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Collegial Relations among Freelance Interpreters
in Taiwan

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The Collegial Relations among Freelance Interpreters in Taiwan

本論文係林可晴 (R10147011) 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 22 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 22, 2024, have examined a Master's Thesis entitled above presented by KE-CHING LIN (R10147011) and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

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摘要

自由口譯員須具備良好的語言、溝通能力，且須學習各領域知識。然而因為自由接案的工作性質，除了工作能力之外，自由口譯員也必須面對客戶、講者，更須和同事建立良好的合作關係。自由口譯員和同事之間同為競爭者及合作者，存在利益上的矛盾，彼此之間的互動與競合會影響口譯員的工作及生活品質，進一步影響口譯員提供的服務品質。也因為自由口譯員沒有固定工作場域或是隸屬特定組織，口譯員之間的過去口譯研究多針對口譯員面對不同腔調、語速以及演講內容的策略以及表現，卻鮮少有研究探討口譯員彼此之間的群體關係。台灣自由口譯市場未受特定單位管轄，口譯案件的來源以及形式多樣，口譯員之間的社群和人際關係更顯重要，以台灣市場為根基的自由口譯員社會互動層面是值得探討的議題。

本研究以台灣自由口譯員為研究主體，經立意抽樣透過質性訪談探討不同教育背景及工作經驗的口譯員與其他口譯員的合作與競爭關係，以及工作前後期間口譯同事的互動情形。本研究涵蓋各式訓練背景的口譯員，透過兩階段的半結構式訪談，了解在工作場域口譯員與同事之間的競合關係以及互動模式，也一窺口譯員群體的社交網絡，以及同儕關係如何影響自由口譯員的職涯與生活。台灣自由口譯員的合作模式以準備工作、相互介紹案件為主，競爭手法則較間接，以自我品牌經營等方式呈現，亞洲社會的群體主義為可能的原因之一。研究發現口譯員多與 2-4 位其他自由口譯員組成非正式團體，透過團體內相互合作提升競爭力。

關鍵字：口譯員、同事關係、同儕關係、自由口譯員、競合關係

Abstract

Freelance interpreting demands language proficiency, communication skills, and domain-specific knowledge. Without a fixed workplace, freelance interpreters often meet new individuals, making relationships with colleagues crucial for social support. However, the impact of collegial relations on interpreters' performance is underexplored, with limited information on how these relationships affect their career development and well-being.

This research investigated collegial relations among freelance interpreters in Taiwan using qualitative methods and semi-structured interviews. It examined cooperation and competition, the two major aspects of collegial relations. Findings revealed that while training programs emphasize technical skills, collegial relations were often overlooked. In terms of cooperation, Taiwanese freelance interpreters form close-knit groups with trusted colleagues, fostering cooperation and enhancing career opportunities through mutual referrals and collaboration. However, subtle competition exists through price wars, information withholding, and self-branding.

Trust is crucial in balancing cooperation and competition, with interpreters preferring cooperative relations within trusted groups. Collectivistic culture contributed to the construct of such a community, where cooperation is expected and competition is expected to be alleviated. This research highlights the need to incorporate social skills training in interpreter education programs to enhance performance, career development, and workplace experiences.

keywords: freelancer interpreter, collegial relation, peer relation, interpreter

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Chapter 1 Introduction



Interpreting is a profession that requires interpersonal communication skills, proficiency in two or more languages, cultural competence and the ability to learn new knowledge of different fields (Setton & Dawrant, 2016). However, interpreting is not the interpreter's only responsibility. Freelance interpreters also have to cope with matters such as time management, contract signing with clients, tax management, and perhaps more importantly, social relations with clients and other fellow interpreters (Rehkopf, 2018). Freelance interpreters, distinguished by their lack of affiliation with a specific institution or a fixed workplace, frequently encounter new individuals in various interpreting contexts. This contrasts with many other professionals in different industries who typically work in a consistent office environment and at the same desk each day. Due to the absence of a regular workplace or a direct supervisor, freelance interpreters seldom have daily interactions with consistent colleagues, limiting opportunities for forming close professional relationships. Instead, they primarily rely on interactions with other interpreters, often met during assignments, to build a supportive community. Consequently, the relationships established with fellow interpreters take on heightened importance, offering essential social support. The community formed by these interpreter colleagues plays a crucial role in various market aspects, significantly impacting the interpreters' well-being and career trajectories.

Academic research has substantiated that collegial relationships exert a substantial impact on an individual's workplace experience (Betzler, 2021; Reich & Hershcovis, 2011; Stoetzer, 2010). Despite their significance, collegial relationships among freelance interpreters remain an underexplored area in academic research. To date, most studies have concentrated on various factors influencing interpreters'

performance, including the speaker's accent (Albl-Mikasa, 2010; Han & Riazi, 2017), speed (Han & Riazi, 2017), and factors on the speaker's end, such as the content and semantic features of the source text (Alexieva, 1999), as well as the interpreter's proficiency in their second language (Tzou et al., 2012). However, the potential impact of collegial relations on interpreters' performance has not been adequately addressed. Additionally, there is scant information on how these relationships affect freelance interpreters' career development, well-being, and overall workplace experience. Therefore, this research aims to explore the collegial relations among freelance interpreters based in Taiwan, hoping to provide more insights into this critical but neglected aspect of interpreters' professional lives.

The current study planned to employ a qualitative research method with two-sectioned, semi-structured interviews, which also collected the demographic information of the participants. The researcher has chosen to concentrate on the dynamics of cooperation and competition among freelance interpreters, for these are the two major aspects of their collegial relations (Giustini, 2021, 2022b).

The research questions for this study were formulated as follows:

1. What characterizes the collegial interactions among freelance interpreters in Taiwan?
2. What traits define the dilemma in interpreters' relations, particularly with respect to the intertwined cooperative-competitive dynamics?
3. How do the cooperative-competitive dynamics and the characteristics of these relationships impact freelance interpreters' career development and workplace experience?

The researcher intended to delve into the interactions among freelance interpreters in Taiwan through in-depth conversations. By analyzing these collegial relations, the

goal was to gain deeper insights into how these relations influence the careers and lives of freelance interpreters.



Chapter 2 Literature Review



This chapter aims to review related studies by former researchers to help define and explore freelance interpreters' collegial relations (or the lack of them) in Taiwan. The three segments include fields of study on 1) the definition of collegial relations, 2) the significance of collegial relations, 3) collegial relations and professionalism, and 4) competition and power in practice among freelance interpreters.

2.1 Collegial Relations

To understand the dynamics of colleague interactions and their relations, it is essential to first establish a definition of "colleague." This term, as Betzler (2021) argued, has "not been the subject of much philosophical study" (p. 214) and is rarely the central subject of academic papers, typically only being incorporated as a component of broader studies. Betzler (2021) characterized colleagues as individuals who share at least two of the following traits: similar work content or domain of activity, common institutional affiliation or purpose, and equivalent status or level of responsibility. They posit that such commonalities are foundational to the designation of individuals as colleagues. According to Betzler (2021), the shared traits mentioned above compose the so-called "collegial relation". Betzler argued that the two individuals can be in this collegial relation "without knowing each other, without having any kind of contact with each other and without being aware of this relation" (p. 218). The key concept in a collegial relation is the implication of "sameness", whether it is sharing the common work content, purpose or status and responsibility. He also believed that the collegial relation indicates that the two individuals have reasons to "give each other special treatment" (p. 216) in their interactions. And by deepening and strengthening the collegial relation, the connection has the potential to be developed into collegial relationship.

