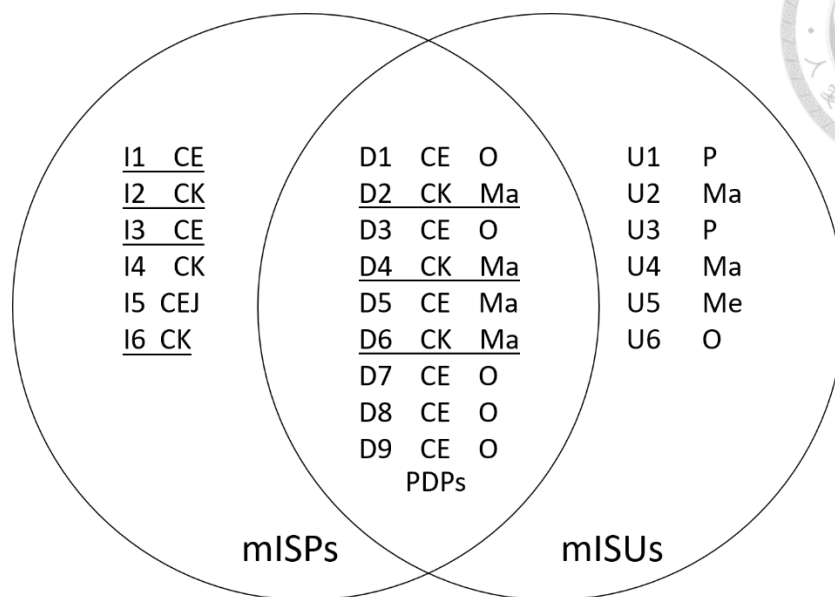
⁴ mISPs: ISPs who do not possess experiences as ISUs.

⁵ mISUs: ISUs who do not possess experiences as ISPs.

⁶ PDPs: People who have worked in esports settings and possess experiences of ISPs and ISUs.

Figure 6

The Participants of the Semi-structured Interviews



Note. The table is created by the author of the present study to demonstrate the list of participants of the semi-structured interviews. The table shows details of the participants, including whether they are interpreting mere service providers or users. For the mISPs, the letters next to the participant codes stand for their working language, with “C” for Mandarin Chinese, “E” for English, “K” for Korean, and “J” for Japanese. For the mISUs, the letters next to the participant codes stand for their identity, with “P” for players, “Ma” for managers, “O” for organizers, and “Me” for media workers. If an ISP’s code is presented with an underline, it means that the ISP has a language background.

I1 served as a CH-EN staff interpreter for Taiwan’s professional baseball team and previously worked as a part-time escort interpreter for League of Legends (LoL) tournaments in Taiwan. Despite holding a language-related degree, I1 lacked formal professional interpreting training. However, I1 did attend classes at a prestigious translation and interpretation graduate institute in Taiwan. The LoL tournament attended by I1 was held in Taipei, rendering I1 eligible for inclusion in the present study.

I2 is a CH-KR freelance conference interpreter with a master’s degree in Korean literature and extensive industry experience. I2 has provided interpretation services for

renowned LoL Korean stars during their visits to Taiwan, thereby earning an invitation to participate in the present study.

I3 is a CH-EN freelance interpreter who collaborated with LoL PCS games organizers to conduct post-game interview interpretation. Despite holding a bachelor's degree in British literature, I3 lacked formal professional interpreting training. I3 attributed language acquisition to a period spent in the US during high school and university.

I4 is a CH-KR freelance translator and interpreter without formal language-related qualifications. Despite lacking an interpreting certificate, I4 enhanced Korean language proficiency during a working holiday journey. I4 was hired by esports teams to interpret for Korean athletes imported to Taiwan, facilitating the competitiveness of teams in the PCS region.

I5 is a Mandarin, English, and Japanese ISP with experience in the 2024 PCS Spring Split. Despite lacking language-related qualifications or interpreting certificates, I5 worked as a freelance interpreter and was designated as a “referee” by the event organizer, primarily assisting Japanese LoL teams during their stay in Taiwan.

I6 served as a staff ISP for PCS teams in Taiwan, providing interpretation and support for Korean players imported for LoL esports activities.

U1 is a Taiwanese LoL esports professional athlete who commenced their career in 2017 and secured contracts with teams from the PCS region. Throughout various seasons, U1 attended several international events, utilizing interpreting services to receive and respond to queries from esports media or game hosts.

U2, U3, and U4 are acquaintances of U1, having been ex-colleagues on a Hong Kong-based team in the PCS region. U2 and U4 serve as team managers, while U3 is a professional LoL athlete. They shared experiences using interpreting services or working with ISPs, particularly when Korean players or coaches were involved.

U5 is an experienced LoL esports media editor, utilizing interpreting services provided by event organizers when conducting interviews with foreign players.

U6 worked with LoL teams in Taiwan and currently manages the LJL league under the PCS region, offering insights into interpreting services from the ISU side.

D1 is an employee of Riot who performed CH-EN short consecutive interpretation for Taiwanese esports athletes during international events. Lacking formal language or interpreting training, D1 attributed successful interpreting experiences to Taiwanese-American ethnicity and industry background. In addition to interpretation, D1 provided perspectives on working with other ISPs as an esports event organizer.

D2 served as a CH-KR staff interpreter for a competitive esports team in Taiwan, with a bachelor's degree in Korean literature but lacking professional interpreter or translator training. Initially employed as an interpreter, D2 later assumed team manager responsibilities, providing insights from both the provider and user perspectives of interpreting services.

D3 served as a broadcast host, or shoutcaster, for a company overseeing LoL online games and tournaments in Taiwan. During international assignments, D3 provided interpretation services, offering dual perspectives on the role of ISPs in the LoL PCS league.

D4 functioned as a community manager for a Hong Kong LoL team and acted as a backup Korean ISP for foreign players, leveraging language-related qualifications.

D5 served as a team manager for a renowned PCS team, initially employed as a staff interpreter for an American coach before transitioning to managerial roles.

D6 served as a backstage Korean-Mandarin ISP for an LoL tournament in Kaohsiung, offering insights from both provider and user perspectives of interpreting services.

D7 worked in the LoL PCS region in various capacities, including shoutcaster colleague, ISP for PCS teams at international tournaments, and content creation manager for the 2024 PCS Spring Split.

D8 held roles in game localization for LoL in PCS and later assumed managerial positions for the Southeast Asia region, providing ISP services during international tournaments.

D9 is one of the first female shoutcasters and ISPs in Taiwan, overseeing LoL publish matters in the PCS region and providing dual perspectives on esports interpreting from both provider and user sides.

The author of this study started to interview participants starting from the beginning of April, 2024. Each interview lasted around 30 to 45 minutes. The interview questions for ISPs are designed based on four themes (See Appendices A and B):

1. Personal background: What is their educational background? How did they come across esports interpreting?
2. Interpreting experiences: What are their interpreting experiences in an LoL tournament game setting? What are the tasks and challenges that they need to face in LoL tournament game setting?
3. Recommendation: What kinds of qualities are required to become competent esports interpreting service provider? What is the ideal working condition for them?
4. Compare and contrast: Have they interpreted in other settings such as sports industries? What are the similarities and differences between other industries and the esports industry?

On the other hand, the interview questions for ISUs focus on the following three themes (See Appendices C and D):

1. Perceptions on the interpreting service providers: What is the occasion and the experience of working with an interpreting service provider? How do they interact and how do the interpreter help them with their tasks in an LoL tournament game setting? How do they perceive the interpreting service provider?
2. Recommendation: What else can be done to improve the communication between the interpreters and the core-stakeholders of the esports industry? Do you have any suggestion for improving the cross-cultural communication process in the field?
3. Compare and contrast: Have you experienced interpreting services in different settings? What are the similarities and differences between then and the esports interpreting that you have personally encountered?

PDPs, having interpreting experience on both sides, are presented with both sets of interview questions but are interviewed following the structure of the ISP question set. Either the author of the present study or the participant may leverage the flexibility of semi-structured interviews to ask or respond to questions from the ISU question set.

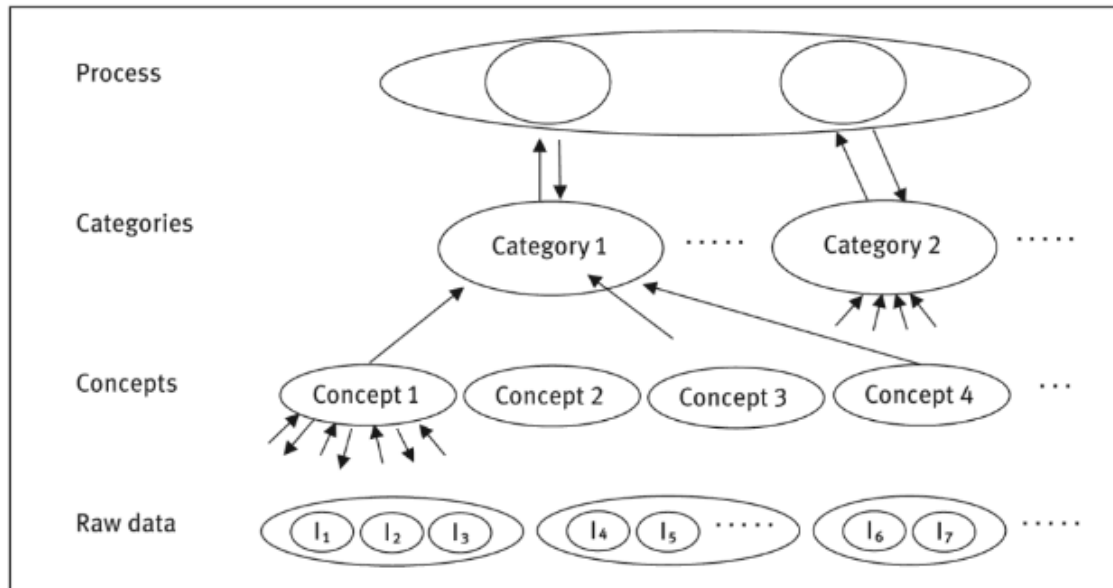
The interviews with the participants are conducted online through accessible video conference software such as Zoom, Webex, Line, etc. The conversations are conducted in either Mandarin or English, depending on the participants' preferences, and recorded for future transcription and analysis. An interview consent form is distributed to each participant at least one day prior to the interview and signed and returned from them at the beginning of the interview. Upon completion of the interview, the participants are provided with NT\$ 700 in cash as compensation for their time.

3.2 Data Analysis

This research employs the Modified Grounded Theory Approach, or M-GTA, developed by Kinoshita (2003, 2007) to analyze the collected data and derive concepts and theories for addressing the research questions. The M-GTA is developed on the basis of grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, with the premise that all grounded theories fulfill the following requirements: 1) They should be grounded on data, and theory is generated; 2) data are categorized using *open coding* and *selective coding*; 3) categories emerge from data using the *constant comparative method*; 4) *theoretical sampling* occurs as the researcher considers the next steps in data collection; 5) *theoretical saturation* is reached when conceptual categories have sufficient substantial evidence to support them (Kinoshita, 2003). Figure 7 shows the specific processes that researchers undergo when applying M-GTA. There are two stages of coding in M-GTA, open and selective coding, with the former forming “concepts” from “raw data” and the latter grouping “concepts” into thematic “categories” (Kambaru, 2018). Eventually, a “Storyline” will be narrated with the formed concepts and themes (Kinoshita, 2003). The main features and distinctions between M-GTA by Kinoshita and Grounded Theory by Glaser and Strauss were the unsegmented raw data and analysis worksheet leveraged to form and categorize concepts (Kambaru, 2018). In Kambaru's journal article, which is dedicated to introducing M-GTA in English, the data analysis process is successfully demonstrated with an example related to pre-service teachers' developmental process of teaching English in their teaching practicum. A Storyline about the practicum days of the pre-service teachers is narrated, with the formed concepts and themes embedded in the description. M-GTA can also be applied in other areas.

Figure 7

M-GTA Analytical Process



Note. The figure illustrates the analytical process of a research exercising M-GTA. From “Grounded theory approach-Rebirth of qualitative empirical research”, Kinoshita, Y. (1999), *Kobundou, Tokyo*.

M-GTA has previously been used to explore the roles of interpreters in the Japanese professional baseball industry, demonstrating its applicability to similar contexts (Itaya, 2021). Figure 8 outlines the M-GTA analytical process and illustrates how Itaya (2021) categorized raw data. There are three main sections on the analytical sheet: Variation, Definition, and Concept. Segments of the transcribed interviews are listed in the Variation column to form a Concept. After the Concept is formed, a respective Definition is given under the Concept. The content in the Variation column is required to be explained by the Definition of the Concept. Otherwise, the researcher should modify either the Concept or the Definition to make the Variations fit. For instance, No.1 participant of Itaya’s study said that it was necessary to become a baseball interpreter in the Japanese baseball industry to work the way up to a more powerful position so as to achieve their ambitious goal as an executive on the baseball team. Such statement demonstrated the distance between the participant’s current role and their aspiring role,

which was confined to the Definition under the Concept “<Role Distance>: Stagehand vs Actor.”



Figure 8

An Example of Analytical Sheet of M-GTA

Concept 21	(Role Distance) : Stagehand vs Actor
Definition	Most of baseball interpreters feel the distance between what he or she is (stagehand) and what he or she wishes to be (actor). They wish to reflect their opinions in the operation of the team.
Variation	No. 1: I had an ambition, an ambition of becoming an executive of this team or climbing up the corporate ladder. So, I had to succeed in this business of interpreting first; otherwise, no one would recognize me, no matter how ambitious I was. No. 2: If I speak honestly, truly honestly, when interpreting in this same enclosed environment year after year, unlike professional interpreters who get to work in different situations, I come to lose sight of my own existence. Take a meeting, for example. If everybody spoke the same language, my presence would not have been required. I was not in a position to voice my own opinions. The longer I worked for the team, however, the more opinions I began to form on the improvement of the team. I must say that toward the end of my interpreting career, I felt the frustration of not being able to express myself. I admit I was doubting my <i>raison d'être</i>. I'm not sure if this metaphor would express the feelings, but I think many of the baseball interpreters have the desire to cast dice. No. 3: This position of an interpreter, I'm not saying that it is unimportant, but I would like to assume a more responsible post. No. 4: I think there is a limit to this job in terms of the scope of the work. No. 5: As an interpreter, I draw a clear line between what I can do and cannot do. In order to go above the power of an interpreter, I need to add on more experiences and impress my boss. I would like to be someone who can make a decision, or at least, whose opinion is reflected in the decision-making process, or who can at least witness the process of decision-making. You cannot attain that by being an interpreter. No. 6: I would like to hang on to this world of baseball, and hopefully, move up to a position of more importance. No. 7: The role of an interpreter is more or less passive. We work on the assumption that we do not state our opinions. In this sense, I have witnessed a few cases where other interpreters asked for different positions with the team. They said they wanted to engage in something more productive. No. 8: I was not sure if staying where I was as an interpreter was what I wanted. No. 9: When people find out I was an interpreter for a famous MLB player, that's all they become interested in, not in me. So, I intend to do something larger than be a baseball interpreter. No. 10: There is another occupation I would like to take up in the future, not this one. No. 11: In the future, I would still like to work in the baseball world, but not as an interpreter, I hope.

Note: One interpreter out of twelve expressed his hope to stay as an interpreter.

Note. The figure demonstrates how raw data are being listed in a column that could potentially form a concept and a definition. From “The sports interpreter’s role and

interpreting strategies: a case study of Japanese professional baseball interpreters,” by Itaya, H. (2021), *Communication and Sport*, 28, 137.



The method researchers choose to demonstrate M-GTA results depends on their personal preferences. For instance, upon completing forming Concepts from raw data, Itaya (2021) grouped the Concepts into Categories, and constructed a table of Categories, Concepts, and Definitions, as shown in Figure 9. On the other hand, Kambaru (2018) designed a diagram showing the relational core-categories, categories, and concepts of the developmental process of preservice teachers teaching in English in their teaching practicum, as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 9

An Example of Presenting the Analysis Result of M-GTA in a Table

Category	Concept	Definition
View on Baseball Interpreters (B.I.)	1. Gateway	B.I. is a gateway to a baseball world.
	2. Lay Interpreter	Self-view is a lay interpreter.
	3. Halfway Point	Current job is a halfway point to the goal.
	4. Low Self-Esteem	B.I. is replaceable.
Linguistic Role	5. Immediacy	Immediacy is imperative.
	6. Creativity	Creative delivery may be necessary.
Social Role	7. Stagehand	B.I. is a stagehand.
	8. Public Relations	B.I. is a public relations staff.
	9. Mediator	B.I. is a mediator for coaches and teammates.
	10. Listener	B.I. lets players vent.
	11. Manager	B.I. manages players' schedules.
	12. Glue	B.I. connects overseas players with the team.
	13. Family's Caretaker	B.I.'s main job is the care of the family.
	14. Mastermind	B.I. could pull strings behind the scenes.
Susceptibility	15. Taking a Hint	Good B.I. can read between the lines.
	16. Neutrality	B.I. should not take anyone's side.
	17. Giving Space	Not too close to nor too far from players.
	18. Trustworthiness	Winning trust from players is a must.
Role Conflict	19. Sandwiched	Anger from all sides is directed to B.I.
	20. No Private Life	24/7 work, both physically and mentally.
Role Distance	21. Stagehand vs. Actor	Desire to reflect one's opinion in workplace.
Fulfillment	22. Fulfillment	Fulfillment comes from social roles.

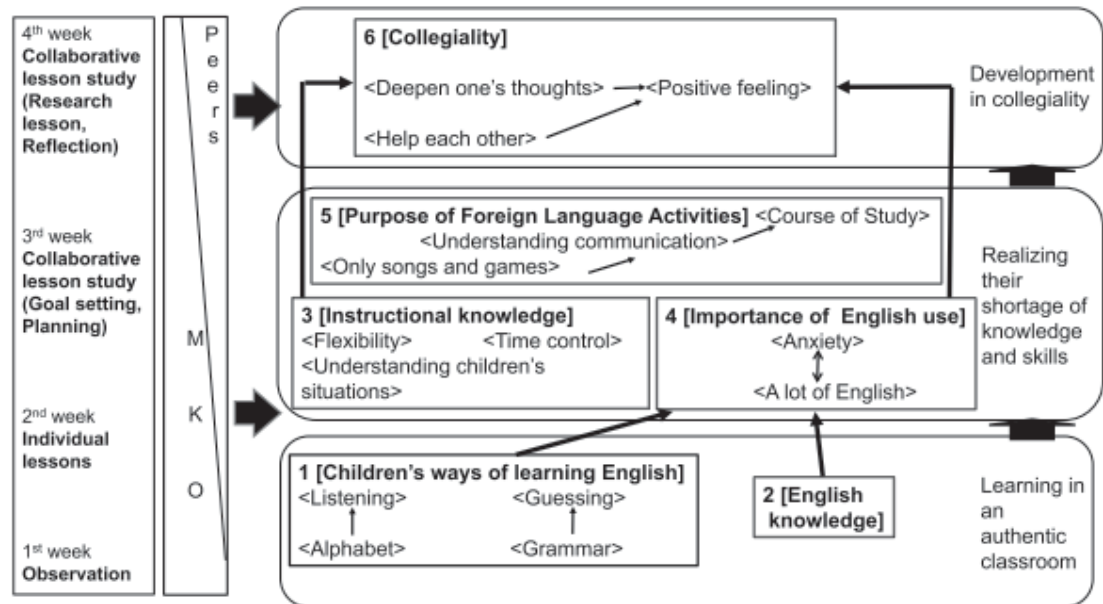
Note. The figure demonstrates the result of M-GTA, which the goal of such approach is to produce categories of concepts to address research questions. From “The sports

interpreter's role and interpreting strategies: a case study of Japanese professional baseball interpreters," by Itaya, H. (2021), *Communication and Sport*, 28, 137.



Figure 10

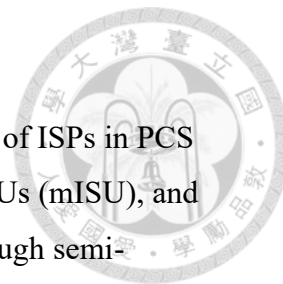
An Example of Presenting the Analysis Result of M-GTA with a Diagram



Note. The figure demonstrates the result of M-GTA in the form of a diagram. The concepts formed from raw data are placed between angle brackets. The concepts are further grouped into numbered categories that are placed between square brackets. Arrows are applied to illustrate the relationship between concepts or categories. From “Qualitative Research and a Modified Grounded Theory Approach,” by Kambaru A. (2018), *The Tsuru University Review 2018 Issue 88*, P. 55

The present study has chosen M-GTA methodology for its ability to systematically analyze complex data, allowing for the development of comprehensive insights into interpreting activities in esports settings. This approach aligns with the research goals and ensures a rigorous and structured analysis of the collected data.

Chapter 4 Results



This chapter presents the results of the study, detailing the roles of ISPs in PCS tournament games from the perspectives of mere ISPs (mISP), mere ISUs (mISU), and participants with dual perspectives (PDPs). The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 21 participants who have worked or are still working in the LoL PCS league.

The following sections compile and categorize responses from the ISPs and the ISUs. Each group's responses are organized according to the order of the respective interview question set. Notably, the PDPs' responses are integrated into the two groups, as they share similarities with both mISPs and mISUs due to their unique stance. In addition, a separate section is dedicated to showcasing the distinctive responses from the PDPs that are different from those of the mISPs and mISUs. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings from these responses.

4.1 Responses from the Interpreting Service Providers (ISPs)

As shown in Figure 5 in Chapter 3, the author interviewed a total of 15 ISPs, six mISPs and 9 PDPs. The interview results are presented in the order of the questions: tasks, relationships with stakeholders, encountered stresses and conflicts, roles, requirements and training, suggestions for esports cross-cultural communication, and comparisons with other interpreting experiences.

4.1.1 Tasks of the ISPs

From ISPs' responses regarding their tasks, some clear categories have arisen covering aspects of translation and interpretation, administrative and logistics, and content creation and development.

For translation and interpretation, participants responded that they have interpreted during occasions involving interviews such as post-game interviews, media interviews, and press conferences. They also mentioned that there were other occasions that interpreting services were performed, and the differences in their employers led to differences in how the interpreting activities were carried out.

Post-game interviews usually took place on stage, or in front of a camera that belonged to the official livestream channel of the tournament, right after a series of games were completed. Players were invited onto the stage or in front of a camera by hosts to share about their thoughts related to the game just played. Post-game interviews were the “most common occasions where ISPs appeared” (D4, D5, D7), and the interpreting assignments could be carried out by ISPs hired by different stakeholders, which could be exemplified by the following cases. As a freelance interpreter and host hired by regional event organizers, I3 mentioned that she was a dedicated interpreting personnel to conduct consecutive interpreting for post-game interviews in front of cameras and was in charge of tasks related to the interpreted event:

我除了主持口譯外還要想問題，給賽事方看過，問題他們看過後我還要把問題翻成英文。開始賽後採訪前，我還要先問受訪者這些問題能不能問，如果媒體他們有問題要問的話，我還要先審過這些東西能不能問。[In addition to hosting and interpreting for the interview, I am in charge of coming up with interview questions, and submitting them to the regional event organizer for review. After the questions pass the review, I will then translate the interview questions into English. And then during the post-game interviews, I would first ask the interviewees if they feel comfortable answering these questions before really get the camera rolling. I would also need to censor the questions or answers from the interviewees or media.] (I3).