Betzler (2021) argued that two self-employed general practitioners who don't have an employer, are still considered colleagues because "even in the absence of an institutional affiliation...they work for the common purpose." (p. 217) Therefore, freelance interpreters who work together can also be defined as colleagues. This argument is thus applied to this research as the fundamental element necessary to analyze the collegial relations among freelance interpreters in Taiwan.

Assuming that two independent, freelance interpreters, who lack any prior acquaintance, do not share a mutual institutional affiliation, it is plausible that they may still exhibit similarities in their professional tasks or domains of expertise. Furthermore, these interpreters should adhere to a similar set of professional standards, thereby bestowing upon them an equivalent status or level of responsibility. Therefore, in accordance with Betzler's definition of colleagues, freelance interpreters in Taiwan can be considered as such.

2.2 The Significance of Collegial Relations

In examining the significance of collegial relations on an individual's life, numerous studies have concentrated primarily on interpersonal relationships at work without offering detailed distinctions among these relationships. Reich and Hershcovis (2011) stated that an interpersonal relationship in the workplace is an individual's personal perception of consistent interactions with another person. A number of studies (Baumeister, 1995; Isabella, 1985; Reich & Hershcovis, 2011; Stoetzer, 2010) probed into the impact of these work relationships on personal performance and overall well-being. Baumeister and Leary (1995) extended previous studies to measure the sense of belonging of almost 1000 undergraduate students and compared results of two previous studies to draw a more comprehensive conclusion. They asserted that these connections could satisfy the intrinsic human need to belong,

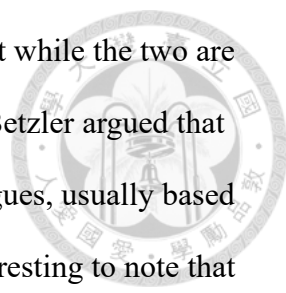
positing two essential conditions for this fulfillment: the interactions must be frequent, positive, and non-adversarial, and they must transpire within a stable, lasting framework. Furthermore, it is posited that strong workplace bonds can enhance job satisfaction. Similarly, Stoetzer (2010) conducted a multi-sectioned study with survey and interviews to investigate the correlation between interpersonal relationships at work and factors related to organizational structure and employee health. He identified two main issues within interpersonal relationships: individual conflicts and social exclusion.

Certain studies have targeted specific types of workplace relationships for deeper analysis. Isabella (1985) emphasized that peer relationships in the workplace, as opposed to mentorships, provide mutual benefits that allow individuals to both offer and receive career development support. This mutuality fostered a balanced dynamic where both parties could play supportive roles. Isabella categorized these relationships by their duration and the intensity of the bond, exploring how different levels of peer connection can be advantageous at various stages of a career. Isabella suggested several themes of peer relationships, regarding different stages of their career (Establishment, Advancement, Middle, Late Career) and the types of bonds these two people share (Information, Collegial or Special Peer). On the continuum of peer relationships, an Information peer refers to peers whose primary function is information-sharing, while a Collegial peer includes “career strategizing, job-related feedback and friendship” (p. 119). The point farthest right on the continuum is Special peer, which is the most intimate form of peer relationship, with the primary function of “confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback and friendship” (p. 119). It involves colleagues who reveal “central ambivalences and personal dilemmas in work and family realms” (p. 121), where not only intimacy and confirmation are crucial, but also “continuity and stability” (p. 121). These are well-constructed concepts and

have the potential to be integrated into this research if the interview results apply.

Betzler and Loschke (2021) introduced the concept of unique ‘relationship goods’ that are exclusive to colleague interactions, notably collegial solidarity and recognition. They argued that collegial solidarity is exemplified by the commonality between colleagues, particularly in the form of mutual assistance. The extent and nature of this assistance are contingent upon shared attributes that define their collegial relation. For example, they suggested that professors from different institutions offering each other constructive feedback is an act of collegial solidarity, as it is predicated on a shared understanding of academic standards and practices. They also noted that solidarity among colleagues can alleviate competition, which is also a crucial aspect in freelance interpreters’ relations. Furthermore, Betzler (2021) highlighted the importance of collegial recognition. Colleagues, owing to their shared professional context, are well-placed to evaluate and affirm each other's work-related experiences and skills. Recognition from colleagues validates an individual's professional experiences and feelings associated with them, providing a level of understanding that extends beyond the empathy of non-collegiate relations. According to the authors, the presence of these elements of collegial solidarity and recognition greatly enhances the potential for flourishing relationships among colleagues.

With ideal collegial recognition, relationships among colleagues deepen and strengthen, forming an even stronger connection among individuals. The enhanced network serves no longer as merely working for a common purpose or sharing the same institutional affiliation. That is where Betzler (2021) introduced the concept of collegiality, which is frequently conceptualized as the cooperative interaction among colleagues. He argued that the aforementioned relationship goods such as collegial solidarity and recognition could facilitate a better cooperative relationship of colleagues, hence improving collegiality. He also differentiated between mere

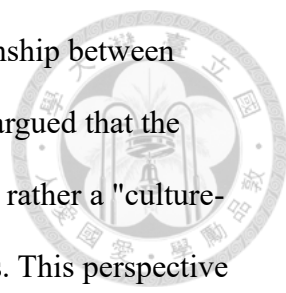


collegial relations and deeper collegial *relationships*, suggesting that while the two are not synonymous, the former may serve as a precursor to the latter. Betzler argued that collegial relationships refer to an ongoing interaction among colleagues, usually based on interconnected and enduring behavioral chains (p. 218). It is interesting to note that the researchers took time to define the attributes of a good colleague: To be considered a good colleague, one must demonstrate proficiency in their work. This competence is essential to harness the benefits of collegial relations, as it enables one to contribute meaningfully to the professional growth and support of their peers. For freelance interpreters, this suggests that one must possess proficient interpreting skills before becoming a valuable colleague within the profession. Interpreters also play a crucial role in each other's career growth by referring assignments and work opportunities. Such referrals can constitute a significant portion of a freelance interpreter's assignments. It is also noted that when a work undertaken has little to no value, collegiality might "become particularly important", for it "introduces non-instrumental value to an otherwise valueless context" (Betzler, 2021). In the context of interpreters, this could refer to assignments characterized by suboptimal working conditions, or situations where interpreters must manage unreasonable clients or ineffective speakers. Collegiality has been more extensively studied in other professions. For instance, Jarzabkowski (2002) described the collegiality of teachers as their engagement with peers across a spectrum of interactions, whether intellectual, moral, political, social, or emotional. She argued that "successful and comfortable personal relationships are in fact necessary for genuine collaboration to take place" (p. 16). Baltimore (2006) examined collegiality among nurses, focusing on issues such as workplace conflicts and the vulnerability of novices to negative workplace culture due to their unfamiliarity with new settings. In the context of freelance interpreters, collegiality predominantly signifies professionalism (Setton & Dawrant, 2016) and

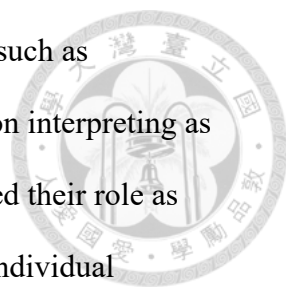
cooperation. Interpreters are expected to assist their booth partners as needed and adhere to the ethical standards of the profession. Previous research has highlighted that “active cooperation is important” (Tiselius, 2010, p. 17) and working with interpreters who fail to fulfill their partnership role can be challenging. Therefore, collegiality is a crucial component of an ideal professional relationship.

2.3 Collegial Relations and Professionalism

Betzler and Loschke (2021) posited that a good colleague needs to be competent. Therefore, professionalism is a crucial factor in the context of collegial relations among interpreters. Understanding the nuances of an interpreter's professionalism offers essential insights into what constitutes a competent interpreter. Moreover, this understanding extends to identifying the qualities necessary to be an effective interpreter colleague. In Chapter 10 of "Conference Interpreting: A Complete Course" by Setton and Dawrant (2016), there is an extensive discussion on the ideal work ethics and behaviors of interpreters, including aspects of client relations and team composition. Chapter 11, on the other hand, portrayed the “informal alliances” and the reciprocity of work opportunities among freelance interpreters (p. 400). However, the chapters did not delve into booth etiquette and collegial interactions among interpreters. They touched upon teamwork and provided some guidelines for conduct in the booth, but there was limited analysis of collegial relations from a social perspective, which is indicative of the relative lack of scholarship on this aspect. Similarly, many textbooks and training programs for interpreters concentrate primarily on "how to be a good interpreter" without sufficiently addressing "how to be a good interpreter by being a good colleague." Fortunately, more attention has been paid to the aspect of collegial relations among interpreters in studies. Researchers conducted analyses and experiments to explore the practical application of interpreter



professionalism. For instance, Rudvin (2007) examined "the relationship between professionalism and cultural constructions of selfhood" (p. 47). He argued that the notion of "professionalism" was not a universal corporate value, but rather a "culture-bound social practice" (p. 48), influencing interpreters' ethical codes. This perspective shed light on how interpreters from different cultural backgrounds might have varying perceptions of what constitutes a "good colleague." Rudvin's exploration into the professionalism of community interpreters offered a unique viewpoint, enabling an understanding of professionalism from a different angle and highlighting how these social factors influenced interpreters' role perception and strategic choices. Moreover, Rudvin analyzed the backgrounds of Western (individualism) and non-Western (collectivism) professionalisms and discussed how professionalism impacted collegial relations. He asserted that not only were professions culturally bound, but "the way in which interpersonal professional relations are negotiated on a day-to-day basis" (p. 55) was also influenced by cultural contexts. This insight underscored the significance of understanding the cultural dimensions of professionalism in shaping the dynamics of professional relationships among interpreters. Building on the previous discussions about Rudvin's and other researchers' perspectives on the professionalism and collegial relations of interpreters, another relevant study is Tiselius' (2010) research on the expertise of Swedish conference interpreters. This study delved into the "habitus" of interpreters, a term used to describe the deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that individuals acquire through their life experiences and social interactions. Tiselius investigated this concept among interpreters working in international institutes in Sweden, illustrating how they "integrate and recreate the norms of the profession" (p. 6), thereby actively shaping professional standards. The findings indicated that interpreters accredited at European Institutions formed "a small and homogeneous group," possessing "a strong joint habitus" (p. 21). Tiselius'



examination of this habitus involved interviews that covered topics such as educational background, advice for student interpreters, and views on interpreting as teamwork versus individual performance. The interpreters considered their role as encompassing elements of both, acknowledging the importance of individual responsibility and the necessity of collegial support. They highlighted that "active cooperation is important," and noted the challenges when colleagues failed to fulfill their 'duties' (p. 17). These insights align with earlier studies, suggesting that the concept of "professionalism" and the norms of the interpreting profession are culturally constructed and cultivated within professional groups rather than being a universal code of ethics. This body of research collectively emphasizes the impact of social and cultural factors in shaping the professional identities and practices of interpreters, highlighting the importance of "habitus" in this process. These studies demonstrate how being competent at one's job can be a pivotal part of being a "good colleague" and that codes of ethics for different interpreter communities might vary due to diverse cultural backgrounds. These studies collectively underscore that competence and professionalism, influenced by cultural and social factors, are essential in defining what it means to be a good colleague. Understanding these dynamics, including the impact of Taiwanese culture, allows the researcher to further investigate community norms and collegial interactions in Taiwan.

2.4 Competition and Power in Practice among Freelance Interpreters

Rudvin (2007) and Tiselius (2010) explored how professionalism can differ in different contexts and argued that a universal code of ethics may not be universally applicable. Their studies suggest that the notion of "what a good colleague should do" could manifest differently in various interpreting communities. Beyond cooperation, competition emerges as another vital aspect of interpreters' interactions, often

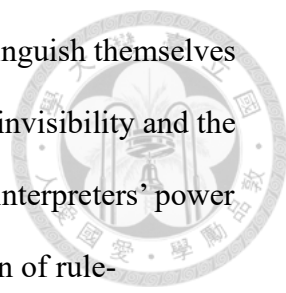
intertwined with and influenced by the exertion of power.

Before delving into the power dynamics in interpreting settings, it is important to understand the workplace environment of freelancers. Although research on freelancers' working environments is limited, it remains a highly relevant field of study. Akhmetshin (2018), in "Freelancing as a Type of Entrepreneurship," identified the advantages and disadvantages of freelancers worldwide, arguing that freelancing is a promising career form, albeit not yet mature in some regions (p. 9). Akhmetshin and colleagues also asserted that it is "convenient for companies to work with freelancers" (p. 4), as employers need not provide office equipment and consumables. Overall, the advantages of freelancing stem from the flexibility it offers to remote workers, students, and individuals with variable schedules. The disadvantages primarily relate to income insecurity and work-life balance challenges (pp. 4-5). While the research findings are concise and lack in-depth analysis, they successfully draw attention to freelancers' working conditions. For freelance interpreters, who are subject to the same environmental factors as other freelance workers, workplace inconsistency is even more pronounced due to frequently changing interpreting settings. Consequently, when examining cooperation and competition among freelance interpreters, the exertion of power emerges as a significant and worthy topic of discussion, as understanding these factors is essential for analyzing how power dynamics among freelance interpreters shape their professional interactions collegial relations.

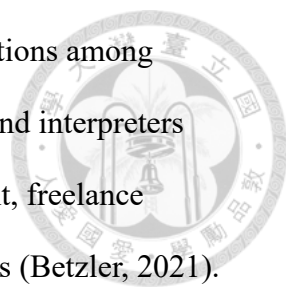
The concept of power was initially defined by Dahl (1957) as the capacity of an individual or group to influence another entity to undertake actions it would not have otherwise pursued. This definition frequently associates power with the initiation of changes in human interactions. However, Foucault conceptualized power beyond traditional dominating forces that monopolize, control, or rule others, viewing it



instead as a strategy, tactic, or technique that functions within a network of relations (Mason & Ren, 2012). Furthermore, in researching power dynamics in the social interactions of interpreters in the UK, Giustini (2022b) argued that for freelance interpreters, the demonstration of power manifests in numerous practical aspects, including the resources and skills used to pursue specific interests (p. 4). Giustini also posited that power can be asserted through decision-making (p. 4), rule-making, and strategic manipulation of physical space and objects. Power is closely related to the competition among interpreters. In an unregulated market, interpreters compete for opportunities, and those with power are more likely to have the upper hand in this competition. Giustini (2022b), in a study on power dynamics in the UK interpreting market, concluded that power in practice plays a pivotal role in the competition among freelance interpreters. According to Giustini, this power is often manifested through practices that include elements such as "competence, materials and meanings" (p. 14). Giustini argued that interpreters compete against each other through exerting power. For instance, some might "disempower" a boothmate to secure future opportunities by over-monitoring them in the booth and bad-mouthing with the client (p.11). Or, in a less active manner, one might attempt to mask their own incompetence through taking "the easiest bits of the event" (p. 13). These examples demonstrate that interpreters can strategically use power to influence others to act according to their wishes. In exercising power within the interpreting job market, interpreters frequently manipulate their visibility, either by showcasing their strengths more effectively or by highlighting the shortcomings of others. This manipulation occurs within a context where invisibility is a complex concept for freelance interpreters. The professional ideal often involves being "invisibly good," where an interpreter's work is seamless and unnoticed. Paradoxically, interpreters often become noticeable only when errors occur in their work. However, to differentiate themselves and secure future