D1, who was an employee of Riot, shared his challenging experience during post-game interviews when he volunteered to be an ISP during one of the tournament games:

那時候他們那隊的賽後採訪翻譯其實是另外一個人負責的，但後來因為不知什麼原因被換掉，後來我就被叫上台要翻譯。那時候不知道是怎樣，感覺選手想要衝康翻譯看我們出糗，所以講了一大串，很多網友也在聊天室等著要看笑話，但我後來就翻完了選手也感覺心服口服的摸摸鼻子就走了，之後就沒有人在那邊講那些五四三了。[Someone else used to be in charge of interpreting for the post-game interviews for that team, but that person got dismissed for some reasons. So, I was called onto the stage. I don't really know

what happened then, but it seemed like the players wanted the interpreter to make a scene, so he said a lengthy response. Many online audiences were also waiting for the interpreter to make mistakes. But then I pulled it off and the player seemed to be satisfied with my interpretation and left without saying anything. Since then, no one said anything about the interpretation.] (D1)

D2, who was a team ISP, shared a similar incident where he was “pushed on to the stage without any notice to interpret for the MVP interview” (D2). D3, a shoutcaster of the event organizers in Taiwan, concluded the ISPs’ tasks during post-game interviews well by saying, “These ISPs wore different hats, and needed to run on and off the stage to handle these interpreted events.” (D3)

In addition to the interviews that could be directly observed by fans and audiences, there were media interviews and press conferences that required interpreting services. During media interviews, the ISPs were “usually at the backstage” (I5, I6, D1, D3, D6) and “were often not included in the frame” (I4, I5, I6, D8). These ISPs could be ISPs hired by teams, volunteering staff of the event organizers, or freelancers hired by event organizers. I4 shared how she acted and adjusted her interpreting style when facing the increased number of media interviews as a team ISP:

如果說要討論國際賽事當中的賽後翻譯的話，翻譯的需求確實比較高，因為有更多媒體採訪。除了官方的直播外，還有很多人會來採訪。這些通常是後台，不一定會上鏡頭，但如果真的有拍到我的話，我會選擇當傳聲筒，就講選手說的。[When it comes to post-game interviews of the international games, the demand for interpreting surges due to the increasing number of media interviews. There are more than just being livestreamed on the official channel, there were more media. These interpretation assignments usually happen at the backstage, and the camera probably won’t include the ISP in the frame. But if it does, I would choose to act like a conduit, and say exactly what the players said] (I4)

“Referees” (I5) like I5, hired by regional event organizers, also interpreted for media interviews between esports media, event organizers, esports players:

我的雇主是 PCS 的地區賽事方，然後我的工作叫裁判，主要是負責跟著日本隊伍到處跑，確保比賽期間他們可以在對的時間出現在對的地點。我也會負責翻一些媒體採訪，只是就不是那些官方的。[I am an ISP hired by the regional event organizer that runs the PCS. My title is a referee, and my main duties are escorting the Japanese teams around during the tournament games, making sure that they show up at the right place and right time. I am also in charge of some of the media interviews, but not the official ones.] (I5)

Sometimes the ISPs in charge of interpreting for media interviews were the hosts of the regional event organizers (D9), when they “receive abundant resources from Riot” (D9). In other cases, event organizers would employ local freelancers to help out, just like D6:

我那時候還是學生還在打工，就看到學校有學長姊在徵人去幫英雄聯盟當韓翻，因為我們學校剛好跟比賽地點一樣都在高雄。所以我後來我就跟我同學一起去，主要就是坐在後台待命，如果有工作人員要跟韓籍選手講話就會拉我們過去。另外比較重要的就是，如果比賽完媒體要找選手訪問也會找我們幫忙。[I was a student back then, doing part time jobs. The seniors of our school were finding Korean interpreters for a LoL game, because the game would be held in Kaohsiung where our school is located. Therefore, mt classmate and I went for the position. Our main task was to stay at the backstage and facilitate communication between Korean players and staff workers. Another important task was to interpret for esports media who wanted to interview those players.] (D6)

In contrast to media interviews, responses from the ISPs showed that there were fewer interpreting opportunities for press conferences. Only three out of the 15 ISPs interpreted for press conferences. However, the involved participants mentioned that more stakeholders involved in press conferences than in media interviews. I2 shared her experience following a Korean celebrity player around participating a day of celebrity game schedule in the PCS:

其實我那時候翻譯的東西沒有我想像中難，因為我就是跟著這位選手跑行程，所以翻譯的內容跟形式跟之前跑類似的活動相差不遠。我記得那時候除了賽後半個多小時的記者會，剩下時間就是跟著選手去參觀贊助商的工廠。那時候現場除了有比賽隊伍，還有就是粉絲媒體之類的吧，反正人很多就對了。[The interpretation assignment was not as difficult as I expected, because what I was tasked with was to follow the player's schedule. Therefore, the interpreted content and interpret mode were very similar to the events that I have attended in the past. I remember working during a press conference that lasted around half an hour, and for the remaining day I followed the player to a sponsor's factory. Apart from their opposing team, there were also fans and media workers. In short, there were many people at the scene.] (I2)

D7, a volunteer ISP from the event organizers, expressed his fear of interpreting in occasions like press conferences due to a large crowd:

我覺得翻譯最大的壓力還是來自觀眾。你翻譯的時候，大概會有五萬到七萬的觀眾聽你翻譯。同樣的狀況也適用於鏡頭很多的記者會，即便我知道鏡頭不是對著我也一樣。[I think the most stressful part for interpreting still originates from the audience. There are around 50,000 to 70,000 people looking at you when you are interpreting for post-game interviews. The same thing applies to appearing in front of a lot of cameras like during press conferences is also stressful, even though I know the cameras were not focused on me.] (D7)

D9 explained that press conferences did not take place as often as other interpreted events:

媒體日很珍貴欸，而且採訪時間還很不好搶。不是所有比賽都有記者會，而且只有國際賽才有機會參加這種大型還有播出的記者會，也才有更多機會採訪到想採訪的選手。[Media Days are precious opportunities! And the interview slots are hard to get. Not all games have Media Days. Only international games will schedule these kinds of large-scale press conferences, and it is also then can

people get the chance to interview players they have been longing to interview.] (D9)

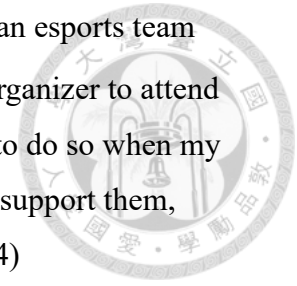
Apart from the interview-related interpretation, esports ISPs also mentioned other interpreted events based on the different employers, esports teams and event organizers. ISPs such as I4, I6, and D2 highlighted the significance of their service during post-game analyses for the esports team to operate whenever there were foreign personnel on the team. ISPs' interpretation was "critical" (I6) to enhance "the game review process" (I4). The ISPs were required to "interpret during 10-minute intervals of a series of games" (I6), in which the esports team could reflect on the completed game and prepare for the upcoming one (D2). I6's response somehow summarized ISPs' work during post-game analyses:

我覺得我工作最難的部分是加快我的翻譯速度。每場遊戲之間的休息時間只有 10 分鐘。我需要翻譯教練的復盤給韓籍選手聽。我不可能因為要翻譯給他聽就浪費整隊的時間，復盤的每分每秒都很關鍵，有可能多講一句少講一句就會影響遊戲勝負。[I think the most difficult part of my work is speeding up the pace of interpretations. The interval between games was only ten minutes. I need to interpret the post-game analyses conducted by the coach to the Korean player. There was no way that the team should waste time because of interpretation due to the interests of one player. Every second of the post-game analyses is critical to make room for more discussion that could determine the result of a game.] (I6)

For interpretation that took place under the employment of event organizers, participants shared their interpreting experiences that facilitated the operations of tournament games. For example, I1, who was a freelancer then, described his work escorting a Riot employee, whose main task was to set up the lightings and sound system for a tournament game. I4 recalled that even though she was then hired by esports teams, she was still invited by regional event organizers to provide interpretation services:

我那時候是跟著戰隊的啦，只是還是會跟台灣賽事方出去翻譯，而且會問我的時候，大多數都是我們沒有晉級的時候。我還是會出去幫他們翻啦，就是

一種支援他們的概念，有點算一起奮鬥吧。[I was hired by an esports team back then, but I would still be invited by the Taiwanese event organizer to attend international games to interpret. They would usually invite me to do so when my team did not advance to the next level. I would agree to go and support them, because I think we were all trying to contribute to this field.] (I4)



D7, who was once a coach, also recounted times when he received assistance from ISPs hired by event organizers to navigate through matters related to his team's participation in a tournament game.

For administrative and logistical tasks, participants reported that these kinds of assignments cover aspects such as team management, player coordination and communication, Mandarin training and education, and document processing.

For team management, I4, though still accountable for the responsibilities as an ISP, got promoted to the managerial level and had to look after two esports teams that were under the same company:

那時候應該算是升職吧，反正就是除了之前的翻譯之外，還要管理原本這隊還有二隊。我記得我的職銜好像叫經理，不管是參加比賽、宿舍管理、日常生活相關、甚至是會計都要經過我。[I think it was a kind of promotion back then. Anyways, aside from the previous interpreting tasks, I was asked to manage the current team and its second team. I think my title was manager. Any matter that was related to attending games, managing dorms, addressing daily needs, or even processing accounting issues were required to go through me.]

While I4 shared the team managing experience from the esports team side, D3 shared his perspective on the managing task from the event organizing side:

身為地區賽事方，我們需要帶當地的隊伍出國比賽，這種時候通常都需要以英文溝通。在這種時候就需要一些同事來幫忙翻譯，他們還需要擔任窗口協助戰隊經理跟國際賽事方溝通。[When we bring the regional teams out as the regional organizer, we will need to communicate in English. In these cases, we

need some colleagues to take on the role of ISP and serve as contact points for the player managers and the international event organizer.] (D3)

For player coordination and communication, ISPs had to “consider more than just an ISP” (I4) because they were the most available personnel to “help foreign players adapt to life in Taiwan” (I6). D3 stressed that this was an important task that team ISPs should be aware of:

我覺得戰隊翻譯要幫助外國選手與隊伍建立連結。而且除了要替選手跟隊伍溝通特定需求，翻譯也要確保選手可以進行有效溝通。另外一個很重要的工作是要幫助選手與他人打成一片，所以可能就要教他們一點中文。我覺得這種人的溫度是翻譯的價值所在，也是 AI 沒辦法取代的。[I think the team ISP is there to help the foreign player to connect with the team. Furthermore, in addition to voicing the needs of the foreign player, the ISP also needs to facilitate effective communication for the player. Another important task of a team ISP is to help the foreign player blend in with the team. To do so, teaching them a bit of Mandarin would help. I think this warmth is irreplaceable by AI.] (D3)

Adding to the topic of Mandarin training, I4 and D5 extended the scope of discussion and stressed that the ISPs or teams should perform the function of teachers in schools and educate the young players:

那時候我需要幫選手安排中文課程，或是我要自己教他們中文。我覺得我應該要負起責任教育這些年輕人，總不可能讓這些十七八歲的屁孩，打完五六年職業後還是未社會化。即使到現在我也還是以自由接案的身分教外國選手中文，基本上每個禮拜上一次課，然後我會去他們戰隊辦公室上課。[I would also have to do things like scheduling mandarin courses for the players and teach them myself. I think I need to be responsible for educating these young players. It's not acceptable to let these 17, 18-year-olds to be unsocialized after 5-6 years of esports career. Even until now, I am currently a freelancer teaching Mandarin courses to foreign players. The classes are scheduled on a weekly basis and I would go to their office to teach mandarin.] (I4)

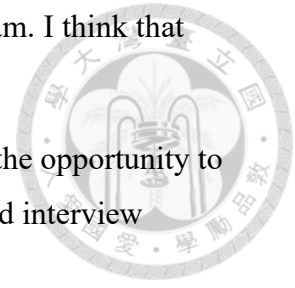
選手們都滿年輕的，常常會做一些幼稚叛逆的事情。這時候我需要很有耐心跟他們解釋為什麼這樣做是錯的。限制他們管他們是沒有用的。一而再再而三的提醒他們會比較好，可以幫助他們建立起正確的價值觀看待這個世界。選手在這個年紀其實應該要去上學，慢慢社會化，但是他們卻在這邊打電競，沒有人來教他們。所以我覺得我們要負起責任教他們正確的倫理道德。

[The players are young and would do things that are immature and rebellious from time to time. In these cases, I will need to be patient and explain to them why they shouldn't do such things. It wouldn't be effective if you just resort to restrictive measures to regulate them. It would be better to remind them again and again of what is right, and assist them in building the right mindset to look at the world. Players are at the age to study in school, and to get socialized, but they end up here playing esports, lacking the right person to educate them. So, I think it is our responsibility to teach them about morale and other general principles in life.] (D5)

For document processing, participants responded that they handled “VISA issues” (I4, D4), resolved “military service issues” (I4, D5), and looked into guide books issued by tournament organizers (I4, D2, D5, D6). While most of these works were assigned by the employers, D2 shared that he would volunteer to do extra work because he wanted to contribute more as a teammate:

文書處理的話，可能就是去參加國際賽事會發那個大會手冊，我大概就需要花一個禮拜左右去翻過那個主辦方手冊，然後大概跟戰隊講解一下。我們的工時真的很長，都要待在一起，所以也可以說日久生情啦，我有空的時候會自願去幫戰隊做 Ban Pick 紀錄，應該也算一種文書處理。[When we attend international games, there will be some rules that we need to abide by. So I would spend like one week to look through the player guide provided by the event organizer and then summarize the content for the team. The working hours are long. I have to stay with the team. I think I have developed a sense of belonging due to the long hours stuck with the team. So, when I am free, I would volunteer

for additional tasks like keeping the ban-pick records for the team. I think that also counts as document processing.] (D2)



For content creation and development tasks, not all mISPs had the opportunity to deal with relevant tasks except for I3., In addition to the aforementioned interview preparation I3 mentioned tasks related to brand management:

你可以說 Jeesun 跟希然都是以主持人為目標在接收訓練的。翻譯只是我們工作的一部分，他們的目標是要建立起你的個人形象跟品牌，成為地區賽事方的招牌。[You can say that Jeesun and Xiran are being trained and branded as hostesses. Interpreting is just part of our job. Their focus is on building their personal image and brand for their respective regional league.] (I3)

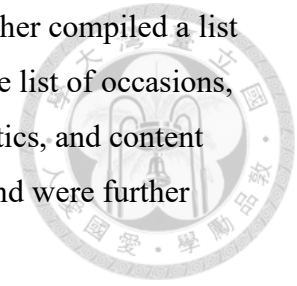
I3 also mentioned about a special case of a Korean ISP that incorporated production management into their tasks:

以 Jeesun 的例子來說的話，他更特別，因為他後來成為 LCK 英語頻道的製作人，所以他會比其他他人更常出現在鏡頭前或是在直播時出現，有點像集分析師、翻譯、製作人於一體。[For Jeesun's case, she is more special than others, because she has become the production manager of the English Channel of the LCK. So, she would appear in front of cameras and in livestreams. She is more like a combination of an analyst, a Translator, and a manager.] (I3)

On the contrary to the ISPs of event organizers, D5 handled production management tasks as an ISP of an esports team, portraying a different view on production management tasks:

我們的戰隊是大公司的子公司，所以有很多交辦下來的專案，像是行銷專案產品製作都要我們負責。另外還有很多需要戰隊配合的拍攝需求，這些都是我們需要管理，還有提交相關企畫書。[Our team is a subsidiary of a large enterprise. So, we there are many projects on our time table, like marketing projects, or merchandise production. There are also promotional shootings that the team need to cooperate with. We are in charge of handling these tasks, and submit relevant proposals.] (D5)

In brief, from the responses of the mISPs and PDPs, the researcher compiled a list of occasions where tasks of the esports ISPs were identifiable. From the list of occasions, tasks of general translation and interpretation, administration and logistics, and content creation and development emerged from the responses of the mISPs, and were further supported by those of the PDPs.



4.1.2 Relationships with key stakeholders in the esports industry

Participants provided insights into their relationships with key stakeholders in the esports industry, revealing a complex interplay of professional respect, personal connection, and power dynamics.

Several mISPs underscored the professional respect and recognition they received from various stakeholders, including clients, coaches, players, and media personnel. For instance, I1 noted that despite the client-contractor dynamic, he felt “lucky” that “suppressive manners of senior weren’t present” and it could be “partially due to the western background of the Riot employee he provided service for. I2 stated that she was already an esteemed freelance interpreter and experienced the same level of respect as in other professional settings:

我覺得好像大家對我的態度跟其他場合差不多，但我覺得這有點跟我的經歷以及我開的薪資有關，畢竟我那時候幫英雄聯盟翻譯的時候也是在業界打滾多年，再加上開了比較高的價格，所以基本上那時候工作人員也都是叫我老師，跟其他專業場合的會待遇差不多。[I think how people treated me was no difference compared to other occasions, but I think this had to do with my resume and my rate. After all, when I got to interpret for LoL, I have worked in the field for several years. I also had a higher rate. Therefore, the staff members would call me Laoshi in general, which was similar to interpreting assignments for other professional occasions.] (I2)

I3 reported that most key stakeholders treated her as “a friend or colleague” during the latest LoL event she interpreted for, attributing this to her extensive experience in esports and her long-standing personal connections. I4, who held a managerial position within the esports teams, mentioned that she was regarded with the same respect as coaches and

players, being treated as a respected colleague. Beyond respect and recognition, I5 described a sense of camaraderie and trust with his Japanese ISUs:

日本隊伍其實對我滿友善的，甚至說不是把我當主辦方而是當同伴，我覺得最主要的原因是因為他們處在一個陌生的環境，身邊了解當地文化又能溝通的人大概就只有我，然後我又一直在扮演一個協助者的角色，所以他們可能比較親近，甚至在活動結束後還有交換聯絡方式。[The Japanese teams were friendly to me. To a certain degree, they treated me as a comrade instead of a staff worker from the event organizers. I think it was mainly because they were placed in a foreign environment, and I was the only one who knew the local culture and was capable of communicating with them. Meanwhile, I also played an assistive role throughout the games. Maybe that was why we got closer. We even exchanged contacts after the closing of the event.] (I5)

The PDPs also experienced a sense of respect and recognition they received from various stakeholders, regardless of the different backgrounds of the mISPs and PDPs. For example, D1 noted that being part of the regional office often led to “respect” and “more dignity” from key stakeholders:

I have been the big brother for these teams throughout the games, because I was in charge of the tech support team. I was the one who sat in the monitoring room with other famous hosts, instructing them how the system is going to operate. So, I was in a good place to be the interpreter because I could get the interview questions from them beforehand. For the players, they were just kids, so before getting on the stage for post-game interviews, I would sometimes help them go through the interview questions. I had been taking care of them, so I think my position may be different from other ISPs. (D1)

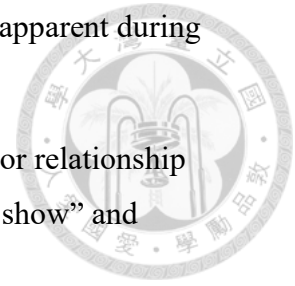
D7, having worked as a coach and established a presence in the esports scene, remarked that most of the esports stakeholders were respectful towards him and treated him as a good friend or a colleague:

我認為我是受到尊重的，畢竟也算是在 LoL 界有點名氣，除了之前上主播台，後來也有當教練。後來轉到賽事方，不自量力去國際賽當翻譯有去刷臉認識滿多人的，然後現在在這邊也算是坐在一個大家都知道我的地方，所以我覺得我自己是沒有受到什麼壓榨或歧視的。[I think I was respected by others. After all, I think I could be considered slightly famous in the LoL world. I was one of the analysts on the official channel and I used to be a coach. Later I was hired by the event organizers and connected with many people in this field when I boldly took on the role of interpreters at the international games. Now I am at a position where many people could learn more about me. Therefore, I personally think that I was not abused or discriminated or anything.] (D7)

While respect was generally prevalent, participants also acknowledged the presence of power dynamics and professional boundaries within their working relationships. I3 noted a more formal relationship with event organizers, recognizing that despite her personal connections, the employer-contractor dynamic persisted. She added that respect from players or coaches might sometimes stem from a fear that the ISP could misrepresent them due to language barriers:

雖然說我跟賽事方的人關係不錯，但是工作上都還是會維持甲方跟乙方的關係，因為我們都是在工作，維持專業素養是基本該做的。所以說雖然沒有歧視而且有受尊重，但我們之間也是有一點界線存在的。戰隊跟我們之間關係比較好，只是在接受媒體採訪的時候會有點疏離，一部分是因為怕說錯話被媒體亂寫，一部分是怕翻譯上有什麼漏掉或疏失，所以那個疏離感會比較明顯。[Although I know the people from the event organizing side well, we would still maintain the client-contractor relationship, because we were at work and upholding our professionalism was a no brainer. Thus, though I was not mistreated and was respected, there was still space between us. I am closer to the esports team side but would feel a bit distant when interpreting for media interviews. On one hand, team members would worry that the media would write negative reports about them when they misspoke something. On the other hand, team members would also worry that there was something missing or mistaken

during interpretations. Thus, the distance between us was more apparent during media interviews.] (I3)



Based on his role as an event organizer, D1 added to the client-contractor relationship with freelance interpreters, where everyone was focused on “running a show” and demonstrated professionalism throughout the process:

I think Rioters would not treat the ISPs in the way that could be expected in the Chinese society. There is no such thing as the senior-junior thing. What was in place was still the client-contractor relationship. As long as the ISPs were there to help run the show business, they would be partners and colleagues. (D1)

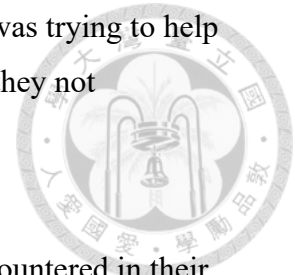
Also mentioning the inherent power imbalances in Taiwan, I4 shared her thoughts on how ISPs should act considering the hierarchy between employers and employees. She emphasized that respect should always be maintained, regardless of the ISPs’ roles and salaries:

覺得自己雖然說話語權可能沒有雇主來得多，但不會覺得自己沒被尊重，工作本身就是合作。會因為薪水職位而有所權力高低的問題，但不應該也不會衍伸出不受尊重的狀況。[Though I have less authority compared to my employer, I do not feel disrespected. Employment itself represents a form of collaboration. The salary I receive or the position I hold may determine my power within the company hierarchy, but these differences should not lead to disrespectful behavior.] (I4)

Some mISPs and PDPs expressed concerns and challenges regarding the treatment of ISPs in the industry. I6 highlighted that media workers were often reminded to allocate time for ISPs to prepare for interview questions or interpretation, but such reminders were frequently disregarded, indicating a lack of respect for the interpreter’s time and role in the interview process. D6 also mentioned a sense of being undervalued by journalists:

對於記者來說就是一個幫忙的角色，但是覺得好像有點被貶低的感覺。因為我幫你，但是你卻脫稿演出，不能互相一下嗎？[I played a supportive role for

the esports journalists. However, I felt undervalued. Because I was trying to help you do your work. But then you didn't follow your script. Can they not demonstrate some mutual respect?](D6)



4.1.3 Conflicts and stressors in esports interpreting

mISP participants elucidated various stressors and conflicts encountered in their work within the esports industry. These challenges stemmed from the pressures and complexities inherent in interpreting in this dynamic and demanding environment. Notable stressors included the pressure arising from event organization, conflicts related to maintaining professionalism, the rapid pace of interpreting sessions, the navigation through cultural norms, and the personal costs and sacrifices entailed.

Several participants reported experiencing significant stress due to unclear communication or conflicting expectations. For instance, I1 recounted a stressful incident stemming from ambiguous directions from event organizers, which the event organizers dismissed recruited ISPs at the scene because they found out they had recruited too many. I2 suggested that standardized norms, such as those established in press conferences, could alleviate the burden on ISPs:

我覺得在翻像是記者會這種場合壓力就比較小，因為突發狀況比較少，他的會議形式是固定的，而且跟其他領域開記者會的概念差不多。這種讓口譯員有標準可循的場合，翻譯起來壓力就比較小。[I think interpreting for events like press conference was less stressful, because there would be fewer unexpected events. The mode of such conferences is fixed, meaning that esports press conferences would be similar to those of other fields. In these cases where there is a clear direction for the interpreters to follow, it would be less stressful to interpret.] (I2)

ISPs frequently have faced pressure to uphold professionalism, including addressing internal identity conflicts and gaining trust from others. I3 described the tension between her enthusiasm as a fan of certain LoL star players and her professional responsibilities as an ISP. She noted that this internal conflict diminished over time as her familiarity with the players grew and her “fan filter” faded. I4 expressed the internal

struggle between acting as a “conduit” and the pressure to present a polished image of the player while working as a team ISP and devised a personal strategy to manage these conflicts:

跟內在衝突最有關的一次大概是某次採訪的時候，選手用非常直白的方式講了某件事，但我下意識的就用成語幫他翻。雖然說那時候獲得許多正向回饋，但我就有點糾結為什麼要幫選手打造根本不是他的形象，說不定大家就想看到最真實的樣貌阿。所以後來我就告訴我自己，只要是在台上或在鏡頭前，選手說什麼我就說什麼，除非選手向我求救，或是在鏡頭外那種可以修改的翻譯，不然我絕對不幫他修飾他的用詞，或是幫他多補充之類的。[The time that I had internal conflicts was during an interview that the player said something plainly and I interpreted in a more idiomatic way subconsciously. Even though I received positive feedback, I still struggled internally, thinking why I tried to build an image that did not represent the player. Perhaps what the audience wanted was the real side of the player. Then I told myself, I should interpret as faithfully as possible when I am on stage or in front of cameras. Only when the player signaled for help, or when I am out of the frame interpreting for events that I can modify my interpretation, will I adjust the speech of the player, or add things for them.] (I4)

For instance, D5 described an internal conflict he had where he felt his interpretation was more thorough than the coach’s explanation while reviewing a completed game:

自己角色上的衝突是有一次教練在復盤時，身為口譯的我講解的比教練還要詳細。雖說不是完全不好，但有機會曲解教練的意思，資訊給出的多寡可能會讓選手有誤會的可能。[I personally experienced conflicts between the roles I play. There was once that the coach was doing post-game analysis. However, as an ISP, I provided more details than the coach. Even though it was not like a bad thing, there was a chance to misinterpret the coach’s words. Also, the difference in the number of details offered may lead to potential misunderstandings.] (D5)

D9 mentioned the internal conflict she experienced as a fan and the representative of a specific team while also having to interview the opposing team:

我最大的內在衝突是我們區的隊伍輸給其他區，然後我還必須要主持賽後訪問，訪問贏的那隊。那時候的衝突點在於，我是一位粉絲，但我要維持專業素養，但又有一份隊自己地區的歸屬感。[The biggest internal conflict was when teams of our region lost to another, and I still had to be the host to interview the team who won. The conflict between the identity as a fan, the sense of professionalism, and the sense of belonging took place then.] (D9)

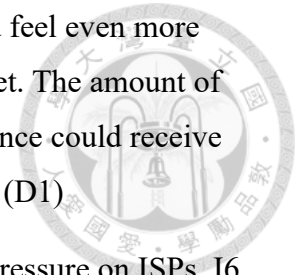
The condition that ISPs needed to wear different hats also led to challenges such as gaining trust for the ISPs. I4 particularly noted the internal verification pressure from bilingual colleagues when she was working for an esports team:

我那時候工作就有一個教練，他會一點點中文，但他就一直批評我翻譯的方式，也不是說我翻得不對，就是他一直想要我以一種特定的方式翻譯，可能是希望我字對字翻吧。可是中文就不會完全照韓文的方式講啊，我就很頭痛，因為我要維持翻譯的專業素養，但身為同事又算是教練下面一階的人，又要想辦法博得他的信任或是認同。到現在我還是不知道他到底要我怎樣。[I once worked with a coach that could speak a little bit of Mandarin. He would criticize how I interpret. It was not because I made mistakes while interpreting. It was because he wanted me to interpret in a specific way, perhaps literally. But Mandarin does not work that way. It is different from Korean. I really struggled with this. I need to be a professional interpreter, but I also need to gain trust and recognition from him due to his title as a coach and mine as a lower rank. I still don't know what he wanted until today.] (I4)

D1 emphasized on the importance of gaining trust from players, for it would determine how cooperative players would be during interviews:

You need to let the players feel comfortable with you around. We are in a show business. When the players are on the stage, they are already very nervous. If they feel comfortable around you, you can help them say more by just standing there.

If they don't feel comfortable when you are around, they would feel even more nervous when they have to speak to you so that you can interpret. The amount of words they say will determine how much information the audience could receive and therefore decide whether the interview is successful or not. (D1)



The rapid nature of esports events further has exacerbated the pressure on ISPs. I6 highlighted the primary source of stress as the limited time allotted for coaches to conduct post-game analyses:

我覺得我工作最難的部分是加快我的翻譯速度。每場遊戲之間的休息時間只有 10 分鐘。我需要翻譯教練的復盤給韓籍選手聽。我不可能因為要翻譯給他聽就浪費整隊的時間，復盤的每分每秒都很關鍵，有可能多講一句少講一句就會影響遊戲勝負。[I think the most difficult part of my work is speeding up the pace of interpretations. The interval between games was only ten minutes. I need to interpret the post-game analyses conducted by the coach to the Korean player. There was no way that the team should waste time because of interpretation due to the interests of one player. Every second of the post-game analyses is critical to make room for more discussion that could determine the result of a game.] (I6)

Additionally, I6 noted the time constraints during post-game media interviews, where some reporters would excessively contextualize their questions. In such scenarios, I6 employed summarizing skills and selective omissions to enhance interpreting efficiency and manage the pressure from fast-paced sessions. Responses from the PDPs also indicated that the limited time was stressful. For instance, D3 highlighted the pressure of interpreting quickly and addressing uncertainties during live interviews:

當主持人或採訪者時最大的壓力就是時間壓力，因為採訪時間只有三分鐘，要包含提問、翻譯回答等等，非常緊湊。同時要處理口譯跟提問非常耗腦力。採訪選手給的回答具有很大程度的不確定性，這點壓力也很大。[The most stressful thing for a host or an interviewer was the time constraints, because there was only three minutes for asking questions and interpreting the responses. It was a very intense schedule. Meanwhile, I had to deal with interpretations and

follow-up questions, both draining my mental energy. The degree of uncertainty of the players' responses was also stressful, too.] (D3)

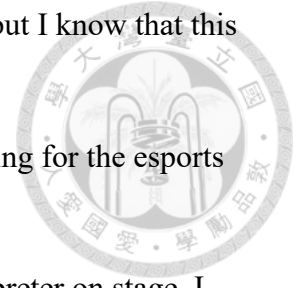
ISPs replied that one of the problems they faced during their work was navigating cultural norms of the esports industry. I2 highlighted the pressure induced by cultural differences in communication styles between Taiwanese clients and Korean clients:

有時候比較困難的點就是台灣人跟韓國人的溝通頻率不對。有時候台灣人講話或是做事都會比較慢，因為要請示上級幹嘛的。但韓國人就是可能比較以效率為主，所以一個快一個慢常常吵架。這時候即便我是翻譯，我還是需要處理幫兩邊溝通，因為我知道這可能是因為文化上的差異而造成的。[One challenge that I have encountered is that Taiwanese and Koreans are used to different paces for communication. Taiwanese tend to do things and speak slowly, perhaps due to their reporting duties to their supervisor. The Koreans tend to be more efficiency oriented. Therefore, these two groups who communicate with different paces would find themselves in conflicts against each other. Meanwhile, even though I am just an interpreter, I would still feel like that I need to address the conflict because I know that this might have resulted from cultural differences.] (I2)

D6's experience added to that of I2, where she had trouble using the correct honorific terms to address Korean ISUs when she was interpreting at the backstage:

我自己遇到的困難是，在後台翻譯的時候你根本沒辦法從他們名牌一瞬間知道他們是誰，因為他只有用顏色去區分，翻成中文的時候可能沒關係，但如果翻韓文的時候就要考慮使用敬語。雖然說他們可能也理解我們的情況，可是這種事情在他們的文化裡面就滿重要的，所以我對這點滿頭痛的。[What I was troubled with was that I couldn't tell who the Koreans were from their name tags when I was interpreting at the backstage, because their rankings were only represented by colors. It wouldn't be a problem when I was interpreting into Mandarin. However, it would be problematic when interpreting into Korean, considering the honorific language usages. Although they might not blame us for

using the wrong terms because they understood our condition, but I know that this matters in their culture. That was what I struggled with.] (D6)



D1 and D9, on the other hand, expressed their concerns when interpreting for the esports fan considering the disturbing characteristics of the community:

From my personal experiences as a Riot employee and an interpreter on stage, I would say the toxic culture of the fans was the most challenging one. People will try to nick pick you on everything as soon as you are under the spotlight. So my advice to all the esports interpreters-to-be's would be to get good. (D1)

你也知道會打電動的人絕大多數都是男生嘛。可想而知公司叫我去當這個賽後訪問主持，一部分可能是缺人，另外一部分肯定是知道我是女生可以吸引男生的目光。所以我那時候其實滿抗拒的，因為一定會有對我的外表品頭論足，就是那種父權凝視，很噁心。[You know that the majority who play games are guys. So, when my company told me to host the post-game interviews, partially it was because we lacked talents to do so. Another reason was because they knew, girls could attract more attention of the guys. I was thinking of refusing the job, because there will be someone who definitely comment on my appearance, like male-gazing. It's gross.] (D9)

Participants acknowledged that the demanding nature of their work often impinged on their personal lives. For example, I6 mentioned a breakup with his partner due to long working hours while serving as an ISP for the esports team, underscoring the potential personal sacrifices required to excel in this role.

4.1.4 Roles of esports ISPs

Beyond assuming the traditional conduit role, participants of the mISP and PDP groups have delineated a diverse array of roles they undertake within the esports industry, including assistants, cultural mediators, educators, and brand representatives.

In the role of assistant, I1 reported not only shadowing his American client to interpret event organizing instructions but also accompanying the client's family members and facilitating small talk between them and local event organizers. Similarly,

I2 reminisced about serving as a personal assistant to a visiting Korean esports star, aiding in preparation for upcoming interview sessions, saying, “I had to go through all of the questions with him because he could barely answer any of them on his own.” (I2) I4 shared analogous experiences, but from an in-house perspective, assisting players and other stakeholders in a secretarial capacity. Furthermore, I6 mentioned assuming the role of caretaker for the Korean player, fostering a fraternal relationship with him:

因為這個韓國人他年紀很小嘛，我那時候也大學畢業有幾年了，所以他會叫我哥。基本上我要做的事情就是帶他生活，融入台灣的生活。因為我大學在這邊讀嘛，肯定是比他熟悉，所以有時候假日我也會帶他出去走走，有時候他生病也要帶他去醫院。[This Korean player was pretty young then, and I had graduated from university for some years. Therefore, he would treat me as his older brother. What I did in general was to help him adapt the life in Taiwan. I studied in a Taiwanese university, and thus I definitely knew more than him. Therefore, I would take him out on the days that he was off. I would also take him to hospitals when he was sick.] (I6)

D2 had similar experiences acting like a personal assistant, but in the case of a Korean coach. He looked after the coach’s daily needs, which was similar to a “babysitter or caregiver” (D2). D4, who tended to be a backup ISP on the esports team, shared his observation on the caregiver role of the other ISP on the team:

那位翻譯老師基本上就是在當保母。除了要翻譯之外他還要負起照顧者的責任。他需要幫助韓援跟隊伍成員溝通，帶韓援去醫院，翻譯法律文件，還要處理外援簽證相關問題。[The ISP was like a babysitter. He not only needed to perform interpretation, but he also took on responsibilities of a care giver. Apart from facilitating communication between team members, the ISP had to take Korean players to hospitals, translate legal documents, and handle VISA-related matters for the foreign players.] (D4)

I2, I4, I5, and I6 recounted moments as cultural mediators during their interpreting assignments, with the latter three highlighting their involvement in conflict resolution. For instance, I5 recounted mediating conflicts during the 2024 PCS Spring

Split Playoffs, particularly between LJJ players and Taiwanese event organizers regarding equipment handling:

選手本來就有些自己的習慣，有些人不太喜歡別人動自己的東西。但是電競比賽雖然是場秀，還是有他自己的規則。可能有時候選手會忘記這些規則，導致裁判根據規定去檢查選手裝備時，影響到選手然後起衝突。這時候我們這些翻譯就扮演很重要的角色，有我們在就可以避免這些衝突發生。

[Players have their own habits. Some of them don't like others touching their stuff. We know that many people say that esports tournament games are a show business, but they still have established rules. Sometimes the players would forget about the rule. Therefore, when referees went to check the gears of the players, according to the rules, they might get into conflicts against the players. In these cases, ISPs like us would play a significant role to help avoid these incidents.] (I5)

I6 also recounted mediating conflicts between Taiwanese managers and a Korean player, both on the same team, adeptly diffusing tensions through calm and persistent communication, while deliberately maintaining his neutral position:

之前後勤團隊有跟韓援起衝突，這過程中其實說難也沒有難，我就只是確保自己可以一直維持中立的立場。一定要中立，因為兩邊才會相信我講的都是對方講的話，我沒有偏心。可能比較辛苦的點就是兩邊口氣都很不好吧。

[There was once that the logistical team had a quarrel with the Korean player. It wasn't as difficult as people think to deescalate the situation. What I need to do was to make sure that remain neutral at all times. Remaining neutral is necessary for both sides to trust you on what you interpreted, showcasing that I wasn't biased. What was difficult was that both sides weren't speaking nicely to me.] (I6)

Many participants also mentioned assuming the role of educator while serving as ISPs for esports teams. I4, during her tenure as an ISP and team manager, adopted a stricter managerial approach to guide players, deeming it a surrogate for the education they lacked:

我自己做經理的時候應該是滿機車的，因為我覺得不能慣著他們。即使他們可能薪水比我高，公司也比較重視他們，但是這跟我們身為成年人的義務沒有關聯。我們這些大人就是應該要避免這些年輕人出去之後三觀不正，所以我自己對他們滿嚴格的，常常大呼小叫。[I think I was a pretty strict manager for the players because I think it was wrong to let them do whatever they wanted. Although they might be better paid valued more by the company, it had nothing to do with our responsibilities as grown-ups. What we needed to do was to prevent them from turning into troublemakers for the society. So, I was pretty mean to them, and would yell at them from time to time.] (I4)

D5 said almost the same thing regarding the obligation of the esports team to educate these young players:

選手們都滿年輕的，常常會做一些幼稚叛逆的事情。這時候我需要很有耐心跟他們解釋為什麼這樣做是錯的。限制他們管他們是沒有用的。一而再再而三的提醒他們會比較好，可以幫助他們建立起正確的價值觀看待這個世界。選手在這個年紀其實應該要去上學，慢慢社會化，但是他們卻在這邊打電競，沒有人來教他們。所以我覺得我們要負起責任教他們正確的倫理道德。[The players are young and would do things that are immature and rebellious from time to time. In these cases, I will need to be patient and explain to them why they shouldn't do such things. It wouldn't be effective if you just resort to restrictive measures to regulate them. It would be better to remind them again and again of what is right, and assist them in building the right mindset to look at the world. Players are at the age to study in school, and to get socialized, but they end up here playing esports, lacking the right person to educate them. So, I think it is our responsibility to teach them about morale and other general principles in life.] (D5)

Conversely, I6 focused on teaching Mandarin to the Korean player as a means of aiding his adaptation to overseas life, which I4 also did:

那時候我需要幫選手安排中文課程，或是我要自己教他們中文。我覺得我應該要負起責任教育這些年輕人，總不可能讓這些十七八歲的屁孩，打完五六年職業後還是為社會化。即使到現在我也還是以自由接案的身分教外國選手中文，基本上每個禮拜上一次課，然後我會去他們戰隊辦公室上課。[I would also have to do things like scheduling mandarin courses for the players and teach them myself. I think I need to be responsible for educating these young players. It's not acceptable to let these 17, 18-year-olds to be unsocialized after 5-6 years of esports career. Even until now, I am currently a freelancer teaching Mandarin courses to foreign players. The classes are scheduled on a weekly basis and I would go to their office to teach mandarin.] (I4)

Regarding brand representation, I3 occupied a unique position as one of the few representing a regional league in the LoL industry. Describing herself not only as an ISP but also as a potential representative of the PCS region, I3 emphasized her multifaceted role:

我覺得電競口譯要做的事情比其他產業的口譯特別，其中一部分就是要上相。其實你仔細看大陸跟韓國那邊甚至是歐美的主持人，大家真的口才或是語言能力超級好所以才當上口譯或主持嗎？並不是。從他們華麗的外觀來看，外表跟討觀眾喜歡很重要。另外就是他們必須要注意他們身後代表的是賽區形象，要注意自己的一言一行，假設今天一個翻譯真的會三國語言好了，他也不會真的突然跑去其他台客串翻譯，因為他有他自己所要顧慮的立場，也要考慮更多。[I think esports interpreting is more unique than other interpreting, partially due to the requirement for physical attraction. If you look at the hosts and interpreters in the West, or those from China and Korea, did they really get the job because they were articulate or because they were really proficient in all kinds of languages? No, they were their because they look pretty and they were good at winning the hearts of the audience. Additionally, they need to keep an eye on their representation of regional leagues. They need to behave accordingly. Even if an ISP could interpret three languages, they wouldn't appear

abruptly in a different channel to support interpreting services, because they need to think for their stances. They need to consider more.] (I3)

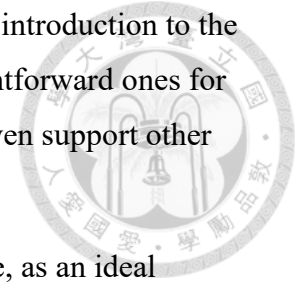
Conversely, other ISPs like I4 and I6 discussed their supportive role in enhancing players' image, rather than those of themselves. What they said was related to the role of public relations specialist brought up by D9, when she said that a "good esports ISP should be able to guide the interviewee so that they can say what really was in their mind" (D9) to let the audiences know more about the players. Articulating a more abstract concept, I6 suggested that ISPs "should be the 'shadow' of the players," aiming to enhance their prominence through minimal alteration of their speech during interpretation. This perspective aligns with that of D1:

You need to let the players feel comfortable with you around. We are in a show business. When the players are on the stage, they are already very nervous. If they feel comfortable around you, you can help them say more by just standing there. If they don't feel comfortable when you are around, they would feel even more nervous when they have to speak to you so that you can interpret. The amount of words they say will determine how much information the audience could receive and therefore decide whether the interview is successful or not. (D1)

While D1 described what an ideal ISP should do as a supportive role to the players, other ISPs shared their thoughts on the ideal ISP. I6 referred to the "neutral role," explained when addressing team conflicts, as the ideal role of an ISP. The PDPs were more straightforward and proposed their role models. D7 identified "Jeesun", the renowned Korean ISP that is also a production manager for Riot, as an ideal ISP, highlighting their professionalism, expertise, and ability to navigate complex questions:

在韓國翻譯的 Jeesun 是我理想中的口譯員。面對比台灣更專業的韓國記者更，專注於電競的韓國記者所提出的艱難問題，應對如流。除了縮短問題引言之外，還能精確地把問題提出讓選手回答，接力時夥伴遇到問題時還能支援對方。[I think Jeesun, who performs esports interpreting in Korea, is the ideal ISP. When working with Korean esports journalists, who are more professional in terms of esports news compared with Taiwanese counterparts, she could easily

maneuver the situation. In addition to summarizing the lengthy introduction to the interview questions, she could modify the questions into straightforward ones for the players to answer. During interpretation relays, she could even support other when needed.] (D7)



D8 proposed Xiran, a Chinese bilingual host in the Chinese LoL league, as an ideal example of esports ISPs. He praised how Xiran constantly engaged in learning about the esports title, how she reviewed her work after each performance, how she bravely rejected abrupt interpreting invitations to maintain professionalism, and how demanding she was to herself in terms of increasing the quality of her interpretation works. Rather than directly address the ideal roles of ISP, D9, who was a female host that was involved in many ISP jobs, suggested an ideal scenario for interpreting to prevent the presence of ISPs from affecting the direct interaction between hosts and players:

理想的需要翻譯的溝通情況，是採訪由一人來處理而不是一位主持人跟一位翻譯。因為採訪時會有螢幕畫面，會需要跟受訪者互動，如果多了一個翻譯在場會影響到整個互動的情況。如果真的要讓翻譯加入這個溝通組合的話，會希望把翻譯放在鏡頭外，至少讓螢幕中的人可以對著螢幕說話。[In the ideal scenario for an interpreted event, the interview should be conducted by one person instead of a combination of a host and an ISP. The reason is that the interaction between the interview participants is being broadcasted. If an ISP is involved, their presence would affect the interaction between the host and the interviewee. If it is necessary to place an ISP in this event, I would rather the ISP to be placed behind the camera, so that the people in the frame can look at the camera when they are speaking.”] (D9)

4.1.5 Requirements and training for esports ISPs

Participants highlighted a range of requirements and training they believe are essential for becoming successful esports ISPs, emphasizing both linguistic skills and a profound understanding of the esports ecosystem. Overall, the mISPs have emphasized that requirements such as language proficiency, esports knowledge, and personality traits should be considered prerequisites for aspiring esports interpreters. Conversely, they also

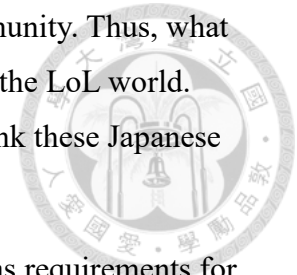
identified specific training areas focused on game-specific knowledge, language and culture, and streaming content.

All participants unanimously agreed that language proficiency is the fundamental requirement to become an esports interpreter with D1 leaving no room for confusion by saying, “Bilingual is the basics” (D1). I1 further emphasized the importance of mastering jargon usage while interpreting. Additionally, I3 expressed her aspiration to learn Korean to enhance her competitiveness within the LoL esports ecosystem, saying, “If I could speak Korean, then I may be able to get more jobs beyond the current regional leagues and even work in the LCK or LPL.” (I3)

Acquiring esports knowledge emerged as another crucial requirement cited by participants. They underscored the significance of understanding terminologies, in-game mechanics, and community culture. For instance, both I1 and I2 highlighted learning terminologies as a primary requisite for esports ISPs. I3 and I4 expanded on this, emphasizing the importance of understanding the game mechanics to a level where interpreters can comprehend the game as players. Meanwhile, I6 advocated for interpreters to achieve at least a diamond ranking in LoL, explaining, “You need to get to at least the similar levels to the players and coaches to understand what they were talking about.” (I6) D9 dug deeper by suggesting that ISPs “should learn the META of the game”, referring to the popular game strategies that led to more wins by adapting to each update of LoL. Furthermore, I4 emphasized the importance of familiarizing oneself with community language usage, which was supported by D3, saying, “Learn the terminologies and language usages specifically related to LoL or games” (D3), and D7, indicating, “ISPs should also look up the language used by esports communities.” (D7) I5 particularly noted the unique culture of the Japanese server compared to the broader PCS region:

日本用語相對中英韓文來講都比較陌生。因為之前大家都不會太注意到他們，算是一個相對比較小眾的社群。因此他們的用語非常不一樣。考量到他們已經併入 PCS，我覺得這個可能是未來需要特別注意的地方。[The Japanese jargons and slangs were less known by the esports fans compared to those of Mandarin, English, and Korean. It was because less attention was

directed at the Japanese league, which has been a smaller community. Thus, what they use for communication was very different from the rest of the LoL world. Considering that they are now included in the PCS region, I think these Japanese jargons deserve more attention.] (I5)



Personality traits and other characteristics were also identified as requirements for esports interpreters. I2 underscored the need for mental and emotional resilience to navigate high-pressure environments. I4 emphasized a passion for esports and a professional appearance as key factors in entering the esports ISP market. Additionally, I4 stressed the importance of maintaining composure and professionalism while on stage, alongside a commitment to continuous language development to adapt to evolving esports titles. Regarding to the on-stage appearance, D1 reckoned that ISPs should have exceptional memory to retain information accurately and enhance their performance:

ISPs should have good memories, so that they can interpret as accurately and completely as possible. Also, event organizers would prefer ISPs to get on stage or in front of cameras without a notebook. It doesn't look good in the frame. Without the notebook, the ISPs need to have great memories. Otherwise, they would become the target of the toxic audiences. (D1)

Many participants offered suggestions for acquiring esports-specific knowledge through various training methods. For instance, I2 and I5 recommended following shoutcasters, the esports commentators, or livestreams to “learn how they say things and how they criticize people” (I4). From the perspective of working for event organizing clients, I3 suggested familiarizing oneself with show-running business practices and procedures. I6 shared his experiences as a team ISP, highlighting the importance of directly watching games and recalling critical scenes as essential training methods for ISPs. In contrast to self-learning, D1 leveraged his experience as a supervisor during tournament games and suggested active measures to event organizers to train ISPs:

It is most effective and efficient to train with the real interviews. When I was in charge of managing or recruiting the ISPs for upcoming tournaments, I would just give them some video clips of the past and tell them to interpret, giving them 15

minute to prepare. I think this can mimic the stressful situation and let them know what's going to happen in real life. (D1)

Regarding language, translation, and interpretation training, I3 and I6 provided more detailed insights than the rest of the group. I3 expressed a desire for more Korean language lessons, considering Korea's status as a leading exporter of esports talent. I6 suggested reading books on translation and interpretation theories and recommended leveraging online footage of LoL post-game interviews to gain practical experience in communication settings specific to esports.

4.1.6 Suggestions for improving cross-cultural communication in esports

Participants offered a range of suggestions for enhancing cross-cultural communication in the esports industry, with a focus on improving clarity, efficiency, and the overall experience for players, media, and fans.

Participants emphasized the importance of refining communication processes and planning. Drawing from personal experiences where ISPs were sidelined due to poor event planning, I1 underscored the necessity of clear communication and organization on the part of event organizers, suggesting, “organizers should put more effort in identifying the interpreting needs during the tournament games.” (I1). Adding to this, I5 highlighted the need for event organizers to ensure an adequate pool of ISP resources to facilitate smooth communication between players and referees during games:

現在大多數的翻譯資源都放在跟採訪相關的場合，但其實這種選手跟裁判之間的溝通也很重要。有可能是我這次主要是跟著日本隊伍走，所以發現其實日文這邊的資源沒有分配很多。主辦方可能可以考慮多加點人手協助裁判跟隊伍之間的溝通以避免不必要的衝突。[Most of the interpreting-related resources were placed on the interviewing end. However, the communication between players and referees also required interpreting services. Maybe it was because I followed the Japanese teams around, so I was in a spot to see that there wasn't much allocated to the Japanese interpretation. The event organizer may consider providing more assistance for the communication between players and referees to avoid unnecessary conflicts.] (I5)

Suggestions for players and media workers also emerged, notably from I2. She observed that players often provide brief responses. Moreover, I2 noted that media workers sometimes pose challenging questions that players struggle to answer, indicating room for improvement on both sides of the interview process:

你知道我去翻的那些選手，回答都超短，還有最有名的那個，超級害羞，他要說的話基本上都是我幫他想的。現在有沒有改善我不知道，但這麼少話的我還是第一次見到。然後台灣媒體你知道都問一些很沒營養的問題，或者是問一些超級難回答的問題，像是喜歡吃什麼，來台灣要幹嘛。我覺得應該要多考慮到選手不多話的狀況，設計一些他能回答又可以回饋粉絲的問題吧。

[You know all the players that I interpreted for then gave me super short answers! Especially the most famous one. Super shy guy. Basically, all of his answers to the interview questions were from me. I don't know if he improved or not, but anyways, he could be the least talkative person I have ever seen. And then the Taiwanese media, notoriously known for asking useless questions or tough questions, such as, "What do you want to eat in Taiwan," or "What do you want to do in Taiwan." I think they should be more considerate for these less talkative players. Design something that they could provide valid reply for the sake of the fans.] (I2)

Many participants referenced the three-way relay interpretation of the 2024 PCS Spring Split Playoffs when offering suggestions for the LoL industry. During these three-way interviews, the host collaborated with a Japanese ISP to conduct post-game interviews with players who had just completed a series of games. As noted in the research scope, the PCS league encompasses teams from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. The regional event organizer had mandated that post-game interviews be broadcast with Mandarin, English, and Japanese interpreting services provided. Consequently, regardless of the interviewee's background, every statement made by the host or player was repeated, interpreted, and broadcast in these three languages. Regarding this event, I3's suggestions focused on streamlining interview processes and fostering inclusivity:

我覺得現在比起過去翻譯資源已經多了很多，但是到底誰要翻什麼，那些工作是翻譯需要負責的，我覺得還有點不清楚。這種狀況會影響到人力配置，甚至導致人手不足。像我們有時候都還需要其他大區的人來支援翻譯跟主持。雖然說這是一種互相幫忙同甘共苦的感覺，但會影響到他們原本的賽區形象。有些人說說不定遠端翻譯可以解決缺人才的問題，但我覺得訪問這種事情還是要現場比較好，因為還有些肢體的動作什麼的，可以讓主持的人有更多的線索來精進這次訪談。[I feel like there are a lot more interpretation resources available now compared to the past, but it's still a bit unclear about who interprets what, and what tasks exactly fall under the responsibility of ISPs. This situation could affect manpower allocation and even lead to a shortage of personnel. Sometimes, we even need support from other regions for interpretation and hosting. While this fosters a sense of mutual help and shared hardship, it can negatively impact the image of their original regions. Some people say remote interpretation could solve the talent shortage, but I think on-site interviews are still better, because there are nonverbal cues and gestures that can give the host more clues to improve the interview.] (I3)

I5 recommended simplifying post-game interviews by segmenting language users into different groups to enhance efficiency and avoid lengthy relay processes that may impede stakeholders' comprehension, which was mentioned by D6 as well:

從觀眾的角度來看，要聽日文翻譯很浪費時間，尤其是我都已經選中文台了。而且看這些日文翻譯還會影響觀賞體驗，我聽不懂的時間就不知道要幹嘛阿。所以，我會建議主辦方把這種採訪分成三個場次。[From the audience's perspective, it is a waste of time listening to Japanese interpretation when I have already chosen the Mandarin channel. And it also interrupts the watching experience, because there is nothing I could do when I am listening to a language that I don't understand. So, I would recommend the organizer to separate the interview into three sessions.] (D6)

D8 shared the sentiment that the relay was an obstructive force for audience to enjoy the game. He expressed the desire for more authentic player responses and entertaining

interviews, and he argued “the awkwardness of the three-way relayed post-game interviews prevents the audience from being entertained.” (D8)

Moreover, how the three-way interview was carried out was not the only factor that affected the quality of the interview. D9 critiqued the quality of questions in multilingual interviews, criticizing that the questions asked were not “interesting enough.” While D6 complimented the reintroduction of post-game interviews into PCS, she identified that the PCS players required more public relations training to improve the quality of the interviews. She said, “Even though the players would eventually improve the public relations skills as they grow, they still need to receive relevant trainings.” (D6)

I6’s suggestions revolved around addressing the long-term sustainability of esports interpreting. He acknowledged the demanding nature of the profession, with ISPs often working long hours to accommodate players’ training schedules. I6 highlighted the niche nature of esports interpreting and emphasized the need for interpreters to adapt to changing circumstances to sustain their careers in the industry. He also noted the challenge of transferring esports interpreting skills to other industries:

現在一個很大的問題就是我們缺人，找不到既會翻譯又懂 LoL 的人。一部分原因是，很喜歡打電動的人成績通常都不好，那些很會讀書很會翻譯的人又不太會接觸遊戲，而且說實在的我們能給的薪水就不高，要這些專業翻譯投入那麼多時間學 LoL 的相關知識，還不能用在其他領域上，真的太難了。建議主辦方早點開始訓練相關人才吧。[A major problem we’re facing is the lack of personnel – we’re struggling to find people who are both skilled Translators and knowledgeable about LoL. Part of the issue is that those who are passionate about gaming often don’t excel academically, while those who are academically strong and proficient in Translation tend to be less familiar with games. To be frank, the salary we can offer isn’t very high, making it difficult to motivate professional Translators to dedicate significant time learning LoL-related knowledge, especially since it’s not transferable to other fields. I suggest the organizers start training relevant talents early on.] (I6)

4.1.7 Comparing esports interpreting with other interpreting experiences

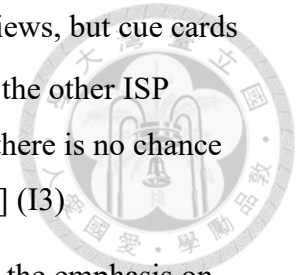
Participants shared their observations regarding esports interpreting in comparison to other interpreting experiences, delineating both similarities and unique challenges inherent in the esports industry.