employment, interpreters must also navigate ways to positively distinguish themselves to clients and stakeholders, creating a tension between the ideals of invisibility and the practical need for recognition. Giustini (2022b) also suggested that interpreters' power "sits between a display of rule-following and a strategic coordination of rule-breaking" (p. 16). For example, interpreters press their power through "keeping the microphone when a turn is over" (p. 14), implying a lack of trust to their boothmate, or passively not helping their boothmate when need be. Certain actions such as cooperation among boothmates are usually expected as part of professionalism (Setton & Dawrant, 2016). However, they can also be used as a measure to compete, for there is often room for manipulation and explanation on how much help is too much or to what extent counts as over-monitoring a boothmate. Interpreters demonstrate their competence and power by negotiating against daily practice norms (Giustini, 2022b). As interpreters exercise this power, their interactions with one another also warrant research attention. The collaborative and competitive aspects of interpreters' work environments present a paradoxical challenge. Interpreters are expected to work with their colleagues to ensure high-quality service delivery (Giustini, 2022b), yet these same colleagues are competitors in the marketplace for job opportunities. This tension between invisibility in competence, visibility in excellence, and competition with peers who are also collaborators underscores the complexity of the interpreting profession. There is a pressing need for more sociological research into interpreters' professional lives to deconstruct these multifaceted issues. Giustini's (2022b) research sheds light on the competitive nature of the interpreting market in the UK, a landscape where personal and collective interests are deeply entangled. While her work does not delve deeply into the interpersonal dynamics among interpreters, it does pave the way for further investigation into the collegial relationships within this profession.



In conclusion, a comprehensive understanding of collegial relations among freelance interpreters in Taiwan is significant for both the industry and interpreters themselves. Past literature has revealed that despite self-employment, freelance interpreters share a common purpose, positioning them as colleagues (Betzler, 2021). Themes of peer relationships across career stages and bond types have been outlined, ranging from Information peers and Collegial peers to the most intimate form, Special peers (Isabella, 1985). Collegial solidarity and recognition involve mutual assistance and validation of professional experiences, respectively, enhancing overall collegiality and cooperative interactions among colleagues (Betzler & Loschke, 2021). The importance of competence in becoming an effective colleague has been emphasized, as it enables meaningful contributions to the professional growth and support of peers (Betzler & Loschke, 2021). Moreover, cultural nuances and shared habits within the interpreting profession can shape different sets of professionalism in various social backgrounds (Rudvin, 2007; Tiselius, 2010). The multifaceted dynamics of power, competition, and collaboration within the interpreting profession among freelance interpreters have also been highlighted. Interpreters are expected to cooperate as boothmates to provide adequate interpreting services, while simultaneously competing against each other to secure future clients (Giustini, 2022b). In essence, the complexity of interpreters' professional lives warrants further sociological exploration to unfold the intertwined nature of their collegial relations, which is crucial for their success and satisfaction as professionals.

After reviewing related research topics in the existing literature, this study aims to investigate the collegial relations of freelance interpreters in Taiwan through in-depth interviews. The primary goal is to enhance understanding of the cooperative-competitive dynamics that exist among these professionals. Additionally, considering previous research findings on how peer relationships influence career development,

this study also seeks to explore the impact of collegial relations on the career progression and workplace experiences of freelance interpreters in Taiwan.



Chapter 3 Methodology

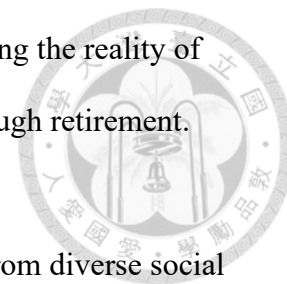
To address the research questions set forth in this study, two-sectioned, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from freelance interpreters based in Taiwan. The following paragraphs will explain the backgrounds of the interviewees and the rationale for the interview questions.

3.1 Participants

The principal criterion for selecting participants in this study is their experience as freelance interpreters based in Taiwan who have provided simultaneous interpreting services. This criterion ensures that the subjects have experience in collaborating with other interpreters in booths, as opposed to solely working independently. Additionally, the number of years of experience is considered, as more seasoned interpreters may have perspectives that differ from those who are newer to the field. The language combinations of the interpreters are not restricted to Chinese-English, but documented as part of the background information. Interviewees were asked to self-report on the stages of their interpreting career, using the definition in Isabella(1985):

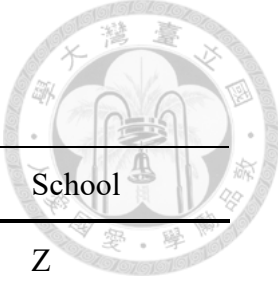
1. Establishment stage: concerns about competence and professional identity.
desire to feel self-confident and competent.
2. Advancement stage: become established in one's chosen profession and begin to internalize feelings of competence and mastery. No longer novices, desire to work through conflicts arising between work and family, desire to settle down.
3. Middle career: have substantial histories established, histories shaped by the choices made and passed up, situations dealt with effectively or ineffectively.
A time for re-evaluation and rethinking of those choices and events.
4. Late career: begin to acquire an understanding and appreciation for the selves

that have accomplished so much in life and in careers, facing the reality of moving out of the work force and into new endeavors through retirement.



To incorporate the opinions and experiences of interpreters from diverse social groups and backgrounds, this research employed both purposeful and snowball sampling. By selecting participants from various educational backgrounds, the researcher aimed to explore collegial relations while considering the communities that have influenced these interpreters. Through snowball sampling, where interviewees introduced additional interpreters to the researcher, this study was able to collect data from interpreters with similar backgrounds. In Taiwan's interpreting market, interpreters often come from diverse educational paths, which frequently determine the communities they engage with. Interpreters typically begin building their networks during interpreting training and often develop into social groups with closer relations upon entering the professional market (Lin, 2011). Well known interpreting training institutions for English-Chinese interpreting include National Taiwan University, National Taiwan Normal University, Fu Jen Catholic University, as well as schools in the U.S. such as the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey or those in the UK such as Newcastle University, University of Leeds and University of Bath. This research recruited participants who had received training from institutions based in southern Taiwan, northern Taiwan and institutions in the US and the UK. A total of 15 freelance interpreters in Taiwan were interviewed (eleven women, aged 25–58, and four men, aged 27–45), with years of experience ranging from less than one year to more than 30 years. Thirteen of the interviewed interpreters received interpreting training at institutions inside Taiwan and the other two at institutions outside Taiwan. The composition of the interviewees is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Research Participants


Interviewee	Career status	Year of experience	Gender	School
A	Middle to late career	32	F	Z
B	Middle to late career	30	F	Z
C	Middle to late career	20	F	Y
D	Middle career	15	F	Y
E	Middle career	15	F	Y
F	Middle career	11	M	Y
G	Middle career	18	F	Z
H	Establishment stage	3	F	Z
I	Establishment stage	2	F	X
J	Establishment stage	1	F	X
K	Establishment stage	1	M	X
L	Advancement stage	5	M	W
M	Middle career	11	F	V
N	Middle career	20	M	U
O	Middle to late career	20	F	T

3.2 Interview

The interview was designed to explore the complexity of cooperation and competition among interpreters, based on previous studies highlighting these intertwined relations (Giustini, 2022a, 2022b). To enhance the understanding of freelance interpreters' social relations, the interview covered several themes, starting with professionalism taught in different institutions and extending to social networks,

cooperative relations, and competitive dynamics within the field.