I1 discerned parallels and shared challenges with other experiences. For example, when comparing freelance work with ISPs hired by event organizers, I1 noted a key distinction: freelancers are not typically held accountable for a diverse range of tasks, whereas ISPs of the organizers are. This sentiment was echoed by I5, who recounted experiences from working in the baseball industry as an ISP, where concerns extended beyond interpreting to include issues such as team commute and weather. Further, I6 emphasized that regardless of the type of interpreting, all ISPs must prepare for the specific terminologies of the field, stating, “It doesn’t matter if it’s concert interpreting, B2B conversations, or esports interpreting. You need to put in the work” (I6).

Conversely, the mISPs elaborated on the distinctiveness of esports interpreting. I2 perceived a disparity in complexity between sports interpreting and esports interpreting, noting that preparation for esports interpreting was comparatively more complex than sports interpreting such as baseball because there were more item names, character names, and esports player names involved. Additionally, I2 likened the emerging field of esports interpreting to a “Battle Royale,” a kind of esports genre that individuals needed to scavenge resources from the ruleless wild and compete against each other to become the last one standing, underscoring the absence of clear qualifications for individuals performing esports interpreting tasks. I3 highlighted the correlation between the workload of an esports ISP and the performance of esports teams, stating, “The amount of work would increase when the teams advance to a higher level” (I3). Furthermore, I3 noted the unique responsibility placed on ISPs to plan the interpretation process for three-way relay post-game interviews, remarking, “There were no professional personnel to consult so we had to try it on our own” (I3). She further observed the heightened demands of esports interpreting when ISPs were in front of cameras:

做這些採訪逐步沒有做筆記，但有準備字卡。接力的過程真的非常倚賴另外一位口譯的內容，因為聽不懂日語所以基本上不存在替別人修正翻譯內容的

空間。[We cannot take CI notes during these post-game interviews, but cue cards were allowed. We are highly dependent on the interpretation of the other ISP during the three-way relay. Since I don't know Japanese at all, there is no chance that I can make up for any mistakes that the other person made.] (I3)



I3 additionally noted that one unique aspect of esports interpreting was the emphasis on physical attractiveness rather than top-tier linguistic ability. I6 reflected on the unique dynamics of esports teams, remarking that despite frequent arguments and quarrels among teammates, interpretation modifications were unnecessary as they would invariably reconcile. “Maintaining a neutral position was always the key,” noted I6.

4.2 Responses from the Interpreting Service Users (ISUs)

As outlined in Chapter 3, six mISUs were interviewed by the author of the present study. The findings from these interviews are structured according to the interview questions, which inquire about various aspects including where ISUs encounter ISPs, the nature of interaction between ISUs and ISPs, ISUs' perceptions of the role of ISPs, the potential for AI to replace ISPs, the requirement of an ISP, recommendations for enhancing cross-cultural communication in the esports domain, comparisons with other interpreting experiences, and conflicts related to communication. The responses of the PDPs were also included in this section, as the researcher leveraged the flexibility of semi-structured interviews to probe into the user experiences of the PDPs.

4.2.1 When and how esports ISPs assist ISUs

mISUs provided insights into when they encounter esports ISPs and the tasks these ISPs undertake. In terms of the occasions where ISUs would require assistance from ISPs, the mISU participants indicated they would need them when an esports team hires a foreign key stakeholder, when an esports team attends international events, when event organizers hold post-game interviews and press conferences, and when media workers want to interview foreign players during tournament games. Additionally, mISUs discussed the tasks ISPs shouldered during these occasions, including interpreting post-game interviews, media interviews, and press conferences; serving as cultural bridges for foreign players; facilitating communications within teams; helping with daily life for

foreign players; assisting with media relations and communication; and translating documents and other materials.

ISUs typically engage with ISPs when incorporating foreign players into their teams. U1 and U4 illustrated this practice, explaining that their team hired a Korean-Mandarin ISP upon recruiting a Korean player to manage communication and other matters related to that player. U3 corroborated this, noting the presence of a team ISP when the team director recruited a Korean player. However, U3 mentioned that situations involving English, such as traveling to English-speaking countries for tournament games, were mostly handled by team coaches rather than team ISPs. As a member of an esports logistics team, U2 emphasized the necessity of a team ISP when accessing materials for community marketing from a Korean player on the team:

我在戰隊裡面是做像是小編的工作，有觀察到會與翻譯有互動的時候大概就是社群需要一些素材的時候。我會請選手教練幫我回答一些問題然後錄成素材放到社群媒體上，這時候就會請翻譯協助我跟外籍選手溝通。[In the team, I'm basically the manager of the social media. I've noticed that interaction with the ISP usually occurs when I need some content for community marketing. I'll ask the players and coaches to answer some questions and record them as content for social media. At this point, I'll ask the ISP to help me communicate with the foreign players.]

Another occasion where ISPs are present is during international events. U1 and U3 mentioned increased media interviews during later stages of international tournament games, necessitating assistance from ISPs hired by event organizers. Echoing this sentiment, U5 recounted an instance where event organizers failed to prepare Mandarin-English ISPs for the 2019 MSI semifinals, leading to difficulties in conducting interviews with a team from the PCS region due to the lack of appropriate interpreters. U5 further described the scene at press conferences during international games:

當時所有人會擠在一間攝影棚，各國媒體都在。Riot 會設定語系提問順序，上去替選手翻譯的大多是官方派出資源。但結果他們沒有預測到台灣那隊會晉級到後段，結果後來差點找不到人來幫他們翻譯。[All of the

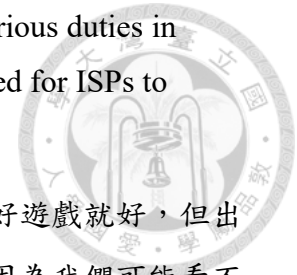
media workers were scrambled into one room, including reporters from all around the world. Riot would divide these interviews into sessions of different languages. Those who are in charge of interpreting are usually appointed by Riot. However, they didn't predict that the Taiwanese team would advance to the later stages, which resulted in them almost not being able to find anyone to interpret for them.] (U5)

Participants also observed ISPs interpreting during post-game interviews. U3 recalled working with ISPs during Worlds post-game interviews. While U6 shared the similar experiences of attending post-game interviews, he stressed the preference for professionally trained interpreters based on personal experiences to enhance player responses. Additionally, U6 highlighted the role of ISPs during promotion video filming for tournament games, where their assistance was crucial in explaining situations to foreign stakeholders involved in the filming process. The sharing of D2 and D7 supported what U6 said:

另外一個狀況會需要我口譯的就是去那種賽前攝影的場合，會有導演跟攝影團隊在，你可能就要跟導演溝通，他會叫你跟選手說等等要擺一些酷酷的姿勢，然後跟你一起想有沒有可以耍帥的台詞。[Another situation where I need to interpret is during pre-game photo shoots. There will be a director and a photography team present. You might need to communicate with the director, who will ask you to tell the players to strike some cool poses. You'll also work together to brainstorm some cool lines the players can say.] (D2)

我們有一次帶隊去韓國，到當地就有很多國際賽的攝影需求，主要是行銷推廣用，就是大家比賽前會看到的那種前導影片。那口譯的工作就是要確保導演跟隊伍溝通無礙，協助拍攝工作進行。[We once brought the team to Korea, where there were a lot of shooting needs for the international game, mainly for marketing and promotion purposes. You know, those introductory videos you see before matches. The ISP's role was to ensure seamless communication between the director and the esports team, facilitating the shooting process.] (D7)

When teams are traveling abroad, ISPs are needed to handle various duties in addition to assisting the aforementioned activities. U3 indicated the need for ISPs to assist with daily life for esports teams when they travel abroad:



雖然我說我們自己需要翻譯的機會很少，因為我們只要打好遊戲就好，但出國比賽的時候就會需要翻譯他們的幫忙，尤其像是吃飯，因為我們可能看不懂菜單阿，這些都需要他們幫忙。[Although I said we rarely need interpretation ourselves, since we just need to focus on playing the game, we do need the ISP's help when we travel abroad for tournaments, especially when it comes to things like eating, since we might not understand the menu. We rely on them for these things.] (U3)

U6 explained that event organizers of regional leagues would require assistance of ISPs when regional organizers lead regional teams to international tournament game as the teams' manager. D8 was the one who encountered such situation from the event organizing side:

首先，我需要帶領地區賽事方去韓國和美國，這些都是他們沒去過的地方。可以說我更像是一名導遊，幫助他們處理所有旅行要用的文件。再來，我還記錄他們的開支和會計工作，例如保管住宿的收據或發票。還有因為我是地區賽事方的人，所以我變成各隊伍與賽事方之間的聯絡窗口。我也是地區賽事方與 Riot 之間的窗口。舉例來說，選手需要某些東西時，我必須向 Riot 反應，試著去弄到選手需要的物品。[To begin with, I need to lead the regional event organizers to places like Korea and the US, places that none of them had been to. I would say I was more of a tour guide, guiding them through all travel document processing. Secondly, I was also in charge of tracking their spendings and accounting matters, like keeping the receipt of the accommodation. In addition, because I work for the regional event organizer, I was the contact point between teams and the event organizer. Furthermore, I was also the contact point between the regional event organizer and Riot. For example, when a player was in need of something, I had to react to Riot and try to get what the player wanted.] (D8)

Tasks undertaken by esports ISPs include interpreting post-game interviews, media interviews, and press conferences, serving as a cultural bridge for the foreign players, facilitating communications within teams, helping with daily life for foreign players, assisting with media relations and communication, and translating documents and other materials. For common interpreting work, U1 described that the ISPs interpreted the responses of players for English speaking and Japanese speaking media, mainly referring to the 2024 PCS Spring Split Playoffs. As a Taiwanese esports media worker, U5 said that she needed help from the ISPs when interviewing foreign players. For facilitating communication within teams, U4 noted that staff ISPs would assist in facilitating communication between members of the team, particularly involving the context of post-game analysis conducted by coaches. Moreover, U1 described that ISPs served as a cultural bridge for foreign players, teaching Korean players Mandarin and helping them adapt to the local lifestyle. U4 took her own experience as an example, describing how the team ISP acted as a cultural bridge instead of a mere interpreter for Korean players on the team:

身為領隊因為需要照顧選手，所以在處理韓援的事情時，會需要翻譯從旁協助溝通。翻譯身為隊上唯一能流暢跟韓援溝通的人，會直接與後勤人員溝通選手需求，有時候甚至選手不會開口要求，而是翻譯替他著想。[I am a manager of the team. When I am dealing with matters related to the Korean player, I would need help from the ISP. The ISP is the only one who could fluently communicate with the Korean player. He would directly communicate with the logistics about the needs of the Korean players. Often times the Korean player didn't even need to voice up his considerations, because the ISP has already taken care of them already.] (U4)

Aside from the tasks mentioned above, the mISUs mentioned that the ISPs may need to babysit players under certain circumstances. For example, U3 recalled his trip to Korea to play against another team accompanied by an ISP, who not only provided interpreting services but also had to address the daily needs of the esports team. Similar to U3's outbound experience, U4 talked about another situation where a Korean player was imported into Taiwan, and the team hired a team interpreter to look after him. U2 and

U6 mentioned that esports ISPs also assist with media relations and communication. U2 said she was aided by the staff ISP of her team to create content based on materials provided by Korean players. U6 explained that the Japanese league has partnered with a Korean-Japanese freelancer who has facilitated production of promotion videos and performed subtitle translation for these produced clips.



4.2.2 Interactions between ISUs and esports ISPs

Participant of the mISU group shared their experiences interacting with esports ISPs, describing the diverse ways these professionals integrate into team dynamics, communication practices, and event operations.

One of the occasions that ISUs worked along with team ISPs was during team practice. U1 said that the team ISP on their team had to join the team practices as a way to collect firsthand data for the interpretation assignment for the post-game analyses. U2 provided a clearer picture about how these team ISPs interacted with team members:

基本上我能看到的就是復盤的時候，翻譯會在韓援旁邊翻譯，是那種教練邊講，翻譯邊小聲翻的那種。然後翻譯跟韓援其實關係滿緊密的，因為他也要跟我們一起住選手宿舍，基本上就是黏在一起就對了。[Basically, I see the ISP sitting next to the Korean player during the review session. The ISP would interpret with a low volume while the coach was speaking. The ISP and the Korean player actually have a pretty close relationship, since they live together in the player's dorm. They're basically inseparable.]

U1 further highlighted the demanding working schedule of the ISP who stayed with them, saying, “in addition to following the day-to-day schedule, the team ISP could only take 2 to 4 days off per month.” (U1)

According to the participants, the ISPs are commonly found on the stage facilitating post-game interviews or at the backstage assisting in media interviews. Sharing his own experience as an esports player who attended international games, U3 said that he would be invited to certain spots by esports media to conduct media interviews. ISPs of the event organizers were stationed at these spots to conduct

consecutive interpreting for these ISUs. Such experience was shared by U5, an esports media worker, and U6, an event organizer handling tasks related to the Japanese league.

Aside from team ISPs that handle interpretation between Korean and Mandarin, U3 recalled that when negotiating contract issues with the owner of the team, who spoke only English, his coach would take on the role of the ISP, to help address negotiation issues:

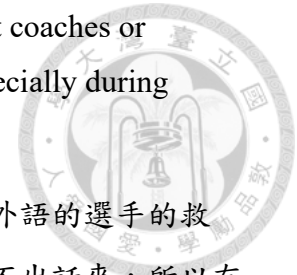
我們有一個狀況是教練會幫我們翻譯，就是我們要跟老闆談合約的時候。我們老闆只會講英文，阿簡單的我們可以聽得懂，但合約這種比較難的就需要教練幫忙。他大部分就是在當那種大家知道的口譯，老闆說什麼或我們說什麼他就翻什麼。但他偶爾也會提醒我們合約哪邊該注意，哪些是我們的權益。主要是因為這些選手也都是他選的，然後請老闆買來的，所以他會多照顧我們。[We have this one situation where the coach acts as our ISP when we need to discuss contracts with the owner. Our owner only speaks English, and we can understand basic English, but for contracts, which are more complicated, we need the coach's help. He mainly acts as the traditional conduit, interpreting what the owner says or what we say. But sometimes he also reminds us about things to be careful about in the contract, like what our rights are. Mainly because he was the one scouted these players and asked the owner to purchase them, so he takes extra care of us.] (U3)

Apart from the formal conversations that involve work and business matters, the mISUs also shared their friendly interaction with the ISPs. U1 said, “I asked the team ISP to teach me Korean pop songs, because he seemed to have nothing to do at the moment.”

4.2.3 Roles of the ISPs and the potential replacement by AI

During the semi-structured interviews, the participants were asked about the roles that ISPs played and whether the ISPs would be replaced by AI. The following are the compiled and categorized roles, including assistant coach, communication and cultural mediator, vital member of the team, colleague, public relations specialist, public-facing representative. The mISUs’ perspectives on the potential replacement of the ISPs by AI were also included.

In terms of the roles of the ISPs, U1 described them as assistant coaches or saviors, providing crucial support for non-native speaking players, especially during interviews:



除了翻譯之外可能也扮演助教角色，一定程度上算是不會外語的選手的救星，因為選手大部分都比較內向，有可能到採訪場合會講不出話來，所以有翻譯服務者在會比較好 [In addition to general Translators, they also play the role of assistant coaches. To a certain degree, they are the saviors of non-native speaking players. Many esports players are really shy, and there is a high chance that they couldn't speak properly during interviews. Therefore, it is better to have an ISP to accompany them.] (U1).

This sentiment is echoed by U2, who saw ISPs as communication bridges and cultural mediators within teams, particularly for international players. U1 added that ISPs were vital colleagues on the team, as their strategic importance was directly connected with that of imported Korean players, who were usually considered the better players in the LoL world. This view of the ISP as a colleague was further strengthened by U3 and U4:

如果隊上有韓國人的話雖然有可能請翻譯，但如果後勤分析師或是經理會韓文的話就不太會請。如果有請翻譯的話會覺得他像同事 [If there is a Korean player on the team, the team may hire an additional ISP. However, if a manager or an analyst is able to speak Korean, then it is unlikely the team would hire another person. But if the team really hires another ISP, I think I will see him as a colleague] (U3)

翻譯其實跟領隊就是同事關係，只是領隊要管理大家的起居，而翻譯則是著重於照顧韓援起居。例如說台灣選手可能直接跟後勤反應某家便當很難吃，但外援可能不敢，所以翻譯會特別去關照外援的需求，主動去幫他溝通 [A team ISP is actually like a team manager, who is a colleague to us. The only difference is that a team manager takes care of everyone's needs, and the team ISP is only accountable for taking care of those of Korean players. For instance, Taiwanese players may directly approach to a member of the logistics team and tell him that the meal delivered by a certain restaurant is bad, which a Korean

wouldn't dare to do so. This is why the team ISP would offer special care to the foreign players and proactively facilitate communication on their behalf.] (U4)

ISPs also contribute to the public image of a team or regional league. U1 noted the ISPs' role as public relations specialists when they took on responsibilities as managers, helping shape the narrative of the players during interviews. D3's responses fit in what U1 said when D3 was accountable for organizing interviews at tournament games:

有很多在後台的媒體採訪需要翻譯的協助。這些媒體採訪通常沒有台上那種那麼緊急，所以除了請翻譯協助我們跟外籍選手溝通，我們也會與他們商量說要怎麼呈現他們隊伍選手的採訪。[There are also media interviews behind the scene. For these interviews, we would also require assistance from the ISPs. These interviews are not as intense as those on the stage. Therefore, in addition to interpreting for us, we would discuss with the ISP on to present the players on the team during the interviews.] (D3)

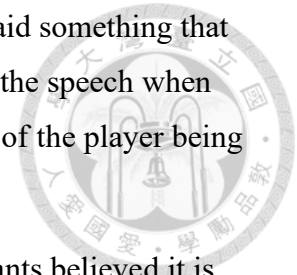
Beyond language Translation, U5 highlighted the importance of the ISP as a mirror or reflector, capturing the emotional nuances of players:

我覺得口譯就像是一面鏡子，能夠忠實反映出選手的樣貌，而不只是單純翻譯言語。要能了解翻譯使用者使用口譯的脈絡，不管是戰隊、選手、還是媒體，要能反射出選手的心態、情緒等等比較抽象的事物。[I think the ISPs are like mirrors, capable of reflecting what the players are really like. What they do is not just interpreting words. They should be able to understand the context behind the speech made by the users. Whether it is with esports teams, players, or media worker, the ISPs should be capable of reflecting arbitrary things like the player's mindset or emotions.] (U5).

They also served as emotion buffers, mitigating potential risks during broadcasts:

翻譯有時候可以做為一層溝通的緩衝，降低轉播的風險。例如知道選手原話非常激烈，有可能落入失言的範疇。翻譯可以適當潤飾，降低輿論批評風險。[Sometimes ISPs could become emotion buffers, reducing the risk during

livestreaming. Let's say a player was emotional and probably said something that may be considered inappropriate. The ISP may help tone down the speech when interpreting into the target language, so as to reduce the chance of the player being criticized.] (U6).



While AI may contribute to communication in esports, participants believed it is unlikely to fully replace ISPs. While U2 acknowledged the potential of AI for some tasks, he recognized its limitations that AI has not yet acquired the gaming and community language used in the esports area, nor could it perceive the emotions of the people involved in the conversation. U4 emphasized the ongoing need for human expertise, highlighting that AI cannot deal with the interpretation or communication of the skills mentioned in the esports title. Additionally, U3 illustrated that human interaction could not be replaced by AI when dealing with conflicts or interviews:

就是我覺得發生衝突時，應該要有一個人類翻譯來協助會比較好，AI 應該沒辦法，其實去採訪的時候也是一樣。就是這些時候有人陪著的感覺會比較好，不像是自己一個人要去面對一切。這跟手上拿著翻譯機的感覺差很多，總而言之我是比較喜歡人翻譯。[I feel like having a human ISP present during conflicts would be better. AI probably wouldn't be able to handle it. It's the same with interviews. Having someone there with you just feels better than being alone and facing everything yourself. It's a completely different experience from just using a interpreting app. To sum it up, I prefer human Translators.

4.2.4 Requirements for esports ISPs

When mISUs were asked about the requirements to become esports ISPs, their responses included a wide range of answers, featuring strong game comprehension, good interpersonal skills, high level of adaptability, and accuracy and sensitivity.

U1 emphasized the need for game comprehension, stating that the ISPs needed to possess above-average game knowledge and learn the terminologies. This statement was backed by U2, who stressed the importance of fast reflexes and quick thinking alongside a deep understanding of the game, because there would be no time to waste in the fast-paced communication setting in the esports industry. U4 further emphasized the

requirement for in-depth knowledge of game mechanics, such as the effects and function of the skills and items. U5 added the need for understanding game history, terminology, and knowledge, highlighting the importance of the context behind:

我覺得一個好的翻譯，應該是可以理解整個事件的脈絡，考量到各種因素之後翻譯的人。如果你可以了解為什麼遊戲現在會長這樣，為什麼選手要選某個特定角色，你就可以翻得更完整，也讓身為媒體的我們有更多的理解，好把故事寫得更完整。[I think a good ISP is someone who can understand the context of the entire event, taking into account various factors before interpreting. If you can grasp why the game is playing out the way it is, why the player chose a specific character, you can interpret in a more complete manner. This could give us in the media a greater understanding so we can write a more comprehensive story.] (U5)

U6 expanded on this, stating that ISPs must have “a basic understanding about the game”, be able to “clearly portray the details of a played game,” and have a strong understanding of “equivalent words used in Korean and Mandarin gaming culture” (U6).

Beyond technical knowledge, ISPs need strong interpersonal skills to navigate complex team dynamics. U2 talked about the importance of “great networking skills and high EQ” (U2) and U4 emphasized the need for “the ability to maneuver relationships, coordinate work, and show empathy in an organization” (U4). U5 underscored the need for sensitivity to context, saying, “ISPs should be able to contextualize the conversation, and comprehend the situation at their best.” (U5)

Furthermore, ISPs need to be versatile and adaptable. U3 perceived that if an ISP was not put in a spot to escort Korean players at all times, then the ISP should be able to multitask and be deemed as part of the logistics team to offer help whenever he or she was available. U4 stressed the importance of being proactive that the ISP should keep an eye on their ISUs and report any relevant problems when necessary. D3 emphasized that being aware of and adaptable to the differences in cross-strait esports language usages should be a requirement for the ISPs in the PCS league:

我自己覺得好的翻譯應該是要能注意一些兩岸用詞。我記得之前是一個中國的主持人來支援台灣的台，你也知道兩地對英雄的叫法不太一樣，那時候那位來翻譯的主持人就有特別切換名稱的叫法，我就有種被體貼的感覺，所以我覺得一個好的翻譯除了中英韓日用法要會之外，兩岸用詞也要特別注意。

[Personally, I think a good ISP should be attentive to the differences in terminology between mainland China and Taiwan. I remember there was this Chinese host who came to support the Taiwanese LoL channel, and you know how they call the champions was different in both places. That host was very considerate in switching between the different names, which made me feel really cared for. So, I think a good ISP should not only know how to use Chinese, English, Korean, and Japanese, but also be particularly aware of the differences in terminology between mainland China and Taiwan.] (D3)

In terms of interpretation and communication techniques, D3 emphasized the need to be able to collect pieces of information from here and there to form meaningful sentences:

其實看了這次 PCS 的採訪內容，就會發現比起日本或是其他國家，台灣選手不只是語言組織能力不足，還欠缺一定的公關訓練，上台要說什麼該說什麼都不太清楚，這對翻譯來講就很困難，所以翻譯要知道如何變通，也要知道如何把這些破碎的資訊撿起來組織成完整的句子。[Looking at the PCS interviews this year, you will notice that Taiwanese players, compared to those from Japan or other countries, not only lack proficiency in language organization but also seem to lack proper public relations training. They aren't clear on what to say and what not to say on stage, which makes things really difficult for the ISPs. So, the ISP needs to know how to be flexible and how to piece together fragmented information to form complete sentences.] (D3)

The requirement for the adaptability also included a resilient mindset, which was mentioned by D3 for working in the fast-paced esports environment, so as to handle pressure effectively. D3 explained, “You need to have a strong heart, and be capable of taking hits, because the audience during livestreams want you to make a scene.” D8 shared the thoughts of D3 in terms of being mentally prepared for pressure, but he also

added that ISPs would need to be ready to adapt to emerging roles such as being branded as celebrities by either the esports teams or the event organizers.

Finally, U6 emphasized the need for accuracy and sensitivity when interpreting:

口譯應該要能忠實的呈現選手的回答，但是他也要同時考慮到是否有需要為了轉播而修飾譯入語用詞。也要清楚傳達主持人問題跟選手回答，而且不能腦補。[ISPs should be able to conduct interpretation for the players in a faithful manner. However, they should also consider the needs of the broadcasting stakeholders to decide whether modifying the source speech is necessary. ISPs should also be able to clearly convey what the host and players said and shouldn't add anything additional to the interpreted speech.] (U6).

U6's comments included maintaining a "neutral position", while recognizing that guiding players back "on to the right track" should be a role better suited for hosts.

4.2.5 Suggestions for improving cross-cultural Communication in esports

Participants in this study offered valuable suggestions for improving cross-cultural communication in esports, particularly on the communication between players, the three-way relay post-game interviews of the 2024 PCS Spring Split Playoffs, the selection of ISPs, the format of press conferences, and communication between players and officials.

U1 provided suggestions on individual communication for players. He believed that bringing an interpreter for interviews with Korean players was beneficial, while suggesting that PCS players can try to communicate directly with English-speaking foreign counterparts. However, he acknowledged that the presence of an interpreter may hinder establishing personal connections:

其實我們很少在線下會去找其他選手，但如果真的在國際賽有遇到的話，然後又想認識他的話，我覺得如果對方是韓國人就一定要帶翻譯，因為台灣人基本上韓文不通，但如果對方會講英文就可以自己用破英文上。我自己覺得如果可以的話還是自己交朋友比較好，因為帶個翻譯感覺就怪怪的。我自己是誰在講話就看誰，多了個翻譯就好像我是在跟翻譯交朋友不是在跟外國選

手。[We rarely connect with other players offline, but if we do happen to run into them at an international tournament and want to make friends, I think it's a must to bring a ISP if the other player is Korean, because Taiwanese people generally don't speak Korean. But if the other player speaks English, we can just use our poor English and try to communicate with them. Personally, I feel it's better to make friends on your own, because having a ISP just feels awkward. When I engage in conversations, I look at the one that is talking. If I have an ISP present, it feels like I'm making friends with the ISP, not the foreign player.] (U1)

The visibility of the ISPs that hindered the communication was also brought up by D9 when asked about her ideal interview condition:

我覺得完美的翻譯人員，就是將主持人跟翻譯合為一體。因為在採訪時會有畫面，如果說翻譯也在鏡頭內，是個正常人都會在翻譯說話的時候看翻譯，那這樣就會影響到我們想捕捉的畫面。理想上來說，如果真的翻譯要在場的話，我覺得可以把他放在鏡頭旁邊，至少這樣主持人跟受訪者都可以看著鏡頭方向說話或是聽翻譯。[I think the perfect ISP would be a combination of a host and an interpreter. Since interviews are filmed, having the ISP in the frame means any normal person would look at the ISP while they're speaking, which would affect the shots we want to capture. Ideally, if the ISP really needs to be present, I think they could be positioned just outside the camera's frame and beside the camera, so at least the host and the interviewee can both face the camera and speak or listen to the ISP.] (D9)

In terms of the three-way relay, U1 proposed individual interviews for each language, recognizing the potential confusion resulted from the three-way approach. However, he also saw the appeal of the three-way relay as a way to attract viewers. U2 shared the same criticism, calling it “too confusing” (U2). While acknowledging the potential “showmanship” value for event organizers, she suggested a need for clarity on the importance of such interviews and the resources allocated to them:

以賽事方來講這種作秀的做法是好的，目前這些需要口譯的場合重要程度不明，所以可能沒有獲得相應的資源。[From the event organizers' perspectives,

it is beneficial to conduct the three-way relay considering its showmanship value. However, it is unclear about how important these interpreted events are. Thus, such events may not receive the amount of resources it deserves.] (U2).

U3 found the three-way relay approach interesting and believed it “opened up a window” for fans to connect with players and suggested the event organizers to think of ways to make use of the window. In addition, U6 expressed approval for the three-way relay format, because such means demonstrated that the PCS league indeed put the second largest group of audience in mind when running the esports show business.

U4 proposed using in-house ISPs for international interviews, such as team ISPs of the esports teams or employees of Riot. She believed that the familiarity with these in-house ISPs could lead to more comfortable and effective communication. She acknowledged that professional fluency may be less important than understanding the player’s intended message in the esports case.

As an esports media worker, U5 identified several areas for improvement in interview formats, specifically criticizing the pace and flow of joint press conferences. U5 criticized the efficiency of the interview, saying, “Two to three questions per seven minutes is just not acceptable for the journalists.” (U5) While comparing consecutive interpreting with simultaneous interpreting for these press conferences, she believed the former was still preferable because the latter would distract the attention of the media from the interviewee due to listening to the voice in the headset. On the other hand, the former approach could leave time for the esports media to direct their attention to the people on stage, despite unable to understand their responses due to language barrier. However, U5 also acknowledged the slow pace of consecutive interpreting, and thus she proposed using simultaneous interpretation for interpreting teams who lost and consecutive interpreting for teams who won:

如果真的可以按照媒體私心的話，會希望敗部組用同步口譯訪問，而勝利組用逐步口譯訪問。因為輸掉的人要不是心情不好不好訪，要不是就是名氣比較小比較弱的隊伍。採訪起來沒有那麼多東西可以挖，那加快效率會比較好。為了避免不公平，可以請主辦在比賽前就說不論誰勝誰負，戰敗組就用

同步，勝利組就用逐步。[If the media workers were granted the right to choose, I would propose using simultaneous interpreting to interview the teams who lost, and consecutive for those who won. Those who lost are either too depressed to be interviewed, or less famous and less competitive. Either way, interviewing them would be difficult and there would be less to dig into. In these cases, speeding up the process would be nice. To ensure fairness, the event organizer can announce before games that regardless of the fame that each team possess, those who lost would be interviewed with the support of simultaneous interpreting, and those who won would be interpreted consecutively.] (U5).

U5 further praised the reintroduction and the importance of post-game interviews for media exposure, because there used to be a drought for collecting materials for esports coverages. She also suggested training players in public relations and emulating the approach in Korea to brand the players as celebrities. Finally, U5 addressed the need for considering different audiences when choosing interpretation methods:

我覺得賽後訪談接力本身節奏要加快，但主辦方賽事方要去思考記者會的接力是服務媒體，但是直播翻譯要服務觀眾，因此要去考慮到該環節的節目效果。[I think the overall pace of the post-game interviews should be picked up.

However, the event organizers should keep in mind that while the relayed-interpreting service is provided for media workers, the target audience changes to live audience while streaming. Therefore, they should take into consideration the showmanship value of the relayed-interpretation in these occasions.] (U5)

As an event organizer running the Japanese LoL League, U6 highlighted the communication challenges between players and referees:

覺得選手在比賽時跟裁判溝通的時候還是會比較費力，因為比賽的時候隨隊翻譯不能上場。所以跟裁判溝通的時候如果有語言障礙，通常要仰賴英文或是比較殘破的二外溝通，這個溝通還是比較有障礙的，很容易造成裁判、選手各自的誤會。[I think it is difficult for the players to communicate with the referees when they are competing, because the team ISPs are not allowed to be on the stage when the game is on. So, if there is a language barrier between the

referee and the players, their conversation would be conducted in English or a second language that both parties are not good at. I think these kinds of communication are obstructed and may easily lead to misunderstandings between players and referees.] (U6)

He suggested training new ISPs beforehand to deal with the mentioned obstacles between players and referees:

目前有物色到合適的人才，會進行事前訓練，例如處理相關業務來訓練他們未來翻譯的能力，而不是直接讓他們出席特定採訪場合直接開始口譯。[We have identified suitable candidates and will initiate pre-event training. As part of this preparation, these individuals will be assigned to positions handling event-related matters, thereby equipping them for future interpreting assignments. Pre-event training does not translate to directly appointing them to attend certain occasions and perform interpreting.] (U6).

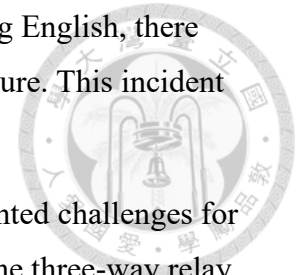
However, U6 emphasized that the model should remain outsourced, because interpreting assignments only took up a small part of running an esports league, and thus hiring a full-time ISP would not be cost efficient.

4.2.6 Challenges faced by the esports ISPs

In addition to sharing their personal experiences, mISUs also provided observations on the challenges faced by ISPs. These challenges primarily included gaining trust from others, balancing the interests of various stakeholders, and effectively conveying abstract emotions. One major concern was the lack of verification and trust. U4 noted that when a team relied solely on one bilingual individual for interpretation, doubts may arise about the accuracy of interpretations. This lack of verification could fuel mistrust, as seen in the criticism surrounding the three-relay interpretation:

PCS 三語為人詬病的其中一個原因就是，台灣雖然會日文的人沒有英文那麼多，但因為動漫文化的流行還是有很多人聽的懂日文，就會發現這次 PCS 中日口譯很不專業，也同時應證之前使用翻譯還有驗證信任問題。[One of the reasons that the three-way relay in PCS got roasted was because the audience discovered that the Japanese-Mandarin ISP was unprofessional. Even though not

so many people in Taiwan speak Japanese compared to speaking English, there are still many that know Japanese due to the popular anime culture. This incident echoes what I said about the verification and trust issue.] (U4).



The complex nature of multi-language interpretation also presented challenges for the ISPs in terms of balancing the interests of different parties. While the three-way relay format can be engaging for certain groups of the audience, it could lead to awkward silences and potentially affect the interviewed player's performance:

對於 PCS 三方接力來講其實也滿吸睛的，但也會覺得在翻自己聽不懂的語言的時後場面很乾，但有這個環節又可以照顧到日本區的粉絲。三方口譯的狀況也可能影響到選手回答表現，冗長的時間會影響到反應，又這種出現陌生語言的場合可能會讓選手感到緊張。[The three-way relay of the PCS has garnered attention from the audience, but it could be boring when the spoken language was incomprehensible. On one hand, such relay also shows that the league cares about its Japanese fans. On the other hand, the three-way relay may affect players' performance during interviews. Lengthy interpretations may affect their reaction, and being exposed in an environment with foreign languages may also make them nervous.] (U4).

Apart from addressing challenges emerging from interests of players and audience, ISPs might find themselves in situations where they were placed in a position of internal conflicts. For example, U2 mentioned that once there was a player who expressed dissatisfaction with their salary and asked the team ISP to follow him to the team owner's office to start a fight. In this case, U2 observed that the ISP was trapped between maintaining his professionalism and arguing with his employer.

Furthermore, ISPs often faced difficult situations requiring emotional intelligence and careful handling. Interpreting complex questions and emotional responses can be challenging, particularly when players struggle to articulate themselves, as U5 explained:

遇過最難的翻譯，就是記者問了一個複雜的問題，翻譯也翻完了。但選手由於當下情緒可能回答不出來，這種狀況對翻譯最為困難。這種狀況比較常出

現在中國選手身，因為他們訓練的都主要跟遊戲有關，在公關訓練上著墨比較少，組織自己語言的能力沒有那麼強。而由於他們這種欠缺順利傳達自己意願的情況，導致他們會使用一些帶有疑問的語尾助詞，這種不確定的語尾助詞也使得翻譯要處理起來比較困難。[The most difficult interpreting assignments that I have ever witnessed was when the journalist asked a complex questions, which was successfully interpreted by an ISP, but the player couldn't respond because he was overwhelmed by emotions. This kind of situation was the most difficult one, and it usually happened to Chinese players. The reason was that most of their trainings were related to playing the game. Little were they trained for public relations. Therefore, it was hard for them to organize their speeches. Since they could not convey their thoughts properly, Chinese players tend resort to doubtful tones of voice to complete their sentences. Such uncertainty manifested at the end of sentences were hard to process for the ISPs.] (U5).

U5 exemplified that misinterpretations can lead to public scrutiny and pressure to verify accuracy, as seen in the “T1 interview incident”:

曾經有某次 T1 參加的訪談在中國燒起來，嚴重到有人要發信去給戰隊確認是不是有韓國隊員失言的情形，被逼迫拿出原文跟翻譯對照，後來就被歸類到翻譯或是媒體超譯去了。[There was once that T1 was heavily criticized by Chinese audience due to one of the interviews they attended. The situation was so intense that the esports team was forced to confirm whether any Korean player had misspoken anything and had to compare the transcription of the interview with the interpretation. The incident was later concluded that it was either the ISPs or the media to blame due to their over-interpretation.] (U5).

4.3 Distinctive Responses from the People with Dual Perspectives (PDPs)

Sharing similar and often times identical comments with the mISPs and mISUs, 9 PDPs also presented distinctive responses regarding esports ISPs' tasks, relationship with key stakeholders, conflicts and stressors, requirements and trainings, suggestions for

improving cross-cultural communication in esports, and comparison between esports interpreting experiences and other settings. In the following sections, the researcher listed the responses of the PDPs that hadn't been mentioned by the former two groups. Notably, there was no dedicated section to the roles mentioned by the PDPs, as the results repeated those from the mISPs and mISUs.



4.3.1 Distinctive tasks mentioned by the PDPs

This section followed the categorization of tasks mentioned in Chapter 4.1.1, namely, general T&I tasks, administrative and logistical tasks, and content creating and development tasks, and listed those that were not mentioned in the previous sections.

In terms of the general translation and interpreting tasks, the PDPs mentioned that esports ISPs also handled document translation, which was crucial for the operational and legal aspects of esports teams and event organizers. To begin with, D5, as an ISP of one of the current largest teams in PCS, shared that he handled translation assignments for tournament registration and VISA documents of foreign personnel. D8, as an ISP assistant to the localization team of the game developer, supported the response of D5:

我進公司的時候是掛翻譯的職銜，那時候是擔任一個遊戲在地化主管的助理，我的工作內容需要處理遊戲相關的字串，像是報導、遊戲公告、或是遊戲字串等等。像是凱莎這個英雄就是我翻譯的其中之一。[When I joined the company, my title was Translator. At the time, I was an assistant to the Game Localization Manager. My responsibilities included handling game-related strings, such as reports, game announcements, and in-game text. For example, I was responsible for translating the name of the champion Kai'Sa.] (D8)

ISPs may engage in translating the subtitles for the promotional videos that were filmed on the media days, supporting content creating works. (D9)

The administrative tasks carried out by esports ISPs that were specifically mentioned by the PDPs focused on working inside a larger organization, referring to organizations that handle more than just an esports team sector. For example, D5 outlined various administrative duties arising from the fact that the esports team he worked for belonged to a large corporate group:

因為我們母公司是大公司嘛，所以除了平常戰隊的工作，還需要去處理行銷和產品設計。我還要向上面的主管匯報進度，提企劃來舉辦像是粉絲活動或是周年慶活動之類的，我同時還要處理招募青年隊的問題。[Because our parent company is a large corporation, besides my regular team work, I also need to handle marketing and product design. I have to report progress to my superiors and propose plans for events like fan activities or anniversary celebrations. On top of that, I'm also responsible for recruiting players for the youth team.] (D5)

Similar to D5, D8 provided additional context, saying that when he was working with the regional event organizer in Taiwan, he was assigned to “hold events for fans” or “anniversary celebration” (D8).

Apart from the T&I tasks that generated content in a relative responsive way, meaning that ISUs reaching out to ISPs to facilitate communication to run the show business, ISPs shouldered tasks that initiated interactions with others, and these tasks were categorized as the content creation and development tasks. D9 mentioned that she had to proactively approach foreign players on media day to invite them to media interviews that were hosted and interpreted by herself, and there was “a KPI to achieve” (D9). D4, who was a community manager that provided interpreting services from time to time, shared his experience interacting with another Korean ISP on the team and how the ISP proactively assisted in content creating for the team:

我之前是小編，負責網路社群經營。跟口譯打過交道大概是像是例如出片時要求韓國選手拍影片回答問題，但還沒用韓文解釋給選手聽，口譯老師就把狀況解釋完了。[I used to be the manager who ran the social media for the team. I experienced interpreting when I was trying to invite Korean players to participate in taking Q&A videos. However, I didn't even use Korean to communicate with the players, because the interpreter has already explained everything.] (D4)

4.3.2 The neglected ISPs

From the mISPs and mISUs responses, it was clear that esports teams generally treated the ISPs as members of the team, meaning they were visible to the key actors on

the team. However, esports ISPs could also be invisible in the LoL PCS games. The following examples were provided by the PDPs on how they interacted with event organizers as a freelancer, and how the value of the ISPs was neglected by the industry.

To begin with, D6 described a sense of distance between herself and event staff:

賽事方工作人員比較像同事，但完全不親近。甚至有些工作人員會講英文跟韓國選手溝通 所以一整桌的韓文翻譯就被晾在一旁。[The relationship between the ISPs and the event staff was like a collegial one, but we were not close at all. Sometimes the event staff would directly communicate with the Korean players, leaving the whole Korean ISP on the side.] (D6)

D7 lamented the lack of value placed on ISPs in the past:

過去還是 LMS 時期因為大多交手的人都是台灣人，所以根本沒有人重視翻譯資源。即便是出國比賽，對於翻譯人才品質的要求大概都是最低等級的。但現在的狀況不一樣，陷入了一種沒有培養翻譯人員，卻亟需人才的窘境。[Back in the days when we were still called the LMS, most of the stakeholders we interacted with were Taiwanese. Therefore, no one cared about resources for translation and interpretation. Even in cases where we went overseas to attend tournaments, we requested for the interpreting talents of the lowest ranks. However, things are different now. We are trapped in a situation where there is a huge surge in the demand of ISPs but we have trained none.] (D7)

D1 provided his own observation on how the ISPs were valued by Riot, the game developer:

We never said that interpreters were not important, not in the way that Chinese companies treat their ISPs. But I have to point out that interpreting takes up only a small part of the show business. It would not be right to start a Translation sector for this one percent, because it is not cost efficient. In the past, it was easy to stretch our roles as Rioters. But as there are more games being developed, Rioters became busier and could not cover the interpreting roles as volunteer ISPs. So

yes, maybe we need to look at our interpreting needs soon. And it would be nice to have a long-term partner providing interpreting services. (D1)

Despite the scarcity of interpreting talent, ISPs did not experience an elevation in their hierarchical position within the esports industry. D9, an esports media worker, observed, “ISPs became much busier, but their status remained unchanged.” (D9) Nevertheless, stakeholders recognized the importance of cultivating strong relationships with interpreters. D9 elaborated, “Good relationships with ISPs are crucial, as they lead to more diligent interpretations and potentially richer media coverage.” (D9)

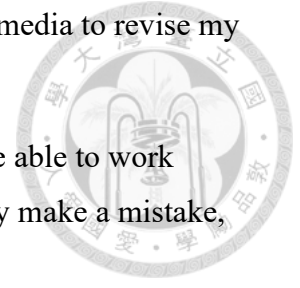
4.3.3 Large audience and self-expectation

Aside from the conflicts and stressors mentioned in the previous sections, the PDPs raised two outstanding sources of stress: large audience and the expectation they had for themselves as a team member.

Several participants mentioned the pressure they felt to perform well in front of a large audience, especially online viewers. D1 shared, “The biggest stress comes from running the show smoothly, and also interpreting in front of online audience is stressful too,” highlighting the added pressure of performing for a large, potentially critical, audience. D7 expressed a similar concern, stating, “The main pressure comes from the reactions of the audience, because there are around 50,000 people watching you during those 5 to 7 minutes,” acknowledging the immense pressure of a live audience and potential for criticism. Sharing the same sentiment, D8 compared interpreting in front of a camera and outside of the frame:

我自己最害怕的就是我們的主持人拉著我跟攝影師去跟外國選手採訪，如果不上鏡頭的就還好，最怕的就是那種有時間限制來要露臉的，因為大家就知道是我翻的。那種鏡頭外的壓力真的小很多，有時候還可以跟主持人或媒體修改我剛剛的翻譯。[My biggest fear is when our host drags me and the cameraman to interview foreign players. If I don't have to be on camera, it's fine. But I dread those situations where I have a time limit and need to be on screen because everyone knows I'm the one interpreting. The pressure off-camera is

much less, and sometimes I can even work with the host or the media to revise my interpretations.] (D8)



D3's suggestions echoed D8's experience, saying, "The ISPs need to be able to work under pressure, because they are placed in a livestream situation. If they make a mistake, that mistake cannot be unfixed as it is being broadcasted live." (D8)

ISPs also experienced pressure tied to the success of the teams they worked with, often feeling responsible for communication breakdowns. For example, D2 emphasized the emotional burden he felt when the team wasn't performing well:

我覺得壓力是自己給自己的，我覺得壓力最大的時候是戰績不好的時候。比賽一直輸的時候會擔心是不是因為自己少溝通了什麼，導致比賽輸了。也會去思考如果我幫隊伍多做了點什麼的話，會不會就贏了，是不是再多做些甚麼，能夠讓隊伍成績更好。[I think the pressure is posed by myself. The moment that I felt the most stressful was when the team was on a losing streak. I would worry that I missed something and led to the team's defeat. I would also think of the possibility that maybe a little bit of extra work could help the team win. Perhaps, my additional effort can assist the team in getting the "W".] (D2)

D5 also described the pressure he placed on himself to ensure accurate and clear communication, saying, "the pressure is from me, because I see myself as the strong communication bridge between the coach and players that could help avoid misunderstandings." (D5)

4.3.4 English proficiency and hosting training

The PDPs listed a range of requirements and training they believed were essential for becoming a successful esports interpreter, emphasizing both linguistic skills and a deep understanding of the esports ecosystem. Among them, the emphases on the importance of English proficiency and familiarization with the hosting process were not mentioned in the previous sections.

D2 offered a reminder that the importance of English proficiency should not be overlooked in the esports industry, though with Korean players being the most dominant players:

我知道現在大家引進外援基本上就是韓援，但是英文還是很有用，不是說要當電競翻譯就是把韓文學好，在隊伍裡面可能確實韓文會比英文更常用，但是賽事方的需求主要還是以英文為主，因為大家都會講英文嘛，要吸引觀眾的話英文的翻譯需求還是在，所以不要說學了韓文結果忽視英文的重要性。

[I understand that most teams are bringing in Korean players now, but English is still very important. An aspiring ISP has more to learn than just Korean. While Korean might be used more frequently within a team, the main interpreting needs still rely on English interpreting services, as everyone speaks it. To attract viewers, English is still needed, so don't downplay the importance of English even though learning Korean is important to work as an esports ISP.] (D2)

On the other hand, D7 stressed the importance of understanding communication patterns within esports communities:

我覺得一個好的電競口譯需要去了解平常採訪到底是怎樣進行，你才有辦法預測接下來會發生什麼事，大概知道主持人會以什麼樣的方式去問問題，先問什麼後問什麼，可以準備的比較充分。[I think a good esports ISP needs to understand the typical flow of interviews. That way, you can anticipate what will happen next, know how the host will ask questions, and predict the order of the questions. This allows you to prepare more thoroughly.] (D7)

Adding to the interview related skills, D3 emphasized two key skills: the ability to synthesize coherent statements from fragmented player responses, and mastery of efficient questioning techniques to streamline fast-paced interview interpretations.

To fulfill the mentioned requirements, certain trainings are necessary, and the PDPs have proposed several approaches to become esports ISPs. Developing strong language skills is paramount for aspiring esports interpreters. This can be achieved through formal language training, immersion programs, and continuous practice. For

improving communication skills, D8 suggested ISPs undergo host training to learn interview techniques and appropriate interpretation styles:

其實我覺得翻譯好像也應該要學怎麼主持，因為你學會主持就有更多發展空間。就算不當主持人好了，也可以了解主持到底是怎麼一回事，翻譯起來也會比較得心應手。而且主持的時候應該還會依些說話的方式，怎樣去運用一些高級辭彙。[I think ISPs should also learn how to host. It opens up more opportunities for your career. Even if you don't become a host, understanding the process helps you interpret more naturally and effectively. Plus, learning hosting techniques could introduce you to more advanced vocabulary and ways to use language effectively.] (D8)

4.3.5 Suggestions to cultivate more esports ISPs

Participants offered a range of suggestions for enhancing cross-cultural communication in the esports industry, and the PDPs focused on addressing the need for dedicated ISPs.

In terms of addressing the need for dedicated interpreting personnel, D1 highlighted the need for a more formalized approach to appoint ISPs:

In the past, it was easy to stretch our roles as Rioters. But as there are more games being developed, Rioters became busier and could not cover the interpreting roles as volunteer ISPs. So yes, maybe we need to look at our interpreting needs soon. And it would be nice to have a long-term partner providing interpreting services. (D1)

In addition to dedicated ISPs, D7 also suggested the event organizer that ran the 2024 PCS Spring Split Playoffs to search for localization talents, since Riot has placed PCS in a more strategic position and allocated more resources to the region:

身為凱瑞的員工，在 2023 年突然受到遊戲原廠的重視。因為他們把 PCS 戰區放在很重要的位置去對待，但是凱瑞目前的工作夥伴中要完全使用英文傳達的人才稀缺，同時這種程度的重視也讓他們看到了在地化的需求，所以如果真的有錢的話會希望可以找到在地化的人才。[I was an employee of Carry

in 2023, and I witnessed the sudden shift of focus from Riot on us, because Riot has decided to place PCS at a more strategic position. However, among the employees of Carry, few were able to get their meanings across in English. The sudden change of value has also led the company to see their need in localization. So, if we really have the money, spending it on recruiting localization talents would be nice.] (D7)

4.3.7 Comparisons between esports interpreting and other interpreting experiences by the PDPs

The PDPs drew comparisons between their experiences as esports ISPs and their experiences in other industries, focusing on the showmanship aspect of esports tournaments and taking personal stories as examples to find out the similarities and differences. D1, supported by comments of D8 and D2, noted that in the esports industry, translation and interpretation often served as a supporting element in a broader entertainment spectacle.

The translation and interpretation part plays only a small part in the industry. they are just there for the show business. The ISPs are either included in the frame or as a tool to enhance communication process. The esports players are the focus, so esports interpreters need to know how to disappear to let them shine and how to make them comfortable in conveying themselves are things that I think are different from other kinds of interpreting. (D1)

D8 echoed D1, stressing the showmanship aspect of esports. He said, “LoL tournament games and interpretations are like a show. Thus, we would want things presented to audience to be aesthetic. So, you can say the appearance of the personnel matters, too.” Contrary to commenting on the overall situation of esports interpreting, D2 described the need for interpreters to adapt to the specific communication styles for the show-running business. He explained that one of the main categories of esports interpreting was on stage post-game interviews, and thus the ISPs need to possess showmanship value. “Their interpretations need to be concise but dramatic, which is different from interpreting for esports teams where interpretations are conducted in a communication style of friends talking to each other.” (D2) D3 focused on the things that PCS ISPs need to be

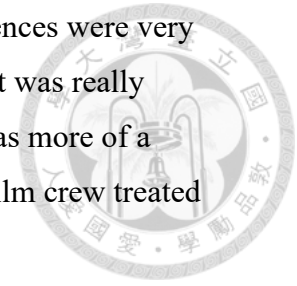
particularly aware of, saying, “For ISPs working with Mandarin, the biggest difference could be the fact that they need to be aware of the differences in cross-strait esports language usages, so that you don’t offend both communities which are significant to the LoL community.”