The interview consisted of two sections. The first section collected sociodemographic data from participants, including age, gender, educational background, years of experience, language combinations, and sources of assignments. This information helps construct the social backgrounds necessary for conducting a deeper analysis (Giustini, 2022a).

The second section delved into the interpreters' professional experiences. It began by exploring training in professionalism and booth etiquette. The first two questions in this section aimed to highlight potential differences between what was taught about being a good interpreter (a topic often covered during training) and how to be a good interpreter colleague (an aspect usually overlooked in interpreting education). Subsequent questions focused on social networks within the freelance interpreting market, examining close relationships and frequency of collaboration with colleagues. The latter part of this section investigated cooperative and competitive relations among interpreters, including motivations and methods behind these interactions.

Questions were designed to elicit both personal experiences and observations about the broader interpreting community. For instance, participants were asked to describe their cooperative and competitive relationships with other interpreters, discuss why interpreters cooperate or compete, and explain how these dynamics manifest in and outside the interpreting booth.

Regarding the interview format, a semi-structured approach was adopted. This flexible format allowed the researcher to ask participants to describe their interactions with fellow interpreters while encouraging them to speak freely and add details to their event descriptions. It enabled the thorough exploration of interviewees' interpretations and perspectives of their experiences (Roulston & Choi, 2018). The

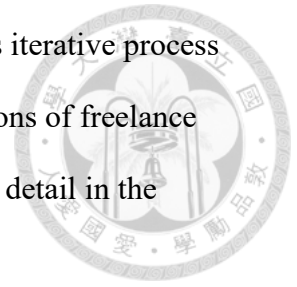
researcher attempted to differentiate between interviewees' "descriptions and examples" and their "opinions" (Stoetzer, 2010), recognizing that opinions do not necessarily equate to facts or fully reflect events. Nonetheless, interpreters' emotions and thoughts were noted as they provide insight into how interpreters perceive their jobs and relationships with others.

Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and was recorded. While the interviews followed a structured set of questions, they were extended as needed to ensure comprehensive coverage of key aspects. All interviews were conducted in Chinese, though some code-switching between Chinese and English occurred in the use of certain expressions.

3.3 Data Analysis

The interview data were transcribed and subsequently coded according to the research themes. Content coding was employed as a systematic method for analyzing the textual data. The researcher categorized the results into four main themes: collegial relations taught during interpreting training, social networks in the interpreting markets, cooperation among interpreters, and competition among interpreters. Close attention was paid to detecting the tone and emotions of the interviewees, as subtle hints of opinions might be conveyed through indicators other than words. This approach allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the data, capturing both explicit statements and implicit attitudes expressed by the participants. The data analysis process comprises several steps. Initially, the researcher identified keywords and key concepts from participants' responses during the interviews, forming a preliminary impression of potential themes. Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed, and the researcher thoroughly reviewed these transcriptions. Key concepts highlighted in the transcription were compared with the

initial notes, using these notes to support the identified themes. This iterative process revealed several key themes related to the experiences and interactions of freelance interpreters in Taiwan. These themes are presented and discussed in detail in the following chapter.



Chapter 4 Result



This chapter presents the results from the semi-structured interviews conducted to explore collegial relations among freelance interpreters in Taiwan. The interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese and transcribed for further analysis. Direct quotes presented in Chapter 4 are translated into English by the researcher. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, four major themes have emerged: 1) what was taught about collegial relations when the interviewees were receiving interpreting training; 2) their social networks in the interpreting markets; 3) cooperation; and 4) competition among interpreters. Aside from these four main themes, additional patterns emerged during the coding process. Notably, most interviewees expressed a preference for working with interpreters who have a background in interpreting education. This trend was consistently observed across the majority of interviews, with interviewees largely agreeing on this preference for similar reasons.

4.1 Additional demographic information of interviewees

In addition to age, gender, and years of experience, participants were also asked about the sources of their interpreting assignments. Four participants reported receiving over 50% of their assignments through translation service-providing companies or event-organizing companies. Notably, these four interpreters all have over 18 years of experience. In contrast, seven interviewees stated that over 50% of their interpreting assignments came directly from clients, where they are responsible for time management, contract signing with clients, and tax management. Their years of experience range from less than one year to 20 years. However, none of the interpreters relied exclusively on one type of assignment source. The portfolios of their assignment sources varied, including direct clients, referral from other

interpreters, and assignments assigned by agents or other sources. It is noteworthy that the four interviewees who are relatively new to the market (with less than three years of experience) received job opportunities primarily from their interpreting professors and friends. Sources like direct clients and translation agencies constituted smaller portions of their work (as shown in Table 2). The additional demographic information provided helps better portray the social aspect of freelance interpreters' jobs, as the source of assignments might suggest the interpreters' relations with other interpreters.

Table 2

Main Source of Interpreting Assignments

Main Source of Interpreting Assignments	Number of interviewees
Agent, Event-organizing Company	4
Direct Clients	7
others	4

Interviewees were also asked to estimate the number of interpreters they had worked with in a booth over their careers. The responses ranged from five to 40, likely influenced by their years of experience in the market. Seven interviewees who have more than 10 years of market experience reported having worked with over 20 interpreters, regardless of the frequency as boothmates.

Among fifteen interviewees, five currently teach interpreting in higher education institutions. One interviewee holds a PhD, while one did not acquire a master's degree in interpreting but completed all the mandatory training courses. Three interviewees are based in southern Taiwan, while the others primarily work and live in northern Taiwan.

4.2 Collegial Relations Issues Taught in Interpreting Training Settings

When asked about how their professors taught them to be good interpreters, almost all participants recalled discussions on professionalism, including booth etiquette, during class. However, when questioned about whether issues concerning effective cooperation and collegial relations among interpreters were addressed, the interviewees were often hesitant. Some recounted that professors occasionally discussed this in interpreting technique courses, but it was rarely a scheduled or planned topic in the syllabi. According to most interviewees in their middle careers, if collegial relations among interpreters were taught, it was typically integrated as part of professionalism discussions. The more recent cohorts, on the other hand, reported to have taken a standalone course on professionalism. The following paragraphs present the interviewees' responses based on their learning experiences regarding professionalism and collegial relations among interpreters.

4.2.1 *Pioneering Cohorts in Mid to Late Careers Stage*

Two interviewees, A and B, who have 32 years and 30 years of experience respectively, were among the initial cohorts at School Z. Both indicated that they had courses on interpreting professionalism, called Professional Orientation, during their interpreter training. They added that their professors highly valued interpreting as a profession, as it was relatively new in Taiwan at that time. The Professional Orientation course provided instruction on interpreting work ethics, covering topics such as rates for services and the process of contract signing.

Regarding booth etiquette and colleague-related matters, the interviewees stated that topics such as rotation timing, proper microphone usage, and handover procedures to booth mates were also taught in their program. However, Interpreter B expressed that she mainly learned about cooperation among interpreters after entering the professional market. In contrast, Interpreter A mentioned that their professor's

emphasis on interpreting as a profession played an important role in her and her classmates' careers.

「...我們會是第一批進入口譯市場的口譯員，加上將來也會當老師...他覺得我們那個時候有一個很重要的責任，...要讓大家知道真正的專業口譯是怎麼一回事。」 [Because the professor knew we would become the first generation of professionally trained interpreters and will also become interpreting instructors in the future... He believed we had such responsibility to lead by example and show the public what 'professional interpreting' looks like.] (Interpreter A)

As students trained during the founding era of the interpreting market in Taiwan, Interpreter A and B highlighted how their professors emphasized education on professionalism. The Professional Orientation course aimed to equip the students with professionalism not only to establish an interpreting career but also to lead as an example in the newly founded Taiwanese interpreting market.

4.2.2 Middle Generations in Mid-Career Stage

According to interviewees with 10-20 years of experience, the training at schools was primarily technique-focused. All interviewees with 11-20 years of professional experience stated that professionalism and interpersonal relations among interpreters were not formally included in the curriculum (Interpreter C, D, E, F, G, M, N, and O). The same interpreters are also those who reported to be currently in the middle stage of their careers.

Interpreters E and F from School Y mentioned an "Interpreting Industry Research Course" which provided some industry perspectives on professionalism. In this course, event company managers and interpreting service providers presented on the profession. However, Interpreter E expressed concerns that the "professionalism" discussed reflected agency expectations of interpreters rather than aligning with

professional ethics standards. Ultimately, Interpreter E indicated that a deeper understanding of true professionalism was largely gained through practical experience after entering the market, rather than formal coursework. Similarly, Interpreter F also mentioned the Interpreting Industry Research course but stated that deeper learning about professionalism occurred after entering the professional market. Both Interpreters E and F agreed their professor taught professionalism-related issues and cooperation with boothmates primarily through leading by example.

Interpreter C, another School Y graduate, believed the professor at her time did not heavily emphasize professionalism, expecting students to already possess this knowledge. Interpreter C felt the professor viewed booth etiquette as common sense, not requiring extensive instruction. It was noted the professors had high expectations of students at that time.

以前的學風本來就是比較嚴謹一點，所以我覺得老師的設定自然不會是你可能會在裡面大吃大喝，他可能覺得這個東西我也不用跟你講，因為以前在學校上課，老師都很嚴格。[Back in the day, the atmosphere of School Y was quite rigorous. I think the instructors expected us to know that it's unacceptable to feast in the booth. They might think that this is not something they need to remind us. The instructors were very strict when we were in school.] (Interpreter C)

Likewise, Interpreter D indicated learning how to be an effective interpreter partner was mainly achieved by observing senior colleagues after entering the market, as professionalism coverage in coursework was relatively superficial.

其實是在大部分是在現場摸索出來的...這些都是在職場上面，你會看到一些好的 role model 然後就其實就會從他們身上學習。[I learned this mostly in practice... I saw some role models in the market and learned from them.] (Interpreter D)

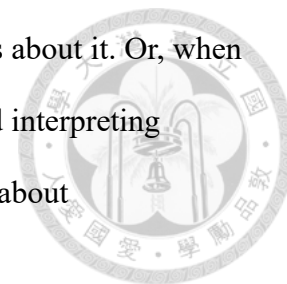
Interpreter G (School Z), who has 18 years of experience, recounted that professionalism and booth etiquette were woven into courses such as Simultaneous Interpreting, and most of their learning about cooperating and interacting with other interpreters occurred after entering the professional market or was based on anecdotes shared by their professors during class. Regarding what was taught about collegial relations, Interpreter G explained that it was mainly conveyed through anecdotal experiences shared in class.

不是刻意的去教，但是[老師]分享一些奇聞軼事當中都會聽到，以及有時候校友回來講在職場上...的經驗，也會講到一些鬼故事，或者是值得學習的作法。[It was not taught intentionally. We heard some of it when the professors shared their experiences in class. Some of it was shared when alumni interpreters came back and gave speeches. We would hear some bad experiences of interactions between booth partners, as well as some tips to learn from.] (Interpreter G)

Interpreter M (School V), N (School U) and Interpreter O (School T) also reported having professors covering some topics about professionalism during interpreting technique courses and learning more about collegial interactions after they entered the market. Interpreter M, who has 11 years of interpreting experience, shared how professors taught professionalism and booth etiquette in the interpreting technique course. She explained that the instructors would hold events featuring professionals from the translation and interpreting industry, and most of the time students would ask questions regarding interpreting practice.

沒有特別開課，但是會在逐步口譯或是同步口譯課的時候，老師會特別挪時間讓同學發問...或者學校有辦相關的口筆譯演講的時候...會開放同學發問，大部分的同學都會問這些問題。[There wasn't a specific course for that, but the professors would find time in consecutive interpreting classes

and simultaneous interpreting classes for us to ask questions about it. Or, when the school arranged lectures and speeches on translation and interpreting related topics, most of the time people would ask questions about professionalism.]



According to Interpreter M, professors addressed professionalism by answering related questions in class. For example, they advised students on formal attire to present themselves professionally and reminded students to respect their boothmates, especially those with more experience. Additionally, students had opportunities to ask questions about professional practice when alumni gave lectures and speeches at School V. Overall, there was no systematic course plan on professionalism or collegial relations among interpreters at School Y, Z, V during the time these interviewees were trained. However, professors did touch on these issues during class discussions.

Interviewees in their middle career who graduated from institutions abroad had similar experiences regarding professionalism in their training. Despite being trained in different schools and countries, both Interpreter N (School U) and Interpreter O (School T), who have 20 years of experience in the market, noted that professionalism was not officially part of the curriculum. Interpreter N recalled that his professors at School U strongly emphasized workplace ethics and offered tips on self-promotion and client interaction. Conversely, Interpreter O mentioned that she was not taught about professionalism or collegial relations at School T; she learned these aspects only after entering the market as a freelance interpreter. She added that her professors believed that students should independently understand and explore professional conduct, deeming it unnecessary to explicitly teach it.

Interestingly, as a professor now, Interpreter N takes a different approach from what he and Interpreter O experienced. Although he did not receive much information on collegial relations during his own education, he ensures that these issues are

included in his interpreting classes.

...確保我在自己的課堂裡面會帶入...告訴同學們要怎麼樣互相 cover，萬一遇到不願意 cover 你的 booth partner 的時候...要怎麼去處理。[I make sure that this is included in my class. I would teach my students how to help each other. I also touch on what to do if they encounter a boothmate who does not want to provide help.] (Interpreter N) Overall, the interpreters interviewed who are currently in their middle career stage agreed that the curriculum design was primarily technique-oriented when they received interpreting training. While professors at that period occasionally discussed professionalism and booth etiquette during classes or modeled expected professional behavior, most learning regarding professionalism-related issues and collegial relations occurred after entering the professional interpreting market. The formal coursework provided limited coverage of these topics, with deeper understanding gained through practical experience in the field.

4.2.3 Recent Cohorts in Early Career Stage

In contrast to the previous era, recent cohorts interviewed from School X all mentioned receiving a course titled "Interpreting as a Profession" during their interpreter training. Interpreter J specified that this was a two-semester series at School X, covering interpreting ethics in practice and business management skills. Interpreter J recalled that professionalism and cooperation among interpreters were integrated topics within the "Interpreting as a Profession" course. Additionally, booth etiquette was emphasized, with Interpreter K recounting professors frequently sharing personal experiences to underscore its importance.

老師主要...就是分享他們的經驗，同時讓我們去思考...未來在跟同事合作時...應該可以有什麼樣的表現...老師也會說在跟...沒有合作過的同事一起工作的時候...先溝通清楚希望用什麼方式合作，畢竟每個人喜歡的工作方式不一樣。[The main way this issue was taught was that professors

shared their experiences with the students. They also encouraged the students to think about what behaviors interpreters should exhibit when working with a colleague in the future. The professors also mentioned that the students should communicate with boothmates first if they were working with someone they had never worked with before, as people might have different ideas of what a good working approach should be.]

Another thing worth noting is how simultaneous interpreting courses were taught in the interviewees' experience. School X usually assigned students as pairs to go in the booth and do the simultaneous interpreting as boothmates in class, with the material lasting 30 to 40 minutes. This allows the students to practice booth etiquette and cooperation with classmates during training. On the other hand, some schools send students into the booths on their own. Each student often did a 15 or 20-minute round by themselves. This could decide whether students have a cooperative experience as boothmates before entering the market.