Aside from focusing on the show aspect of LoL tournaments, the PDPs shared their personal stories while comparing the interpreting experiences with one industry and another. D2 drew a comparison between interpreting in esports and their experience working in the railroad industry, noting that esports interpreting often required a more dynamic and engaging style, while other sectors might be more focused on formal communication. In addition, D2 also mentioned that he was assigned fewer translation assignments compared to his working experience in a railway company. D5 compared his work as an esports ISP to his background in 3D design, noting that interpreting was similar to design works, both of which had to take one step at a time to convey a certain message to their target audience. Moreover, D5 shared a higher expectation from external parties to esports ISPs, using the example of him attending business meetings of the team’s parent company. He said, “In business meetings held by the parent company, people would consult me about the opinions, suggestions, and expectations that I hold for the esports team. That was when I discovered that the scope of communication that esports ISPs could facilitate is larger than we imagined.” D6 compared her esports interpreting experience to her past work as an escort interpreter for dance competitions and film productions, noting that the esports industry tended to be more relaxed and collaborative, while other industries could be more demanding and hierarchical, which could involve discriminative events:

之前是世界舞蹈大賽匈牙利隊的隨隊翻譯中英翻譯，來當過韓劇來台拍攝隨著劇組移動的翻譯，還會幫忙維護秩序和充當機動人力。這些經驗跟在電競翻譯的經驗差很多。電競很閒，舞蹈跟劇組很忙，更像是志工性質，隨隊性質的會把你當朋友，劇組人員會覺得是狗低人一等。[I was also the Mandarin-English escort interpreter for the Hungarian team, who participated in the World Dance Cup. I also interpreted for Korean film crews that came to Taiwan to film Korean drama, and I helped maintain the order at the scene and t

played the role of backup logistics team member. These experiences were very different from those in esports. In esports, it's pretty chill. But it was really tasking to work for the dance group and the film crew, and it was more of a volunteer job. The dance group treated me as a friend, but the film crew treated me poorly as if I were a dog.] (D6)



D8 commented on the presence of the general respect and recognition for esports ISPs when comparing his esports experiences with those of other industries:

LOL 界的翻譯跟其他領域都很不一樣，不像是放在旁邊隨時取用的機器。LOL 的翻譯通常都同時具備另外一種身分，可能是主持人，或是企業內部員工，大多都是雙語人士。[ISPs in LoL are different from other areas. They are not like interpretation machines placed on the side that provide unlimited access. The LoL ISPs often hold another position. They could be hosts, or employees of the event organizers, and most of them are bilingual.] (D8)

Finally, D9 acknowledged that the ISPs are constantly under the spotlight of the esports tournament games, and said it was different from other industries because “it was easier for the world to see what you can do as an esports ISP.” (D9)

4.4 Summary of the Results Chapter

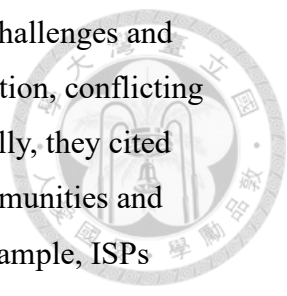
This chapter presented the responses of the participants who are working or have worked within the PCS LoL tournament games. Through categorizing the responses from semi-structured interviews with 21 participants – 6 mISPs, 6 mISUs, and 9 PDPs– the present study revealed the multifaceted nature of ISP work in the esports industry, following the structure of the interview questions as shown in Appendices A, B, C, and D.

4.4.1 Summary of the ISPs' responses

The set of interview questions for ISPs, including the mISPs and PDPs, covered tasks, relationships with stakeholder, challenges and stressors, roles, requirements and trainings, suggestions for improving cross-cultural communication, and comparison to other interpreting experiences.

To begin with, ISPs perform a wide range of tasks, exceeding traditional translation and interpretation. They frequently engage in administrative and logistical support, including team management, player coordination, and document processing. For instance, ISPs assist in scheduling Mandarin language courses for foreign players, coordinate travel arrangements for international tournaments, and process visa applications for players. Some ISPs even contribute to content creation and brand management, such as by creating promotional materials for teams or developing marketing strategies for supervisors of the parent company. Notably, interpreting services are required across various settings, including interview settings, team practices, and event operations. For interview settings, ISPs interpret in front of the audience and at places where audience could not notice. ISPs are visible to the audience when interpreting for post-game interviews with hosts and players after a series of games, either on stage or within the camera frame. In contrast, ISPs remain invisible to the audience when interpreting for media interviews and press conferences. Depending on their employer, whether a team or an organizer, ISPs may engage in additional interpreting activities. For example, team ISPs may be primarily involved in post-game analyses and player communication, while freelance or in-house interpreters hired by event organizers may handle a wider range of tasks for different stakeholders in the esports industry.

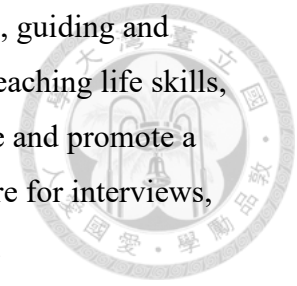
ISPs experience a range of relationships with key stakeholders in the esports industry. Both mISPs and PDPs reported that they were generally respected and recognized for their professional contributions. However, despite the general respect, participants highlighted the presence of power imbalances within the daily operations of esports teams and event organizers, particularly noticeable in the client-contractor relationship with event organizers. For example, some mISPs reported feeling pressured to balance the expectations of the esports show business with maintaining a professional demeanor. Additionally, concerns were raised about certain media personnel undervaluing ISPs' time and contributions. For instance, some ISPs felt that journalists often failed to allocate sufficient preparation time or fully recognize the complexity of the ISPs' role in mediating communication between players and the media.



The demanding nature of esports interpreting presents several challenges and stressors. Participants attributed these challenges to unclear communication, conflicting interests, and the need to interpret during rapid-paced events. Additionally, they cited difficulties in navigating challenging cultural norms within esports communities and gaining trust from key stakeholders, particularly esports players. For example, ISPs reported experiencing confusion when given ambiguous instructions at esports tournaments, leading to a waste of resources, time, and money. Moreover, the internal conflict between maintaining professionalism and fandom passion was a recurring theme. Some ISPs struggled to balance their personal enthusiasm for certain players or teams with their professional responsibility to remain impartial and objective. The rapid nature of esports events, with limited time to interpret during short breaks between practices or games also contributed to stress. Navigating cultural norms, particularly in male-dominated and toxic esports environments, posed additional challenges. ISPs recounted instances of extreme scrutiny regarding their appearance and word choices, which often detracted from the primary purpose of the interpreted event. These events typically aimed to provide more information about the interpreting service users, but such focus on the ISPs themselves undermined this goal. The pressure to gain trust from various stakeholders, including players, coaches, and event organizers, contributed to overall stress. For example, ISPs felt the need to build rapport with players to encourage open communication during interviews, while also demonstrating their expertise and professionalism to event organizers. Finally, participants acknowledged the personal costs and sacrifices associated with this profession, including long working hours and potential impacts on personal lives. ISPs often worked beyond regular hours to accommodate player schedules, which could put a strain on their personal relationships and social lives.

Beyond the traditional conduit role, ISPs serve as assistants, cultural mediators, educators, and brand representatives. They support players in various ways, from facilitating communication to acting as caretakers. For example, ISPs might help players navigate daily life in a new country, translate legal documents, or assist with medical appointments. They mediate conflicts between stakeholders, such as when there are misunderstandings between players and coaches or between teams and event organizers. They act as cultural ambassadors, bridging the gap between players from different

cultural backgrounds. In some cases, they assume a more directive role, guiding and educating younger players. This could involve providing mentorship, teaching life skills, or promoting ethical behavior. Their ability to enhance a player's image and promote a team's brand is also crucial. For example, ISPs may help players prepare for interviews, manage their social media presence, or translate promotional materials.



For the collected responses of the ISPs, they are required to have a combination of language proficiency, deep esports knowledge, and specific personality traits. While bilingualism is considered fundamental, mastery of esports jargon and game mechanics is equally essential. For example, ISPs should be familiar with specific game terms, strategies, and character abilities. They need to understand the competitive landscape of the esports industry, the dynamics of player relationships, and the evolving “Meta” of the game. Passion for esports, mental resilience, and professionalism are also crucial. ISPs need to be able to handle high-pressure situations, manage complex relationships, and maintain a professional demeanor in front of audiences and media. Training recommendations include game-specific knowledge acquisition, language and cultural immersion, and practice through observing live streams and interviews. For example, ISPs can improve their knowledge of the game by watching professional matches, studying strategy guides, and participating in online communities. Language training should focus on mastering esports-specific terminology and building cultural fluency. Practical experience can be gained through mimicking other ISPs, volunteering at events, and participating in mock interviews.

To enhance cross-cultural communication in esports, participants suggested improving communication processes and event planning. Ensuring an adequate pool of ISP resources, especially for communication between players and referees, is critical. Players and media personnel could also improve their communication practices to facilitate more productive interviews. Participants also emphasized the need for training and development programs to address the talent shortage and ensure long-term sustainability for the ISP profession in esports. For example, event organizers could invest in training programs for aspiring ISPs, offering mentorship opportunities and access to industry resources.

While esports interpreting shares similarities with other forms of interpreting, such as the importance of industry-specific terminology and preparation, it also presents unique challenges. The complexity of the esports environment, with its dynamic rules, evolving meta, and diverse player personalities, requires a distinct skillset. For example, esports interpreters need to be able to adapt quickly to changes in the game, understand the nuances of different player personalities, and navigate the complexities of international communication. The pressure to perform effectively in front of cameras and a demanding audience adds to the complexity. The evolving nature of esports and the lack of clear qualifications for ISPs necessitate a constant pursuit of knowledge and adaptation. Unlike traditional interpreting fields, esports interpreters are often expected to be more than just language translators. They need to have a deep understanding of the esports industry, its culture, and its stakeholders. They also need to be comfortable working in fast-paced environments, managing multiple tasks, and adapting to new technologies and platforms.

4.4.2 Summary of the ISUs' responses

The ISUs, including the mISUs and PDPs, offered their comments on the interpreting activities in the esports industry based on their respective positions. The results of the ISUs responses were structured in accordance with the set of interview questions for ISUs, which mainly focused on those from the mISUs, as the PDPs were interviewed with the set for ISPs. However, PDPs' responses are inserted into the ISUs' section when deemed relevant by the author of the present study. The set of ISU interview questions covered where and how ISPs assist ISUs, interactions between ISPs and ISUs, roles of the ISPs, discussion on the potential replacement of ISPs by AI, suggestions for improving cross-cultural communication, and challenge faced by ISPs.

ISUs highlighted the indispensable role of ISPs in bridging the communication gap between foreign players and stakeholders, especially when an esports team landed a successful recruitment of a foreign personnel, or when event organizers held an international tournament for teams to compete against each other. The complexity of the esports landscape, with its increasingly globalized player base and diverse audiences, demands effective communication and understanding across language barriers. ISUs rely

on ISPs to navigate these complexities, making them essential figures in facilitating smoother team communication, navigating cultural nuances, and assisting with the practicalities of daily life for foreign players. For instance, ISUs recounted instances where ISPs helped players adapt to a new country, translated contracts and legal documents, coordinated travel logistics, and even provided guidance on navigating local customs and social norms. As for their work during international events, ISPs play a crucial role in media relations, interpreting interviews, shaping the public image of players and teams, and facilitating communication between esports teams and international media outlets.

As ISUs frequently interact with ISPs during team practices and interviews, they have fostered close relationships. This constant interaction allows for a deeper understanding of the ISP's role and its significance within the esports ecosystem. ISUs view ISPs as indispensable members of the team, often likening them to assistant coaches, communication mediators, vital colleagues, and public relations specialists. In other words, ISPs' roles extend beyond language translation and encompass cultural understanding, interpersonal skills, and strategic support. For example, ISUs described how ISPs often provide crucial support during post-game analyses, acting as a bridge between the coach and players from different cultural backgrounds. They also recognized the importance of ISPs in mediating conflicts between players, staff, and even stakeholders, leveraging their language skills and cultural awareness to diffuse tension and promote understanding.

While acknowledging the potential for AI to contribute to communication in esports, especially in tasks involving simple translations or factual information, ISUs emphasized the continued value of human ISPs. ISUs recognize that AI currently lacks the nuanced understanding of gaming culture, community language, and complex emotional expressions that human ISPs possess. For instance, ISUs highlighted the importance of ISPs understanding the specific jargon and slang used within the esports community, which can vary significantly across different games and regions. Moreover, AI struggles to grasp the subtle emotional cues and cultural nuances that are crucial for effective communication. ISUs value human ISPs for their empathy, conflict mediation

skills, and ability to build rapport with players, which are crucial for fostering a positive and productive team environment. This human touch is invaluable in building trust, understanding the players' perspectives, and navigating the complex dynamics within a team.

ISUs emphasized the need for ISPs to possess strong game comprehension, demonstrating in-depth knowledge of the game mechanics, terminology, and strategies. They also highlighted the importance of excellent interpersonal skills, emphasizing the need for empathy, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to navigate complex relationships within the team. Adaptability and accuracy were also identified as essential traits, reflecting the dynamic nature of esports and the need for ISPs to be flexible and reliable in their communication. ISUs explained that ISPs need to stay abreast of evolving game mechanics and strategies, constantly learning new terminology and understanding the ever-changing competitive landscape. They also stressed the need for ISPs to be culturally aware and sensitive, recognizing that players from different countries may have distinct communication styles and expectations. For instance, while both Taiwanese and Chinese LoL communities communicate in Mandarin, they differ significantly in their gaming terminology. Specifically, the names they use for champions and items vary drastically between the two communities.

To enhance cross-cultural communication in esports, ISUs proposed a variety of strategies. These included advocating for individual language interview session, in contrast to the three-way relay that took place during the 2024 PCS Spring Split Playoffs, to avoid the potential confusion and awkwardness. Complex interview processes can often result in misinterpretations and communication breakdowns. They also suggested utilizing in-house ISPs, such as team interpreters or Riot employees, to foster a sense of familiarity and trust within the team. This allows for a deeper understanding of the team's dynamics, communication styles, and specific needs. Furthermore, ISUs highlighted the importance of specialized training programs for ISPs hired by event organizers, particularly focusing on the unique challenges of player-referee communication and the need to navigate cultural differences in communication styles.

ISUs recognized the unique challenges faced by esports ISPs, highlighting the importance of building trust, balancing stakeholder interests, and effectively conveying abstract emotions. Gaining trust from both players and stakeholders can be difficult, particularly when working in a highly competitive environment where reputations are easily damaged by misinformation and misinterpretation. ISPs often find themselves caught between different interests, needing to ensure accurate interpretation while maintaining a neutral stance. For instance, they may be tasked with mediating negotiation between a player who is unsatisfied with his salary and the owner of the esports team that the ISP works for. Furthermore, the ability to convey subtle emotional nuances and cultural sensitivities is a significant challenge, requiring a deep understanding of both language and context.

4.4.3 Summary of the additional information provided by the PDPs

In addition to corroborating the responses of mISPs and mISUs, PDPs offered distinctive views based on their unique position in the esports industry. Notably, PDPs highlighted a broader range of tasks undertaken by ISPs. They emphasized the importance of document translation, particularly for legal and operational aspects of esports teams and event organizers. For instance, ISPs were involved in translating tournament registration forms, visa applications, and legal documents for foreign players, demonstrating their crucial role in addressing the translation and logistical needs of esports teams. Additionally, ISPs working for larger corporations often found themselves handling administrative duties related to business operations, such as marketing, product design, and fan event planning. Furthermore, PDPs recognized the proactive role of ISPs in content creation and development, highlighting instances where ISPs contributed as primary interlocutors, rather than interpreters, to the production of promotional videos, social media content, and even in-game translations.

While acknowledging the importance of in-house ISPs hired by esports teams and event organizers, PDPs highlighted the often-overlooked value of freelance interpreters. They described a sense of distance and lack of recognition experienced by freelance ISPs. For instance, during events, staff might directly engage with foreign players in English, leaving the ISPs underutilized. The PDPs' responses served as a

reminder to event organizers that professional ISPs, whether freelance or in-house, should be more valued, as the quality of their interpretation directly impacts the quality of media coverage.

PDPs identified two key pressures specific to ISPs that were not frequently mentioned by mISPs or mISUs: the pressure of a large online audience and the personal pressure associated with team performance. The scrutiny and potential criticism from a vast online audience significantly impact the ISP's interpreting experience, adding a layer of pressure to their performance. Additionally, ISPs working directly with teams often internalize the pressure of team success, viewing themselves as crucial components of communication and potentially feeling responsible for any communication breakdowns that hinder performance.

Aside from the aforementioned requirements and trainings for ISPs, PDPs emphasized the importance of English proficiency. They acknowledged that while Korean may be the dominant language in the LoL scene, English remains the primary language for international communication within the industry. They also highlighted the need for aspiring esports ISPs to familiarize themselves with hosting techniques, emphasizing the importance of understanding communication patterns and styles practiced during real-time interviews. This could involve participating in specific training programs designed to hone interview skills, develop effective questioning techniques, and learn how to synthesize information from fragmented player responses.

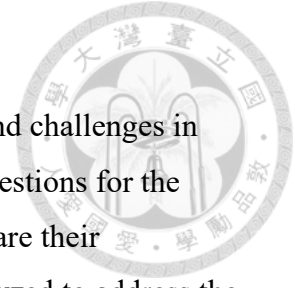
PDPs called upon event organizers and the industry as a whole to actively cultivate specialized talent to address the growing need for esports interpreters. They advocated for a more formalized approach to appointing ISPs, potentially establishing long-term partnerships with dedicated interpreting agencies or fostering internal training programs within organizations. This proactive approach would ensure a sustainable talent pool to meet the demands of the expanding esports landscape.

PDPs compared their esports interpreting experiences with those in other industries, highlighting the unique "showmanship" and "entertainment" aspects of esports interpreting. They acknowledged the necessity for interpreters to adapt their communication style to align with the broader entertainment spectacle of esports events.

This adaptation involves delivering concise and engaging interpretations tailored to a larger audience, and distinguishes esports interpreting from other sectors where formal and technical communication often takes precedence. One PDP, for instance, described how their interpretations needed to be both accurate and dramatic to captivate the audience, contrasting with the more matter-of-fact communication required in interpreting for business meetings or technical conferences. They also described instances where their esports experience involved greater personal involvement and collaborative efforts, contrasting with more hierarchical and demanding environments in other industries. One PDP, for example, shared how the camaraderie and collaborative nature of esports interpreting differed significantly from their experiences in film production, where a more hierarchical and rigid structure often prevailed.

In all, this chapter illuminates the multifaceted role of esports ISPs, encompassing tasks beyond mere translation and interpretation. The responses from the three groups provide preliminary findings addressing the research questions posed in Chapter 3. Despite similarities, notable differences exist among group responses. The following chapter will discuss key findings and apply Modified Grounded Theory Approach (M-GTA) to the raw data, generating a narrative that directly addresses the research questions.

Chapter 5 Discussion



The present study aimed to explore esports ISPs' roles, tasks, and challenges in the LoL PCS region. The researcher employed two sets of interview questions for the semi-structured interviews and recruited a total of 21 participants to share their experiences as mISUs, mISPs, and PDPs. The collected data were analyzed to address the raised research questions by identifying the key tasks of the ISPs, including general T&I tasks, administrative and logistical tasks, and content creation and development tasks. To handle these key tasks, ISPs hired by esports teams and esports event organizers assumed a variety of roles to fulfill their responsibilities, such as conduits, assistants, caregivers, educators, communication and cultural mediators, assistant coaches, public relations specialists, regional representatives, and emotion buffers/amplifiers. While performing these roles, the ISPs faced various challenges, ranging from pressure related to event organizing, internal conflicts, a demanding interpreting environment, and long working hours, to gaining trust from stakeholders.

In this chapter, the results of the Modified Grounded Theory Approach (M-GTA) application are presented, including the coding process and the diagrams formed with coded concepts and categories, as well as comparisons between the current results and those of past studies. The application of the M-GTA generated two diagrams that described how team ISPs' and staff ISPs' work evolved through different stages. Lee's (2019) and Chang's (2023) studies served as the basis for comparisons, focusing on the roles that interpreters played in different settings. The chapter concludes with a summary of the discussions.

5.1 Results of the M-GTA

The M-GTA was applied in the present study because it could generate knowledge within a specific scope (Kamabru, 2018), which, in this case, was the work of ISPs in the LoL PCS setting. Kinoshita (2003) elaborated that the "Research-at-work" should generate knowledge through the "Analytically-Focused-Person", with the "Analytical Themes" clarified. In this study, the researcher played the role of "Analytically-Focused-Person" and aimed to address the raised research questions, which served as the clarified

“Analytical Themes”. Furthermore, while avoiding the fragmentation of raw data, Kinoshita recommended that open-coding and selective-coding should be practiced to generate concepts and categories. These concepts and categories were then considered building blocks to construct a diagram with descriptions and illustrations explaining the relationships between them (Kambaru, 2018). Finally, the “Analytically-Focused-Person” was tasked with writing a Storyline based on the designed diagram.

Following the M-GTA guidelines explained by Kambaru (2018), the researcher compiled a table of codes, designed diagrams to illustrate the work of esports ISPs, and generated a Storyline to describe how ISPs’ work evolved across different stages.

5.1.1 Results of the coding process

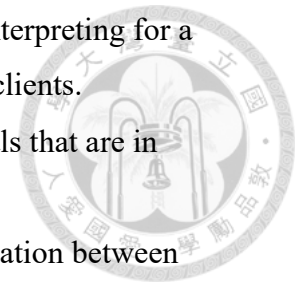
Open coding and selective coding were used to form the main categories of the tasks, roles, and challenges of the ISPs, as listed in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4. During the open coding stage, codes were developed with the research questions in mind, with the researcher intentionally identifying descriptions of tasks, roles, and challenges of esports ISPs when analyzing the interview transcriptions. Initially, the researcher assigned “T” for tasks, “R” for roles, and “C” for challenges. Through the application of the constant comparative method, the results of the open coding process were further categorized into smaller groups that referred to more specific “concepts.” Subsequently, selective coding was applied to group concepts into “categories.”

Table 2

Codes and Definitions of Esports ISPs’ Tasks

Tasks			
Categories	Code	Concept	Definition
General T&I tasks	TA1	Post-game interview interpretation	Perform interpretation for post-game interviews.
	TA2	Media interview interpretation	Perform interpretation for media interviews.
	TA3	Press conference interpretation	Perform interpretation for esports press conferences.

	TA4	Escort interpreting	Perform escort interpreting for a certain group of clients.
	TA5	Document translation	Translate materials that are in written form.
	TA6	In-house interpretation	Perform interpretation between stakeholders of the same organization.
	TA7	Post-game analyses interpretation	Perform interpretation for post-game analyses.
	TA8	Shooting interpretation	Perform interpretation in a promotional shooting context.
	TA9	Backstage interpretation	Perform interpretation at the back stage of tournament games.
	TB1	Team management	Tasks that are related to managing an esports team.
	TB2	Player management	Tasks that are related to managing individual players.
	TB3	Education	Teach foreign personnel mandarin or general social principles.
Administrative and logistical tasks	TB4	Document processing	Process and handle documents for esports teams and event organizers.
	TB5	Address daily needs	Addressing daily needs of members of the esports teams.
	TB6	Public relations facilitation	Assist esports players in improving their personal image in front of media.
	TB7	Event organizing	Involve in tasks related to holding events.



Content creating and development tasks	TC1	Interview management	Design interviews and review and censor interview questions.
	TC2	Hosting training	Participate in training to develop hosting skills.
	TC3	Brand management	Manage personal image as a means to build their image as regional representatives.
	TC4	Production management	Manage tasks related to producing the content of a tournament game.
	TC5	Localization work	Participate in localization work assigned by event organizers.

Note. The table was created by the author of this study to present the codes and definitions of concepts formed when applying the M-GTA. The first letter of the codes stood for ISPs' tasks, while the second represented the categories formed by various concepts.

Table 3

Codes and Definitions of Esports ISPs' Roles

Roles			
Categories	Code	Concept	Definition
Team ISP	RA1	Team conduits	ISPs hired by esports team that play the traditional conduit role.
	RA2	Caregiver	ISPs that address the daily needs of others as a person of higher status.
	RA3	Team assistant	A role that provides secretarial assistance for their target audience on esports teams in achieving something.



Staff ISP	RA4	Team communication/ cultural mediator	A role that mediates problems and conflicts arising from different culture or background of multiple stakeholders.
	RA5	Educator	A role that educates stakeholders on the team about language or social general principles.
	RA6	Public relations specialist	A role that improves public relations of certain esports stakeholder.
	RA7	Assistant coach	A role that assists coaching tasks.
	RB1	Staff conduit	ISPs hired by esports event organizers that play the traditional conduit role.
	RB2	Staff assistant	A role that provides secretarial assistance for event organizers in achieving something.
	RB3	Staff communication/ cultural mediator	A role that mediates conflicts involving employees of event organizers.
	RB4	Regional representatives	A role that represents the regional event organizer.
	RB5	Emotion buffers/ amplifiers	A role that strengthens or weakens the level of emotion for the interest of esports stakeholders.

Note. The table was created by the author of this study to present the codes and definitions of concepts formed when applying the M-GTA. The first letter of the codes stood for ISPs' roles, while the second represented the categories formed by various concepts.

Table 4*Codes and Definitions of Esports ISPs' Challenges*

Challenges			
Categories	Code	Concept	Definition
Challenges from event organizing	CA1	Unclear instructions	Not providing clear instructions due to lack of experience or preparation.
	CA2	Cultural norms	Norms for the esports community and industry.
	CA3	Balancing interests	ISPs need to consider interests of different stakeholders before making work decisions.
	CA4	Dependence on player performance	The work of the ISP is highly dependent on the performance of players in tournament games.
Internal conflicts	CB1	Internal conflicts	ISPs experience conflicts of interests resulting from their multiple identities and roles.
Demanding interpreting conditions	CC1	Limited time	Limited time to prepare and interpret.
	CC2	Risk of misspeaking	Situations that require high EQ and careful handling.
	CC3	Large audience	The number of audiences that could access interpretation is often very large.
	CC4	Self-requirements	ISPs hold high expectations to themselves.
	CC5	Esports-related knowledge	Knowledge related to skills, items, characters, players, communities, language, etc.



	CC6	Player public speaking capabilities	The capabilities of player to address publicly in front of interviewers or camera.
Working hours	CD1	Demanding working hours	Working hour that are longer and less flexible than other jobs.
	CE1	Gain trust from colleagues	To win trust of colleagues with personal traits and professional skills.
Gaining trust	CE2	Gain trust from audience	To win trust from audience with showmanship and professional skills.

Note. The table was created by the author of this study to present the codes and definitions of concepts formed when applying the M-GTA. The first letter of the codes stood for ISPs' challenges, while the second represented the categories formed by various concepts.

As the coding process proceeded, 21 task concepts, 12 role concepts, and 13 challenge concepts were formed, along with 3 task categories, 2 role categories, and 5 challenge categories. All these concepts were formed by grouping descriptions of similar ideas on an analytical worksheet before prior to being named and defined, as shown by Table 3. On the analytical worksheet, the researcher initially filled in the "Examples" and the "Code." Then, based on the examples, the research entitled this group of examples with a "concept," which should be explained with a clear definition. The "concept" must be observed in every example for the worksheet to be valid.

Table 5

An Example of the Analytical Worksheet Used for the M-GTA

Concept	Limited time	
Code	CC1	
Definition	Limited time to prepare and interpret.	
Examples	U5	All of the interview questions were organized at the scene, so that we cannot provide the ISPs beforehand.

	U5	It was really hard to give our questions to the ISPs beforehand during the joint press conferences.
	I4	There are time limits to media interviews, so the utterances of the host and the players won't be long.
	I4	I wouldn't really criticize the poor performance of the JP-CH ISP in the PCS. Because apparently the event organizer didn't prepare the ISP well enough with resources and time, especially for such a demanding position.
	D9	For post-game interviews, you need to digest the gaming content on your own, and then you have to listen to the players' responses and interact with them right there and then. It was quite challenging.
	D9	At the international games, once a game ends, we need to rush towards a media backboard to fight for the first place to interview people.
	D9	It all comes down to your adaptability to the game. I will try my best to remember every bit of the game, so that I reduce my recalling time while interpreting.
	U6	I think the relayed sessions were really time consuming, resulting in less content being explored.
	D2	I think for the on-stage interpretations, it needs to be entertaining. You need to have good control over the time and pace of the interpretation.
	I6	I think the most difficult part of my work is speeding up the pace of interpretations. The interval between games was only ten minutes. I need to interpret the post-game analyses conducted by the coach to the Korean player. There was no way that the team should waste time because of interpretation due to the interests of one player.
	U4	The players are very nervous during post-game interviews, especially when the interview comes with interpretation. A while ago, there was this player from the PCS. He barely said anything at the post-game interview. The ISP couldn't do nothing, and basically interpreted nothing. Eventually, the interview was a total disaster. In these cases, if the ISPs are team ISPs, they could help calm the nerves of the players, making them feel more comfortable in these occasions that they are not used to.
	U2	Regarding the cultural and language barriers, the ISPs are critical in the communication process for the team. Teammates need to communicate in an effective and efficient way to win games. The players rely on ISPs to exchange their thoughts on strategies to deal with the ever changing in-game situation. In addition to being precise and accurate, the ISP also needs to be fast in interpreting to adapt to the fast-paced environment.

	D7	Time is also an aspect that is challenging. Take myself for example. In addition to my volunteer ISP role, I am also an analyst and shoutcaster. There was literally no time between my analyst section and interpreting section, meaning that I have to prepare for everything at the same time.
	D7	For an ISP, he needs to know that he is facing a large audience in real time. So, I think he needs adaptability and stress resistance. He also needs to be reactive, so that he can respond immediately to the responses that need to be interpreted.
	D6	It was really stressful to interpret on stage. What was worse was that you had less time to prepare.
	D5	I think the three-way relay in the 2024 PCS was a difficult task, because no one taught them how to do so.
	D3	Riot has limited the interview time to 3 minutes. We need to finish asking three questions within that limit. As fragmented and short as the questions, the responses from the interviewees would be fragmented and short. This characteristic will be challenging for ISPs, because they need to pick up the small piece within the limited time and glue them together to form something meaningful.
Theatrical note		Speeches made during the three main interpreted events in tournaments, post-game interviews, press conferences, and media interviews, value the characteristic of immediacy, leaving ISPs little time to prepare and interpret.

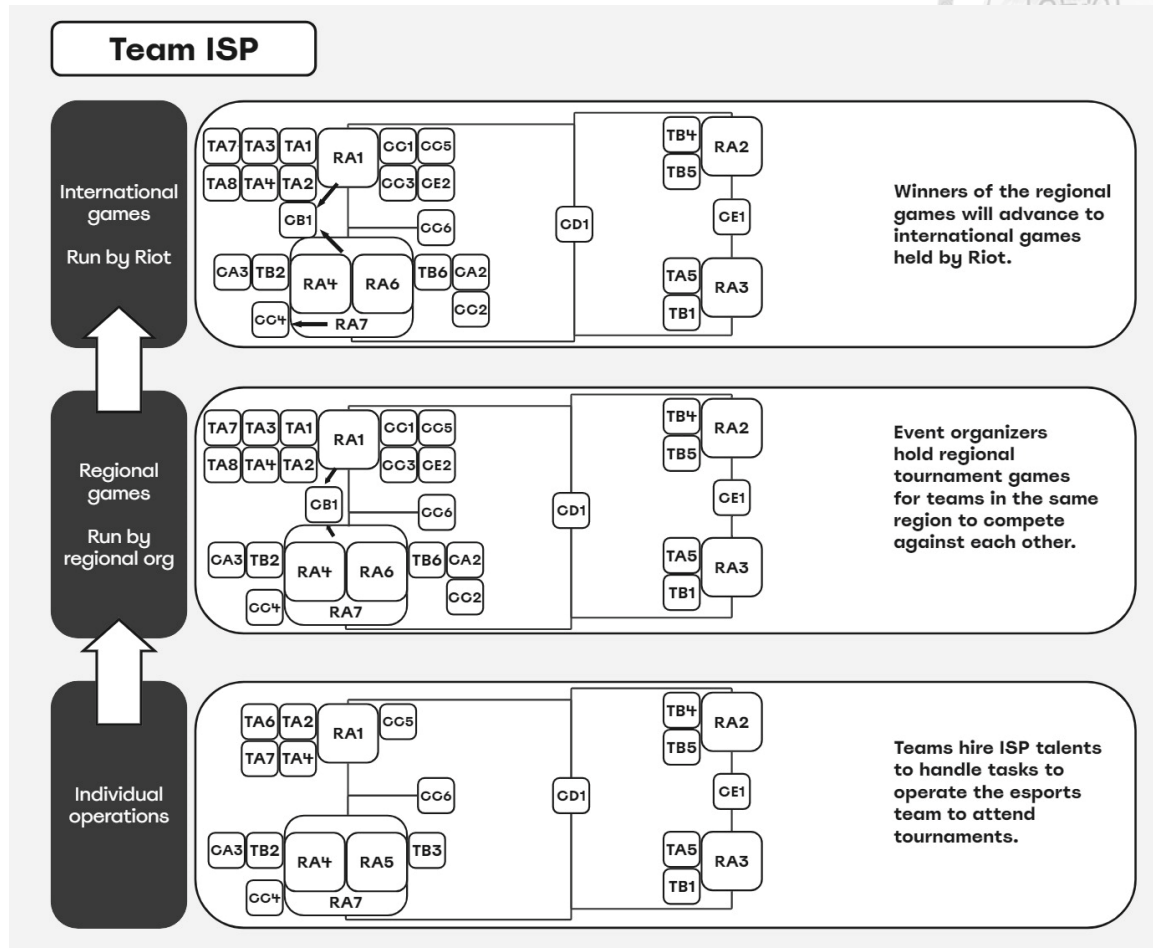
Note. The table was created by the author of this study to present an example of analytical worksheet used when applying the M-GTA. The table consisted of the concept name, concept code, definition, examples, participant codes, and theoretical note. The theoretical note included notes of further questions, elaborations of the situation, and other information that the researcher considered about while analyzing the data.

5.1.2 M-GTA diagrams

The concepts and categories were combined to form diagrams that could be described by the Storyline, which was the end goal of the M-GTA. The researcher ultimately created two diagrams, as demonstrated in Figures 11 and 12, which illustrated the work of ISPs in LoL PCS settings—one for team ISPs and another for staff ISPs. Based on the responses and backgrounds of the participants, esports ISPs were found to be hired by either esports teams or esports event organizers, and were thus further categorized into team ISPs and staff ISPs.

Figure 11

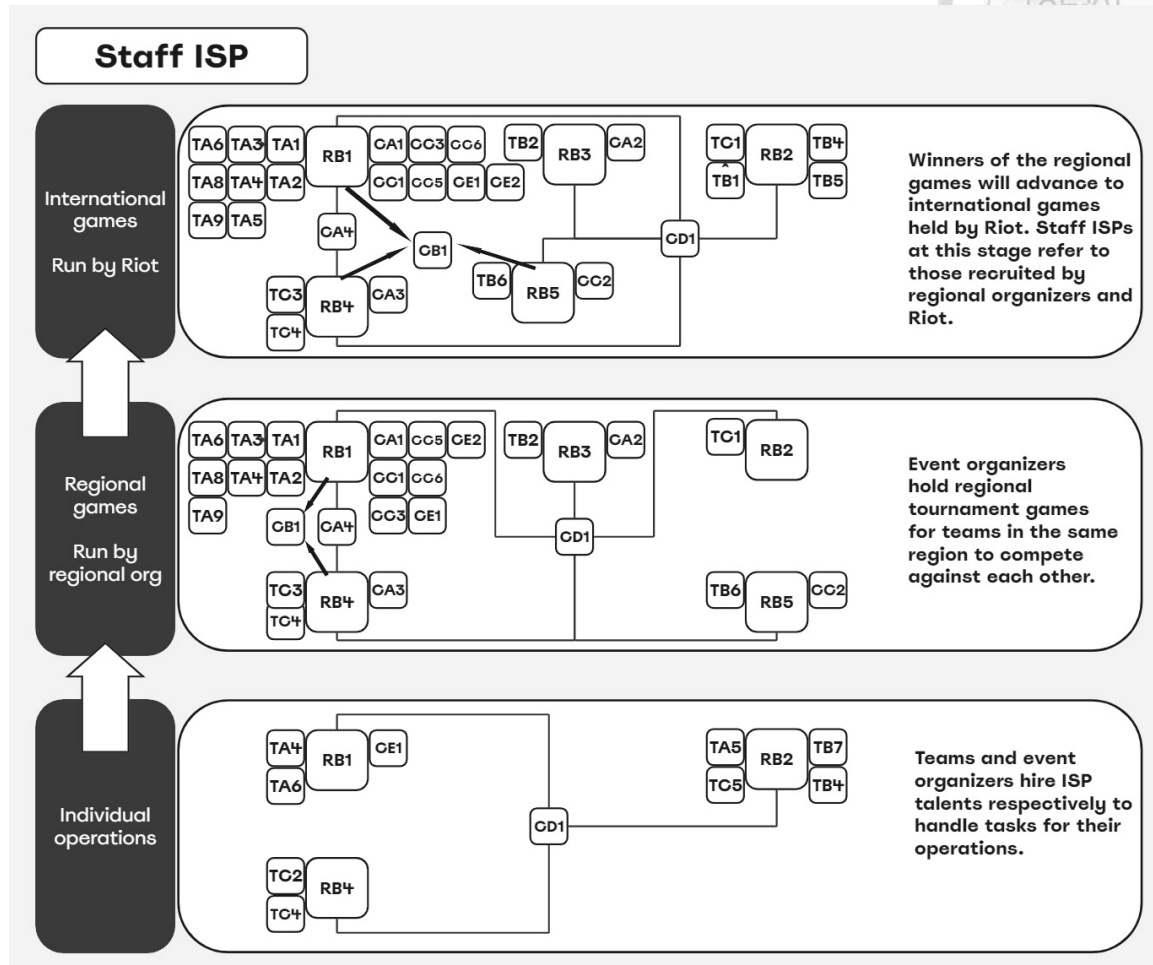
The Evolution of the Work of Team ISPs across Different Stages in LoL PCS



Note. The figure was designed by the author of this study to illustrate the work of the team ISPs. The figure consisted of the stages of work, roles that ISPs played, and the tasks and challenges that came along. Blocks that represented challenges and tasks were connected with blocks of roles to illustrate the tasks and challenges of each role. Black arrows pointing towards certain challenge blocks represented reasons leading to certain challenges. Role blocks were often connected with challenge blocks using solid straight lines, meaning different roles shared such challenge.

Figure 12

The Evolution of the Work of Staff ISPs across Different Stages in LoL PCS



Note. The figure was designed by the author of this study to illustrate the work of the staff ISPs. The figure consisted of the stages of work, roles that ISPs played, and the tasks and challenges that came along. Blocks that represented challenges and tasks were connected with blocks of roles to illustrate the tasks and challenges of each role. Black arrows pointing towards certain challenge blocks represented reasons leading to certain challenges. Role blocks were often connected with challenge blocks using solid straight lines, meaning different roles shared such challenge.

The professional capabilities of ISPs were required across three stages: individual daily operations, regional games, and international games. For individual operations, team ISPs were tasked with assisting the team in preparing for upcoming tournament

games, while staff ISPs facilitated tournament games and maintained game operations for regional event organizers. During regional games, team ISPs performed similar tasks and roles as in the previous stage. The main difference was their responsibility to interpret for three main events: post-game interviews, media interviews, and press conferences. Staff ISPs, however, were assigned new roles and tasks, focusing on more T&I tasks as conduits and taking on additional roles related to show-running and representing regional event organizers.

At international games, the relationships between roles, tasks, and challenges became more complex for staff ISPs compared to team ISPs, as two groups of staff ISPs—one from regional event organizers and another from Riot—were involved at this tournament stage. In addition to heavily emphasizing the tasks carried out in the conduit role and those of regional representatives, staff ISPs at the international stage also shared the responsibilities of regional staff ISPs, such as “TB1 Team management” and “TB6 public relations facilitation.” This consequently led to internal conflicts among staff ISPs when prioritizing different roles.

5.1.3 The Storyline

Within LoL PCS league, esports ISPs were hired mainly by esports teams and esports event organizers across three stages, namely individual operations, regional games, and international games. During each stage, team ISPs and staff ISPs played various roles for esports teams and event organizers to facilitate the smooth operation of teams and tournament games, which were two of the core-industries of the esports industry (Chou, 2018). Apart from the “demanding working hours” that remained as the general challenge across all stages, each role of ISPs bore distinctive tasks and challenges, and these roles evolved as the esports seasons progressed into later stages. In the following, we describe the roles, tasks, and challenges of the ISPs and explain how these roles, tasks, and challenges affect each other.

During the individual operation stage, team ISPs typically began their workday at noon, often staying with players until midnight as they honed their skills and strategies in the LoL arena. These ISPs frequently lived in the same dormitory as foreign coaches or players, ensuring immediate availability when problems arose. Despite the long working hours and confined spaces, this frequent and close interaction facilitated the integration of

team ISPs into esports teams, fostering solid relationships with other team members. Beyond their recognition as vital colleagues, ISPs fulfilled multiple roles including "team conduits," "caregivers," "team assistants," and "assistant coaches," encompassing functions of "educators" and "team communication/cultural mediators." As conduits, team ISPs were responsible for media interview interpretation, escort interpreting, in-house interpretation, and post-game analyses interpretation. For instance, when social media managers created Q&A video content, team ISPs facilitated communication between the manager and interviewees. Interpreting for post-game analyses was considered the task that mattered the most for team ISPs during the individual operation stage. During a coach's game review, team ISPs would provide whispered or consecutive interpretation for foreign players to ensure their comprehension. The primary challenge they faced as conduits was incorporating "esports-related knowledge" into their interpretations, requiring them to seamlessly convey esports-specific language between different primary interlocutors.

Beyond their professional interpreting skills, team ISPs also functioned as "caregivers" and "team assistants." As caregivers, they handled document processing and addressed the daily needs of foreign team members. In their role as team assistants, they undertook document translation and team management assignments. Team ISPs often guided foreign players or coaches around the area and even accompanied them to hospitals when necessary. They were also tasked with managing visa documents or military service paperwork for foreign players, who were typically young when recruited to Taiwan. While both roles shared the challenge of "gaining trust from their colleagues," the ability to fulfill these responsibilities was often more crucial than their "conduit role" in earning respect from team members. The degree to which team ISPs could demonstrate interpersonal skills directly correlated with their level of recognition from others.

At the individual operation stage, team ISPs also assumed the role of "assistant coach," which encompassed two sub-roles: "educator" and "team communication/cultural mediator." As educators, team ISPs went beyond mere interpretation, voluntarily or by request helping to develop the language capabilities of foreign personnel. They taught Mandarin and, in some cases, local ethical values to aid in cultural adaptation. The "team communication/cultural mediator" role primarily involved player management, which

presented challenges such as balancing the interests of various team stakeholders. For instance, team ISPs might need to mediate conflicts between young, rebellious players and team owners, requiring them to de-escalate situations while maintaining trust and professionalism with all parties involved. As "assistant coaches," team ISPs faced unique challenges, including self-imposed high standards and the task of improving players' public speaking abilities. They often viewed team success as their own, whether in game victories or in developing players' social and public communication skills. Throughout the individual operation stage, team ISPs demonstrated a strong sense of belonging to their esports team while maintaining professional interpreting standards. Their multifaceted role required them to balance various responsibilities and navigate complex interpersonal dynamics within the team structure.

Staff ISPs, comprising freelance interpreters and employees of event organizers, adhered to a work schedule distinct from both team ISPs and typical office workers. Instead of the traditional 9-to-5, Monday-through-Friday schedule, they typically worked from around noon to late evening, Tuesday through Sunday. This unconventional schedule primarily resulted from the peak viewing hours for esports, which diverged from standard working hours. Some staff ISPs even characterized themselves as inhabitants of a parallel universe, connected to the ordinary world primarily through the internet. Despite their unique work schedule, staff ISPs fulfilled various roles when working for event organizers during esports tournaments. At the individual operation stage, they functioned as "staff conduits," "staff assistants," and "regional representatives." As staff conduits, they were responsible for escort interpretation and in-house interpretation. The primary challenge for staff ISPs at this stage was gaining trust from colleagues. However, the process by which staff ISPs earned recognition and respect differed from that of team ISPs. Freelance ISPs hired by event organizers often had established relationships with clients through multiple assignments, sometimes in roles beyond interpretation, such as hosts or referees. Consequently, while welcoming personal traits were important, their professional skills played a more significant role in garnering respect compared to team ISPs. For staff ISPs employed directly by event organizers, the respect they received often stemmed from their reputation and achievements in other job roles within the organization. For example, a tech support manager may volunteer to be the ISP for

tournament games. In this case, the ISP was already respected by his colleagues because of his managerial position, while the esports team members appreciated his effort in holding the tournament for them. In contrast, when freelancers are hired by event organizers to become staff ISPs, their extensive experience in the esports industry and well-established personal networks are the main reasons they are treated respectfully at tournaments.

In their role as "staff assistants," staff ISPs were tasked with document translation, document processing, event organization, and localization work to support their colleagues in preparing for upcoming tournament games. Their contributions included localizing gaming content to ensure the operation of regional servers and maintain an active fanbase, facilitating communication between stakeholders in the event organizing process, and handling translations for team registration documents. Staff ISPs were also required to prepare for their role as "regional representatives" through hosting training and by taking the lead in production management to develop gaming content for upcoming events. As regional representatives, event organizers expected staff ISPs to become symbolic of their region. Their presence on stage or in front of a camera was intended to immediately signal to the audience that a session was being coordinated by the specific regional event organizer they represented.

As the regional games stage commenced, interactions between esports teams and event organizers increased, leading to collaboration between team ISPs and staff ISPs. These interpreters worked together in various situations and capacities. For example, during media interviews, staff ISPs and team ISPs might collaborate in a room to interpret for esports media and interviewees. In press conferences, team ISPs and staff ISPs occasionally substituted for each other when interpreting for journalists. In some instances, they even conducted relay interpretation when a single ISP's language pair was insufficient to meet the interpreting needs of the situation. At the regional stage, both team ISPs and staff ISPs encountered diverse roles, tasks, and challenges. For team ISPs, the "educator" role evolved into that of a "public relations specialist" to address the increase in PR occasions, such as on-stage interviews, media interactions, and public events. This "public relations specialist" role was considered an extension of the "educator" role, as team ISPs continued to educate esports players on public relations

matters while facilitating these interactions. This new role presented additional challenges for team ISPs, particularly in navigating "cultural norms" and mitigating the "risk of misspeaking." For example, during media interviews, team ISPs had the opportunity to work alongside esports journalists in interviewing their team's players. The extended interview format allowed ISPs to potentially enhance the team's public image by suggesting example answers to players or incorporating clever wordplay in their interpretations.

At the regional stage, team ISPs experienced an expansion in their "team conduit" role, with additional tasks including post-game interview interpretation, press conference interpretation, and shooting interpretation. These new responsibilities brought forth challenges such as time constraints, addressing larger audiences, and gaining audience trust. Except for shooting interpretation, where ISPs facilitated communication between promotional video directors and players, team ISPs were visible to esports audiences during interview interpretations. In these instances, they provided services to an audience thousands of times larger than their team colleagues. The lack of familiarity between ISPs and the audience complicated the establishment of trust-based relationships. Consequently, team ISPs experienced increased nervousness, not only due to the larger number of interpreting service users but also because of the often toxic and critical scrutiny typical of esports fans. Beyond role-specific challenges, team ISPs faced internal conflicts between their "conduit" and "assistant coach" roles in this more complex working environment requiring cooperation with external stakeholders. For instance, while capable of faithfully interpreting players' statements, ISPs often grappled with the dilemma of whether to refine players' speeches to enhance their image or to convey messages verbatim, regardless of their perceived meaningfulness.

At the regional game stage, staff ISPs experienced significant changes in their roles, tasks, and challenges. They assumed five distinct roles: "staff conduit," "staff assistant," "staff communication/cultural mediator," "regional representative," and "emotion buffer/amplifier." The "staff conduit" role proved most challenging, encompassing the majority of tasks including post-game, media, and press conference interpretations, as well as escort, in-house, shooting, and backstage interpretations. This expanded workload led to increased challenges such as unclear instructions, time

constraints, large audiences, required esports knowledge, player public speaking skills, and gaining trust from both colleagues and audiences. The workload for "staff conduits" and "regional representatives" was contingent on team performance in tournaments, highlighting the challenge of "dependence on player performance." Staff ISPs' workdays often ended only after all foreign players, typically Koreans, were eliminated and interviewed post-loss. In contrast, the "staff assistant" role primarily involved interview management, including designing and censoring post-game interview questions. As "regional representatives," staff ISPs took a more active role in brand and production management, increasing their visibility to esports stakeholders. This visibility necessitated balancing interests among different parties to ensure smooth tournament operations. The active nature of the "regional representative" role often conflicted with the more passive "staff conduit" role, creating "internal conflicts." For instance, when interpreting on stage for players from their region, staff ISPs faced the dilemma of whether to interpret faithfully or enhance speeches for eloquence, mirroring the challenges faced by team ISPs.

The remaining two roles of staff ISPs, "staff communication/cultural mediator" and "emotion buffer/amplifier," shared similarities with the "team communication/cultural mediator" and "public relations specialist" roles, respectively. However, they differed in their primary client orientation, focusing on event organizers rather than team members. "Staff communication/cultural mediators" managed tasks related to "player management" and navigated "cultural norms," similar to team ISPs. Even though staff and team mediators may all serve as communication bridges between teams and organizers to resolve conflicts, they valued interests of different parties. The staff ISPs' primary objective was to ensure the smooth execution of event organizers' plans. For instance, when mediating a dispute between a Korean player and event staff due to cultural differences, staff ISPs would prioritize resolving the conflict to maintain seamless operation of the esports event. Similarly, "emotion buffers/amplifiers" paralleled "public relations specialists" in their "public relations facilitation" tasks. However, staff ISPs in this role aimed to minimize broadcasting risks and maximize benefits for event organizers within time constraints. For example, when a player's statement required

modification to avoid potential criticism, staff ISPs would revise it primarily to protect the event organizer's interests and prevent PR issues during broadcast.

At the international games stage, while the roles, tasks, and challenges of team ISPs remained constant, staff ISPs faced additional responsibilities and complexities. This increase in complexity stemmed from the presence of two distinct groups of event organizers at the international level.

The first group comprised Riot, the main organizer of international games. Staff ISPs employed by Riot functioned similarly to those hired by regional event organizers at the regional games stage. The second group consisted of staff ISPs hired by regional event organizers, whose primary mission was to support regional winners at international games. For this second group, the focus shifted more towards a helper role, often overlapping with the roles and tasks of team ISPs. This shift was exemplified by the expanded responsibilities of "staff assistants" at the international games stage, who were now tasked with team management, document processing, and addressing daily needs for regional winners. Moreover, the role of "emotion buffer/amplifier" for staff ISPs became more akin to the team ISPs' "public relations specialist" role. This change occurred because the speeches made by regional winners at international games could significantly impact the reputation or image of the regional event organizers. In essence, regional event organizers functioned as team managers for the winning regional teams at the international stage. Consequently, staff ISPs of regional organizers effectively became colleagues of the winning teams' ISPs. These two groups of ISPs would then interact with ISPs hired by Riot at the international stage. While this arrangement provided more interpreting support, it also led to blurred boundaries between staff ISP roles, resulting in a higher likelihood of "internal conflicts," similar to those experienced by team ISPs at the regional stage.

In conclusion, team ISPs and staff ISPs were required to wear several hats when working in the LoL PCS league. For team ISPs, their roles, tasks, and challenges were similar across the three stages. The most significant change for them was shifting from preparing the team for competitions at the initial stage, to interpreting for players in public events. For staff ISPs, their work varied drastically throughout the three stages. The importance of staff ISPs was manifested mostly at the second and third stages, where

they had to interpret faithfully while considering the interests of multiple stakeholders. Staff ISPs' work was more complicated compared to team ISPs, especially when they were required to handle tasks related to "content creation and development."



5.2 Comparison between Traditional Sports ISPs and Esports ISPs

The present study drew on the results of Lee's (2019) and Chang's (2023) studies to describe the roles of ISPs in the esports industry. However, after collecting and analyzing data, the researcher discovered similarities as well as differences between the ISPs' roles in the fields of traditional sports and esports, which is demonstrated in Table 4. Lee's (2019) study focused on the roles that team interpreters possess in Taiwanese professional baseball team settings, encompassing assistant coaches/coaches' right-hand men, conflict mediators/emotion filters, team administration staff, and personal assistants/foreign players' lifeline. Chang's (2023) study pointed out that in addition to the traditional conduit model, the roles of interpreters in Taiwan's professional and semi-professional basketball leagues also included assistant coaches, coach's right-hand men, and conflict mediators/emotion filters.

Roles of team ISPs and staff ISPs are also included in Table 6. According to the results of the present study, esports team ISPs acted as team conduits, assistant coaches, team communication/cultural mediators, team assistants, and educators/media relations specialists. The roles of staff ISPs were staff conduits, staff communication/cultural mediators, emotion buffers/amplifiers, staff assistants, and regional representatives.

Table 6

Comparison between Lee's (2019) Chang's (2023) Studies and the Present Study on the Roles of ISPs in Traditional Sports and Esports

LEE (2019)	CHANG (2023)	TEAM ISP	STAFF ISP
N/A	Conduit	Team conduit	Staff conduit
• Assistant coach • Coaches' right-hand man	• Assistant coach • Coaches' right-hand man	Assistant coach	N/A

• Conflict mediator • Emotion filter	• Conflict mediator • Emotion filter	• Team communication • Cultural mediator	• Staff communication • Cultural mediator • Emotion buffers Amplifiers
• Team administration staff • Personal assistant • Foreign players' lifeline	N/A	• Team assistant • Caregiver • Educators • Public relations specialist	Staff assistant
N/A	N/A	N/A	Regional representative

Note. The table was adapted by the author of the present study to compare the roles of ISPs in the traditional sports field and esports field. Adapted from “*Taiwan zhiye yu ban zhiye lanqiu lianmeng kouyi yuan jueise zhi yanjiu*” [A study on the roles of team interpreters in professional and semi-professional basketball leagues in Taiwan] P.58 by Y.C. Chang (2023).

5.2.1 Sports interpreters and team ISPs

According to the comparison, roles concluded by Lee (2019) and Chang (2023) were more similar to those of team ISPs than staff ISPs. For each role in the past studies, there was an equivalent or similar one for team ISPs, implying that the “sports team” setting may contribute to similar roles for ISPs despite different fields. After all, staff ISPs were employed by event organizers that were categorized in different esports-core industries, according to the categorization by Chou (2018).