Some schools had not included formal courses dedicated to professionalism, but include the discussions of such issues into other courses. For example, at School W, professionalism was addressed in interpreting classes rather than through dedicated coursework, according to Interpreter L. There was no formally scheduled course covering professionalism or collegial relations among interpreters during their program. However, work ethics were periodically discussed by professors during class sessions, who also reminded students of the importance of communicating with boothmates. Regarding professional cooperation, Interpreter L, who has 5 years of experience in the market, recalled professors advising on the practice of reciprocating assignments to interpreters who had previously provided assistance, fostering a collaborative dynamic within the field.

他基本上會告訴我們...除了口譯技巧以外的，比如說像是接案的方式...

要怎麼跟客戶接洽...還有一些接案的道德感...那種飲水思源的感覺...如果（學長姐]幫了你...下次如果你有一些案子，...可以回想到這時候幫你的人。[The professors taught us more than just interpreting techniques. They also covered strategies for case management, communication with clients, and the ethics of receiving assignments. They emphasized the importance of remembering those who have helped us. For example, if someone passes a case to us, we should consider them first the next time we have a case to pass on.] (Interpreter L)

4.2.4 Summary

As cohorts from the early years, interpreters with over 30 years of experience shared their experience of having courses on professionalism, work ethics and booth etiquette, in their training. Those with 10-20 years of experience noted a curricular focus on interpreting techniques, with limited formal instruction on professionalism, which they primarily learned through market experience. Recent cohorts, in contrast, reported more dedication on professionalism being taught during training. Some received dedicated coursework on professionalism, covering ethics, business management, and booth etiquette, with a strong emphasis on cooperation among interpreters. Others, although without a planned course, received reminders and thoughts about professionalism from professors in other courses. A trend of emphasis on professionalism in education coming around can be observed.

4.3 Social Network of Freelance Interpreters

The social networks of interpreters are crucial to their careers, providing work opportunities, information, and social support. Many interpreters form close-knit groups of colleagues, with some relationships evolving into lifelong friendships or professional partnerships. These networks often include colleagues with similar

backgrounds, enhancing their professional connections. Regional differences also impact interpreter communities. While interpreters in Southern Taiwan tend to form a tightly-knit community, the larger community in Northern Taiwan is more dispersed. Overall, most interviewees preferred to avoid working with interpreters who exhibit negative attitudes or significant discrepancies in professionalism.

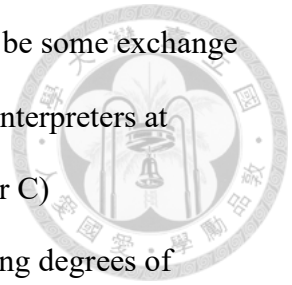
4.3.1 Close Groups

The majority of interviewees, 10 out of 15, indicated having "close groups" of interpreters with whom they share work information, collaborate on large projects as a team, and exchange professional experiences. The composition of these groups varies, but the most commonly mentioned consisted of 3-5 interpreters who frequently work together and have developed friendships. Another model described was interpreters maintaining multiple smaller separate groups. This section will elucidate the social network dynamics reported by the interviewees.

Some interpreters described distinct close-knit groups where collegial relationships evolved into friendships. For instance, Interpreter D stated, "some of my best friends are interpreter colleagues," referring to a group chat with three close friends where work-related information is shared. D also noted being on friendly terms with numerous other interpreters and feeling honored to be part of another group chat comprising well-established senior interpreters in the market. Similarly, Interpreter C's close circle consisted of four interpreters with whom they frequently collaborate. C prioritized this group for shared job opportunities, accounting for 80% of their assignments, describing it as a risk management tactic involving trusted colleagues. Furthermore, C portrayed these relationships as complementary, where pleasant cooperation fostered positive collegial bonds (even friendship), leading to future collaborations as boothmates.

藉由合作...也會產生一些工作資源上的交換...在口譯現場遇到口譯員也

是 networking 的一環。[Through cooperation, there would be some exchange on work-related resources and information...Meeting other interpreters at interpreting settings is also a part of networking.] (Interpreter C)



The concept of social networks as concentric circles with varying degrees of closeness was applied by many interpreters. Interpreter H, an early-career professional, described her innermost circle comprising three former classmates from School Z. The next circle included acquaintances from the same school and instructors, while the outermost contained colleagues with whom H only occasionally collaborated or barely interacted. Interpreter G was closest with fellow alumni from School Z in adjacent cohorts, with the next circle comprising interpreters of the same era from different institutions. Similarly, Interpreter M portrayed her network as layered circles akin to an egg, delineating closeness levels. The innermost circle involved closest colleagues frequently collaborating on assignments, often classmates or instructors from graduate school, whom M contacted first for new work. Conversely, the outermost "eggshell" circle contained colleagues with whom M solely interacted online regarding work matters. This concentric model illustrates how both emergent professionals and experienced interpreters strategically cultivate networks with varying relational proximities.

蛋殼比較外圍的那一區...又是蛋白這一區的譯者介紹的，就是我真的就是沒有碰過面也沒有交談過，或許是只有 line 有溝通過的一些譯者，...主要就是...派案子合作，例如說我自己沒有辦法接的筆譯，那我的核心蛋黃不能接、我的蛋白也不能接，我才會 pass 給蛋殼接。[Interpreters in the eggshell group are introduced by those in my egg white group. They are colleagues that I have not met in person but only contacted on the Internet.

Our encounters are limited to work-related issues, usually passing assignments. For example, I might have some translation assignments that my

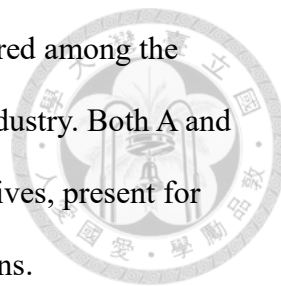
close circle and I aren't able to do, and I'll pass those cases to these colleagues.] (Interpreter M)

Interpreters G, D, M, and C all indicated working optimally with their innermost circles, which tended to comprise colleagues from similar educational backgrounds, such as the same class or institution. The criteria for entry into this inner circle, as articulated by Interpreter C, included strong interpreting skills, diligence, and interpersonal compatibility. However, these close professional circles sometimes transcended collegiality. Interpreter A, for instance, did not delineate a specific inner circle but expressed profound gratitude for colleagues who became lifelong friends. A described her former School Z classmates, with whom she frequently collaborated post-graduation, as "comrades" with whom she shared profound connections extending beyond professional bonds. This suggests that while initial inner circles are often built on shared educational experiences and perceived professional competence, they can potentially evolve into deeper personal relationships over time for some interpreters. The boundaries between professional and personal spheres become blurred through prolonged, positive collaborative experiences.

因為在口譯箱裡面...很容易培養革命情感，...一起經歷很多事情，所以我現在最好的幾個朋友...真的就是在口譯箱裡面跟我並肩作戰而且有幾十年交情的，所以確實是從同事然後變成很好的朋友。 [It is natural to build a connection with your boothmates. They went through a lot with you in the booth. Quite some of my best friends right now are those who went through a lot with me in the booth for a couple of decades. We did go from colleagues to really good friends.] (Interpreter A)

For some interpreters, collegial bonds originated even prior to professional collaboration. Interpreter A described multi-layered relationships, where former students became colleagues or friends over time. Interpreter B, echoing A's

perspective, attributed deep connections to "a sense of purpose" shared among the pioneering cohorts tasked with establishing Taiwan's interpreting industry. Both A and B stated these colleagues participated extensively in their personal lives, present for major milestones like marriages, childbirth, and celebratory occasions.