Despite the relevant roles of traditional sports and esports ISPs, obvious differences emerged from the comparison. To begin with, the role of “coaches’ right-hand men” (Lee, 2019; Chang, 2023) did not appear in the present study, which could be the result of the smaller scale of esports teams. At the minimum, LoL esports teams only needed five starters, one substitute, and one coach to attend professional tournament games (D2). Even for esports teams that were subsidiaries of large enterprises, the team sector required far fewer people compared to traditional sports (D5). Therefore, team

ISPs were not considered to be solely following the coach, making it difficult to categorize them as the “coach’s” right-hand men.

The present study revealed a notable difference in the mediating roles compared to those identified in past studies.. While Lee (2019) and Chang (2023) elaborated on the mediating effect of interpreters during conflicts, participants in the current studies emphasized their neutral position when involved in disputes among team members (I4, I6). I6 emphasized that he purposefully maintained his neutral position so that his team members could be assured that the interpretation was not biased during conflicts. I4 even said that she would avoid mediating conflicts as much as possible so that young players could learn how to settle disputes themselves. The closed environment, age of certain players, and the educational goals of esports teams could partially explain why team ISPs were not considered conflict mediators, but rather cultural mediators, in esports settings.

A final notable difference emerged when comparing the assistive roles identified in the present study with those reported by Lee (2019). Lee's research on staff interpreters in Taiwanese professional baseball teams revealed roles such as "team administration staff" and "personal assistant/foreign players' lifeline." While these roles overlap with some identified in the current study, they are not entirely equivalent to the roles of "team assistants," "caregivers," and "educators/public relations specialists" performed by team ISPs in esports. Lee's (2019) study revealed that staff interpreters in baseball primarily performed general translation and interpretation (T&I) services for specific team members, with administrative work as a secondary duty. The present study, while finding some similar cases (U1, I4, D2, D5), also uncovered divergent roles for team ISPs in esports. For instance, D4 reported being initially hired as a community manager before taking on Korean-Mandarin interpretation for foreign personnel. Similarly, U5 was employed as a team manager, with interpreting duties planned as an additional responsibility. These examples suggest that for some team ISPs in esports, interpretation may not be their primary role, contrasting with Lee's (2019) description of team administration staff in baseball. This distinction highlights a potential difference in how interpreters are integrated into team structures in esports compared to traditional sports. In esports, interpreters often assume multifaceted roles that extend beyond language services, reflecting the unique demands and structure of the industry.

The "personal assistant/foreign players' lifeline" role identified by Lee (2019) shares similarities with, but is not equivalent to, the "caregiver" role uncovered in the present study. While both roles address team members' daily needs, the "caregiver" in esports settings holds a higher status relative to the care recipient. I4 and D5 highlighted a key distinction: unlike traditional Taiwanese athletes who receive public relations training before entering the professional sphere, most esports players excel primarily at video games—a pursuit not traditionally viewed as a viable career path in Taiwan. Moreover, the typically young age of esports players means many are not fully socialized, with some exhibiting rebellious tendencies (U1). Consequently, team ISPs often need to adopt a "mean or strict" approach (I4) when facilitating communication or addressing team members' daily needs. The "educator/public relations specialist" role emerged from the unique educational needs of esports players. Unlike in Lee's (2019) study, where professional players were merely suggested to learn Mandarin, participants in the present study indicated that teaching Mandarin to foreign players was a duty of team ISPs. This educational responsibility expanded to include instruction on societal norms and business etiquette, as esports managers recognized that the professional player lifestyle often deprived these young individuals of a conventional education (I4, D5, I6).

In summary, while team ISPs share some similarities with staff interpreters in traditional sports, the unique characteristics of the esports setting give rise to distinct differences in their roles and responsibilities.

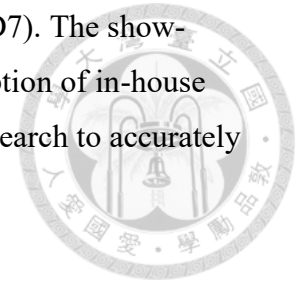
5.2.2 In-house interpreters and staff ISPs

Given their limited relatability to sports interpreters, staff ISPs might initially seem better categorized as in-house interpreters, a broader group examined in studies by Yang (1999), Tsai (2011), and Lee (2016). However, the results of the present study suggest a more nuanced perspective. Yang (1999) posited that in-house interpreters primarily exist to promote specific projects within a company or business group. This description partially aligns with the role of staff ISPs, whose goal is to facilitate communication between stakeholders in esports tournament games. However, the work of staff ISPs rarely encompasses the typical in-house communication contexts listed by Yang (1999), such as business briefings, sales pitches, business consultations, technical exchanges, contract negotiations, or speeches.

Tsai (2011) noted that in-house interpreters face diverse communication contexts due to ill-defined duties. The varied responses in this study partially support Tsai's observation, as participants struggled to provide a unified definition of ISPs' responsibilities. However, many staff ISPs were volunteers for event organizers (D1, D3, D7, U6, D9) with clearly defined tasks according to their initial job titles. This situation presents an intriguing dichotomy: while ISP-specific responsibilities may lack clear boundaries, the overall tasks of these individuals often had well-defined limits based on their initial job title. Paradoxically, these established boundaries for non-ISP related work effectively delineated areas requiring interpreting services. In contrast to Lee's (2016) finding that in-house interpreters adapt their working modes and strategies to diverse communication contexts, the present study reveals a different scenario for staff ISPs. Participants reported that staff ISPs struggled to establish effective communication processes for interpreting services (D5, D7). Furthermore, future modifications to the interpreting process remained open to discussion between ISPs and ISUs (D3, D7, I6). These observations suggest that staff ISPs have not yet fully developed the capability to adopt appropriate modes and strategies for different communication contexts.

While staff ISPs do not align with the typical description of in-house interpreters, their roles, tasks, and challenges remain distinct. With the exception of the "staff conduit" role, staff ISPs' functions primarily focus on prioritizing their employers' interests—namely, the event organizers. Esports event organizers operate within the "show-running business" (D1). Consequently, staff ISPs' roles such as "communication/cultural mediators," "emotion buffers/amplifiers," and "assistants" are inherently show-centric, distinguishing them from team ISPs. These roles prioritize swift conflict resolution over fairness, enhance the tournament's image rather than individual interlocutors', and prevent operational friction in game management. This show-centric focus fundamentally differentiates staff ISPs from team ISPs. The role of "regional representatives" further elevates staff ISPs from the background, providing them with more opportunities to initiate communication that requires interpreting services. For instance, when hosting post-game interviews, staff ISPs are required to prepare and produce interview content that needs interpretation (I3). Similarly, staff ISPs accompanying regional winners to international games are tasked with facilitating communication between international

event organizers and regional teams facing language barriers (I4, D3, D7). The show-centric nature of staff ISPs' roles extends beyond the traditional description of in-house interpreters in previous studies. This distinction necessitates further research to accurately categorize staff ISPs within the broader field of interpretation.



5.3 The Show-centric Feature of the ISPs

The show-centric feature of esports ISPs in LoL is consistently emphasized in participants' responses, manifesting in various aspects of their work. Aesthetic considerations play a significant role, as evidenced by event organizers prohibiting ISPs from using notebooks on stage during consecutive interpreting tasks because "it doesn't look good" (D1). This prioritization of appearance over traditional interpreting tools underscores the emphasis on visual presentation.

Performance enhancement is another key aspect of this show-centric approach. Team ISPs suggest that reading literature related to interpreting studies and teaching can improve articulation and help ISPs "perform better on stage" (I6). This recommendation frames interpreting not just as a linguistic service, but as a performance art. Audience engagement also factors prominently into the show-centric nature of esports interpreting. A Japanese-Mandarin ISP gained popularity among viewers during the 2024 PCS Spring Split Playoffs, despite controversial performance, because "they think he sounds cute" (I5). This instance highlights how audience perception and entertainment value can sometimes overshadow interpreting accuracy. These examples illustrate how the show-centric focus in esports interpreting often prioritizes entertainment value, visual appeal, and audience engagement alongside—or sometimes even over—traditional interpreting standards.

Past research has looked into the concept of showmanship of the interpreters. Katan and Straniero-Sergio (2001) explored the role of interpreters on Italian television, specifically investigating the evolving ethics of interpreting in TV talk shows. Their study identified a significant influx of foreign guests on Italian talk shows, creating a substantial demand for interpreting services. However, the role of interpreters in this context diverged from the traditional notion of being loyal gatekeepers of the source text. Instead, interpreters often found themselves involved as primary participants in

entertaining conversations. Katan and Straniero-Sergio (2001) examined the main features of talk shows in terms of institutional discourse, conversational genre, participants, topics, and goals. Based on their corpus study, the researchers argued for the necessity of a new ethical model for interpreters working in the Italian talk show business. This model would need to account for the unique demands and expectations of the entertainment industry, which often prioritize engagement and spectacle alongside accurate interpretation:

Success for this new model will be based on the three “C” factors (comfort, capacity and culture). First, all participants will need to work within their comfort zones. Second, interpreters will need a particular professional capacity, which includes the ability to perform in public– and they should be respected as fully-fledged professional participants. Finally, the interpreter’s behavior should be coherent with the particular context of television and national culture. (P.21)

Another study exploring the intersection of interpreting and performance skills was conducted by Fan and Ju (2021), investigating whether acting training could improve interpreting students' consecutive performance. Fan and Ju concluded that training in performance techniques benefited the interpreter participants in several areas: loyalty to the source message, cohesion in delivery, flow of interpretation, and stage presence. These findings suggest that elements of performance training can enhance interpreters' skills beyond mere linguistic transfer.

In addition to the work ethics for interpreting for talk shows and acting training for enhancing interpreting performances, the present study suggested a third way of how interpreting crossed paths with show businesses: esports interpreting was potentially one of the performances of the PCS tournament games. In the LoL PCS field, interpretation sessions such as post-game interviews could capture the attention of the audience by themselves. One concrete example was the three way relayed interpretation in the 2024 PCS Spring Split Playoffs. D3 praised that the regional event organizer of the PCS “did an interesting thing” to reintroduce post-game interviews to this league, since it was once halted due to the poor ratings. “Even though the interview questions were not the most meaningful ones, the fact that they are willing to do this, also with interpretation, is worth

complimenting because it would win more attention.” I5’s responses added to the “interesting” thing by highlighting that the Japanese interpreting service itself “meant a lot” to the Japanese fans. “They felt included by watching the three-way relayed interpretation.” (I5)

However, the attention of the audiences may also do harm to the ISPs when they were exposed under the spotlight like other public figures. Internet trolls were the main reasons that ISPs felt concerned when conducting esports interpreting. Instead of merely focusing on the interpreted target text, these toxic audience’s eyes were glued to the visible ISPs, not only commenting on their appearances, but also hoping for the moment that ISPs made a mistake in their interpretation. “To be honest, they don’t care about your language proficiency. As long as you are pretty enough they would spare you with their insults. What matters the most was to make the audiences like you.” (I3)

Sarcastically, the unfair comments of internet trolls could potentially increase the value of esports interpreting. The hurtful words against the ISPs from the trolls would trigger a series of disputes over the internet, may it be in the livechat of 20,000 concurrent live viewers, or on PTT, a highly popular Bulletin Board System with a lively and varied user base with more than 2 million users. The trolls' comments and subsequent rebuttals indicated a high level of audience engagement. This attention escalated to the point where media outlets deemed the topic newsworthy enough to report (U5). However, this situation had real-world consequences: a female ISP faced harsh, sexually discriminatory criticism, while an amateur interpreter received unwarranted attacks unrelated to their performance. D7, currently employed by the regional event organizer, reflected on the unexpected attention drawn by the interpretations: "We were surprised by the level of scrutiny the ISPs received. For future assignments, we'll ensure they are better prepared." They added, "Our goal is twofold: to enhance service quality for our audience and to shield ISPs from such unwarranted criticism."

Fortunately, ISPs can contribute positively to the esports entertainment industry beyond merely enduring criticism. Their linguistic proficiency and familiarity with specific community language usages can pleasantly surprise audiences and earn praise. For instance, I2 recounted an experience where her idiomatic interpretation for a team player caught the attention of bilingual audience members, subsequently resulting in

dedicated media coverage highlighting her performance. Similarly, D3 observed that ISPs who demonstrate the ability and willingness to adapt gaming-related language according to different regional preferences tend to amass larger followings on social media platforms. This adaptability showcases the ISPs' cultural competence and enhances their value in the esports ecosystem. These examples illustrate how ISPs can leverage their linguistic and cultural expertise to not only facilitate communication but also to enhance the overall entertainment value of esports events. By doing so, they can establish themselves as valuable contributors to the esports entertainment industry, moving beyond their traditional role as behind-the-scenes facilitators.

In brief, the show-centric feature of esports ISPs is a distinctive feature that the author of the present study has discovered through reviewing the responses of the esports mISPs, mISUs, and PDPs. Even though interpreting studies may have overlapped with entertainment aspects, few directly addressed the value of interpreting as a form of entertaining performance. However, the present study shows that esports ISPs are capable of attracting attention on their own through positive and negative ways, but would require more discussions to fully explore the potential and meaning of this front for the overall esports industry.

5.4 Summary

This chapter elucidated the application of the Modified Grounded Theory Approach (M-GTA) and compared the roles of esports ISPs with sports interpreters and in-house interpreters. The author, serving as the "Analytically-Focused-Person," explored the "Analytical Themes" defined by the research questions in Chapter 3, namely the roles, tasks, and challenges of esports ISPs within the LoL PCS leagues.

Following Kambaru's (2018) M-GTA guide, the open-coding process generated 21 task concepts, 12 role concepts, and 13 challenge concepts. The selective coding process led to 3 task categories, 2 role categories, and 5 challenge categories, as shown in Table 2. Each concept was formed and defined using an analytical sheet that included supporting responses from study participants, as demonstrated in Table 3. The formed concepts were then represented in blocks and codes within two diagrams describing team ISPs' and staff ISPs' work in esports settings.

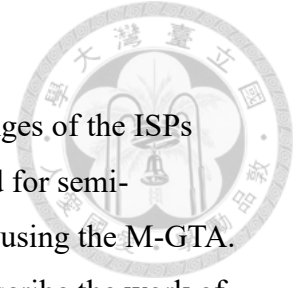
For team ISPs, roles, tasks, and challenges remained largely constant throughout individual operations, regional games, and international games. The most significant shift occurred when teams began attending regional games, emphasizing the "team conduit" role in handling interview interpretations. Staff ISPs' work gained more value in regional and international games, with their roles increasing from 3 to 5 compared to the initial stage. Staff ISPs' work was more complex, encompassing "content creating and development tasks" across all three stages, and even sharing some team ISP duties when regional event organizers brought winners to international games.

The study's results were compared with Lee (2019) and Chang (2023), who focused on sports interpreters in Taiwan's traditional sports teams. As shown in Table 4, team ISPs were more relatable to sports interpreters than staff ISPs, despite differences in conflict resolution among team members and daily operational assistance.

Given staff ISPs' poor fit with the sports interpreter description, the author compared them to in-house interpreters, a category mentioned in Lee's (2019) literature review. This comparison revealed similarities: both aimed to promote employer projects, suffered from unclear labor division, and faced more diverse communication contexts than conference and community interpreters. However, the show-centric nature of staff ISPs' roles, tasks, and challenges precluded their categorization as in-house interpreters.

Finally, the study analyzed the unique showmanship aspect of esports ISPs, unexplored in previous research on interpreting in entertainment contexts. While prior studies focused on ethical frameworks and skill development through acting training, this study reveals esports ISPs as performers, attracting audience attention both positively and negatively. ISPs are recognized for their on-stage presence, language proficiency, and ability to adapt to different regional gaming cultures. This performance aspect is valuable to the esports industry, driving engagement and attracting online attention. The author concludes that this new dimension of esports ISPs requires further exploration to understand its full potential and implications for the industry.

Chapter 6 Conclusion



The present study set out to explore the tasks, roles, and challenges of the ISPs working in the LoL PCS regional league. 21 participants were recruited for semi-structured interviews, and their responses were compiled and analyzed using the M-GTA. The results of the M-GTA included two diagrams and a Storyline to describe the work of esports ISPs, and identified roles were compared with past studies on sports interpreters and in-house interpreters.

Presented in the order of two different sets of interview questions, the results of this study revealed the multifaceted nature of esports ISP work within the LoL PCS league. ISPs performed a broad range of tasks, including general translation and interpretation, administrative and logistical support, and content creation and development. These tasks included interpreting during post-game interviews, press conferences, team practices, and event operations; managing teams, coordinating players, providing Mandarin training; processing documents, and even contributing to content creation and brand management. ISPs played a variety of roles beyond simply being translators or interpreters. They acted as conduits, assistants, caregivers, educators, communication and cultural mediators, assistant coaches, public relations specialists, regional representatives, and emotion buffers/amplifiers. These roles are shaped by their employers, teams or event organizers, and the specific context of their work. ISPs faced a number of challenges, including pressure from event organizers, internal conflicts, demanding interpreting environments, long working hours, and gaining trust from stakeholders. These challenges were often related to the unique demands and pressures of the esports industry, which is a fast-paced, competitive, and often unpredictable environment.

The discussion chapter delved deeper into the findings of the study, narrating how esports ISPs' work evolved through different stages. This included two diagrams illustrating the tasks, roles, and challenges of team ISPs and staff ISPs across individual operations, regional games, and international games. The two diagrams then led to a narrative, "the Storyline," that encapsulated the work of esports ISPs in the LoL PCS field.

Esports ISPs, both team and staff, play crucial roles in maintaining daily operations for their respective employers. Team ISPs primarily support esports teams in training players for tournament games with substantial prizes, while staff ISPs assist event organizers in profiting from the experience economy model. Initially, team ISPs are needed when foreign coaches or players join the team, centering their work around these individuals. Staff ISPs, on the other hand, address language barriers for event organizers, handling tasks such as document translation and localization.

As in-house interpreters, both groups face unclear task boundaries, often managing additional administrative and logistical duties. Uniquely, staff ISPs are also involved in content creation and development, allowing them a more active role beyond passive language assistance.

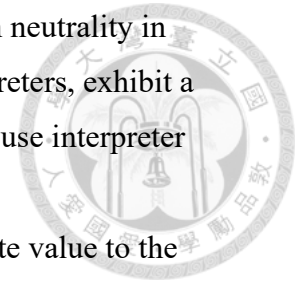
During the regional stage, where teams compete in tournaments held by regional organizers, team ISPs and staff ISPs collaborate to meet interpreting needs. Team ISPs' roles remain largely consistent, with an increase in public event interpreting. Staff ISPs, however, experience a significant shift in their responsibilities. They handle numerous interview interpretations, occasionally supported by team ISPs, and face new challenges related to increased audience visibility. While they may shed some administrative tasks, staff ISPs encounter more complex challenges in content creation and development.

At the international stage, staff ISPs' roles evolve further as regional event organizers bring tournament winners to compete against other regional champions. Staff ISPs now combine aspects of both team and staff ISP duties, essentially acting as team managers for regional winners. They work alongside team ISPs and international staff ISPs hired by Riot, the LoL game developer. This stage involves managing general translation and interpretation for public interviews, addressing winners' daily needs, and continuing content creation to enhance brand image and attract fans.

Throughout these stages, staff ISPs maintain a distinct show-centric focus, prioritizing event organizers' interests and contributing to the spectacle of esports competitions. This is evident in their involvement in interview management, brand representation, and audience engagement.

While esports ISPs share similarities with sports interpreters and in-house interpreters, they occupy a unique niche. Team ISPs, for instance, play roles similar to

assistant coaches and cultural mediators but with a greater emphasis on neutrality in esports settings. Staff ISPs, while sharing features with in-house interpreters, exhibit a more pronounced show-centric focus that extends beyond typical in-house interpreter tasks.



The visibility and performance aspects of esports ISPs contribute value to the industry beyond mere language facilitation. Their on-stage appearances, public interpreting performances, and adaptability to regional gaming cultures open new avenues for audience engagement and industry development, highlighting the evolving nature of interpreting in the esports context.

6.1 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Despite efforts to collect and control data, the study encountered limitations. A significant limitation emerged with the unexpected identification of PDPs. Initially, the study design included two sets of interview questions: one for ISPs and another for ISUs. The discovery of PDPs necessitated a deviation from the prepared questions, relying instead on the researcher's personal interview skills and knowledge to probe participants' experiences. This improvised approach may have resulted in a more superficial observation of ISPs' work from this distinctive and significant group of esports industry stakeholders.

Another significant limitation of this study was the lack of a clear description of the relationship between challenges and the tasks associated with certain roles. While the M-GTA diagrams provided ample visual cues to illustrate the relationships between tasks and roles, and between roles and challenges, there was insufficient data from participant responses to establish clear connections between identified tasks and challenges. Consequently, the author was only able to place tasks and challenges on different sides of the diagrams without indicating clear causal effects. This limitation may have resulted in missed opportunities to address these challenges more effectively.

An additional limitation was the relatively broad definition of ISPs used in the study. The esports industry, having developed over only four decades, has not yet fully standardized its practices despite efforts to emulate traditional sports. Both large and small esports entities operate with flexible frameworks, often functioning like startups as

they explore this emerging field. As a result, the boundaries for labor division remain unclear and fluid. Employees in the esports industry are frequently asked, either explicitly or implicitly, to take on duties beyond their original roles, including providing interpreting services. This fluid nature of roles necessitated a less restrictive definition of ISPs to form a meaningful and general group for discussion. However, this broader definition of ISP may have led to the neglect of the interpreters' original titles and the potential impact of these titles on their behaviors and roles within the industry. The use of a more inclusive definition allowed for a comprehensive examination of interpreting practices in esports but may have obscured some nuances related to specific job titles and their associated responsibilities. Future research could benefit from a more granular approach, perhaps examining how different job titles that include interpreting duties influence the roles, tasks, and challenges faced by these professionals in the esports ecosystem.

Despite its methodological limitations, this study aims to take a pioneering step in exploring esports interpreting from the perspective of interpreting studies. Prior to this research, there was a notable absence of studies examining interpreting activities in the esports domain, a gap that potentially impacts business owners' decisions on integrating interpreting services and talent into their operations. Participants in this study have expressed a clear need for interpreters, having identified areas requiring these services while programming for international esports tournament audiences. However, the degree of influence and importance of ISPs in tournaments remains unclear. This ambiguity presents a challenge for esports team owners and event organizers when allocating their limited resources to maximize profits.

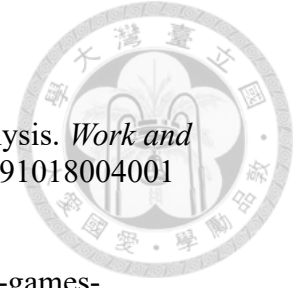
While the present study has catalogued the tasks and roles observed in the current esports industry, it has not assessed whether these tasks and challenges are essential for interpreting talents to realize their full potential value. This gap in understanding suggests a direction for future research: measuring the importance of ISPs in the esports arena, with particular focus on the showmanship aspect elaborated at the end of Chapter 5.

The showmanship dimension of esports interpreting represents a potentially unprecedented way for interpreting services to contribute to this exciting, emerging field. Future studies could explore how this aspect impacts audience engagement, brand

building, and the overall spectator experience in esports events. By quantifying the value and impact of ISPs, particularly in their role as performers and cultural mediators, future research could provide valuable insights for industry stakeholders. This could inform more strategic decisions about resource allocation and the integration of interpreting services into the core of esports operations.

In conclusion, while this study lays important groundwork, it also illuminates the need for further investigation into the unique role of interpreters in the esports ecosystem. Such research could not only advance our understanding of this specialized form of interpreting but also contribute to the professional development and recognition of esports interpreters.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for ISPs (CH)

訪談問題（翻譯人員）：

1. 首先想先請教您的求學背景，大學就讀科系，畢業後的進修狀況，是否接受過專業口譯訓練或修習相關課程？
2. 您是如何成為電競翻譯人員/電競雙語主持的？
3. 您擔任電競翻譯人員時的工作內容有哪些？平時負責什麼業務？
4. 您如何看待您服務或共事的對象，分為五種：選手、教練、電競隊伍管理階層，電競主辦廠商、媒體。
5. 您在工作中會遭遇到什麼樣的壓力或是衝突？壓力和衝突的來源是什麼？
6. 您如何看待您擔任電競翻譯人員的角色？
7. 您理想中，電競翻譯人員應該扮演什麼樣的角色？
8. 您覺得電競翻譯人員應該具備什麼樣的能力與條件？
9. 如果可以，您會希望電競翻譯人員踏入職場前接受什麼樣的訓練，以幫助他們在正式工作時能有更好的表現，或更勝任工作中的不同角色？



Appendix B

Interview Questions for ISPs (EN)



Questions for ISPs

1. Firstly, I'd like to inquire about your academic background. What did you study in university, and what further education did you pursue after graduation? Have you received professional interpreter training or taken related courses?
2. How did you become involved in esports interpreting service provider or bilingual hosting?
3. What are your responsibilities as an esports interpreting service provider? What tasks do you typically handle?
4. How do you view the different stakeholders you work with, including players, coaches, esports team managers, event organizers, and media?
5. What kinds of pressure or conflicts do you encounter in your work? What are the sources of this pressure and conflict?
6. How do you perceive your role as an esports interpreting service provider?
7. In your opinion, what role should an ideal esports interpreting service provider play?
8. What skills and qualifications do you believe esports interpreting service provider should possess?
9. If possible, what kind of training would you recommend for aspiring esports interpreting service provider before they enter the workforce to help them perform better in their roles or handle different responsibilities within the job?

Appendix C

Interview Questions for ISUs (CH)

訪談問題（選手、教練、經理、主辦）：

1. 想請教電競翻譯人員平時如何協助您？他們平常的工作包含什麼？
2. 在與需要以外語溝通的場合時，您如何跟協助您的口譯員互動？
3. 您如何看待電競翻譯人員？您會怎麼描述他們的角色？
4. 您覺得稱職的電競翻譯人員應該具備什麼特質、能力？
5. 電競錦標賽的跨語言、跨文化溝通過程，有什麼值得改進之處？



Appendix D

Interview Questions for ISUs (EN)



Questions for ISUs

1. How do esports interpreting service provider typically assist you, and what does their regular work entail?
2. When communicating in situations that require a foreign language, how do you interact with the esports interpreting service provider assisting you?
3. How do you perceive esports interpreting service provider, and how would you describe their role?
4. What qualities and abilities do you believe competent esports interpreting service provider should possess?
5. In the cross-language, cross-cultural communication process of esports tournaments, what aspects do you think could be improved?