我們那時候還有一種使命感，就是覺得我們既然是科班培養出來的那我們應該盡可能的，讓大家覺得台灣的譯者也很專業，...有共同的目標...向心力，然後人又不多。[There was this sense of purpose among us at that time. We were professionally trained interpreters, so we should do our best to show the world how professional interpreters from Taiwan are. We had the same purpose and team spirit. Plus, there weren't many of us.] (Interpreter B)

This suggests that for the field's earliest professionals, the lines between vocational and personal spheres were inherently blurred. Their role in shaping the nascent industry fostered a profound sense of camaraderie that transcended workplace interactions, cultivating enduring personal ties. The inter-role permeability appears amplified among this cohort compared to subsequent generations of interpreters.

Not all interviewees had firmly established close-knit professional groups. Interpreters I, J, and K, relatively new to the market, tended to consider former classmates from School X as their closer circles. Interpreter K noted only partnering with classmates, individuals already friends, citing benefits of direct communication and mutual support when working with familiar colleagues.

Several mid-career interpreters maintained predominantly work-oriented relationships, friendly but with limited personal overlap. For instance, Interpreter F enjoyed collaborating with colleagues but rarely socialized outside of work due to schedules.

我們本來就是一個很緊密的 community，但是因為...大家工作都很忙，...平常我覺得社交上的聯絡確實是比較少，大家都是因工作而聚

集，...但是我覺得...慢慢就會發現...目前比較常合作的同事，通常都是志同道合，然後具有類似的特質或者是對於工作條件的要求比較有共識的，...這些志同道合的口譯員，通常合作會比較多。[We are a tightly-knit community. It's just that we are also very busy, so we rarely see each other on social occasions. We often see each other during assignments. However, I realized that the interpreters I often work with are those who share similar values. We often have similar traits and have similar standards for work conditions. These are the people I work with more.]

For others, closer collegial bonds did not necessitate a single cohesive group. Interpreter E stated having separate friendships with various interpreter colleagues rather than a defined group. When partnering on assignments, E still evaluated friends' competencies and strengths objectively.

我會衡量其實案件本身的難度，....去判斷說我要找誰，倒不盡然都是因為我跟某人非常的好、我們常常會約出來吃飯，所以我所有案子都找他。[I would decide depending on different assignments and then choose my boothmate. I don't go to one person every time simply because we are closer or we hang out all the time.] (Interpreter E)

This range of experiences highlights how professional networks evolve differently based on career stage and individual preferences. Newly-minted interpreters rely more on educational ties, while some seasoned interpreters strategically maintain boundaries between vocational and personal spheres despite collegial friendships.

4.3.2 Interpreters with Similar Backgrounds

A prominent pattern emerged where nearly all interviewees expressed a preference for partnering with professionally trained interpreters over self-taught ones. Some shared negative experiences with untrained interpreters, while others described how professional training instills shared values crucial for effective booth

dynamics. For example, Interpreter G recounted an incident where a self-taught interpreter unilaterally turned off their mic upon completing their portion, violating standard handover protocol. Interpreter M stated bluntly not working with untrained interpreters. Interpreter B elaborated that professionally trained interpreters typically share attitudes and norms, such as 15-minute rotation, collaborative preparation, and adherence to guiding principles. In contrast, self-taught interpreters may adopt divergent approaches, recounting an experience where an insufficiently prepared untrained partner continued interpreting despite evident issues. When assigned an untrained client employee as a boothmate, B learned only after working together that this individual lacked comprehensive simultaneous interpreting experience or training.

The divide was not necessarily one-sided, however. Interpreter A posited that differing work habits between the two groups naturally led to drift over time. Clients frequently requested professionally trained interpreters partner together, reinforcing the formation of close-knit groups with shared backgrounds and mindsets around five years into A's career.

剛剛出道的時候，會有一些非科班訓練的口譯員，但是他們就漸漸淡出了，或者是說他們也許就繼續做，他們也就不會找我們這些科班出身的...所以我後來發現我會合作的對象，大概都是有正式接受過口譯訓練... 後來就幾乎沒有什麼機會跟沒有接受過科班口譯訓練的人進 booth。 [When I first entered the market, there were quite some self-taught interpreters, but they phased out. Maybe they continued to work as interpreters, just that they prefer to partner with someone else and rarely partnered with professionally-trained interpreters like us...I noticed that people who I cooperate with are usually those who have received formal interpreting education... I rarely work with self-taught interpreters after the first few years in the market.] (Interpreter A)

This suggests professional training cultivates not only technical skills but also a cohesive interpreting culture distinct from self-taught practitioners. Over time, differing norms and workflows drive a segmentation within the field, with professionally trained interpreters gravitating toward establishing robust collegial networks grounded in mutual understanding.

When asked about interpreters they would avoid partnering with again, most interviewees cited negative past experiences. For example, Interpreter C recalled a colleague who incessantly complained and threw tantrums, even scolding the equipment provider before the assignment began. This created a highly negative atmosphere that made Interpreter C very uncomfortable, leading her to decide against future collaborations with that individual.

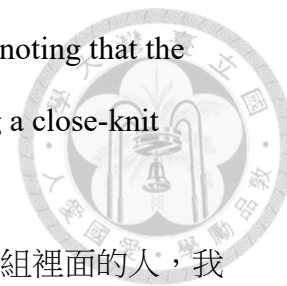
心中暗自說...再也不要找他，因為他從頭抱怨到餐點...我到最後很想跟她說可以不要再抱怨了嗎... [I decided to never partner with this interpreter again. They were complaining about everything from start to finish, including the meal provided...In the end, I was really tempted to ask her to stop complaining. ...] (Interpreter C)

In addition to negative attitudes, the interviewees emphasized the importance of professionalism in determining future partnerships. Interpreters often assess whether their colleagues share the same professional values. Interpreter D, for instance, recounted working with an interpreter whose attire and interactions with clients lacked professionalism. These experiences led her to decide against working with those interpreters again.

4.3.3 Communities Based on Regions

Another notable pattern identified in the interviews is the distinction between regional interpreter communities in Taiwan. According to several interpreters, there are two primary interpreter communities: one based in Northern Taiwan and the other

in Southern Taiwan. Interpreter N described the overall ecosystem, noting that the community in the South is relatively small, with interpreters having a close-knit network.



有個 line 的群組，...都是彼此知道是在南部的，其實群組裡面的人，我每一個人認識...都是以前在很多場合有在一起搭檔過。或者是因為其實南部的譯者大概就是這幾位...，所以我們就算是有接到北部的案子，我們也會就是說有沒有誰...要一起去。[There is a LINE group chat. People in there know we are all based in southern Taiwan. I know them individually.

These are the people I have worked with in the past. There aren't many interpreters based in Southern Taiwan, so we know each other pretty well. If there is an assignment in Taipei, we usually would ask if someone would like to take the case together.] (Interpreter N)

Interpreter N explained that, in southern Taiwan, where there are fewer interpreters, assignments are often shared among a smaller, more collaborative network. This leads to interpreters in the south working together frequently and having a closer relationship.

北部的譯者，他們比較會可能今天你有七個 case 然後七個你都會跟不同的譯者合作，但是南部因為譯者比較少...，其實我們會有一個固定的 partner 這樣子...通常翻譯社來問我的時候他就會跟我說『老師，我可以麻煩你幫我再找另外一位嗎？』...所以這個環境是不太一樣。[In northern Taiwan, if you're an interpreter, you might be cooperating with seven different people on seven different cases. The market in southern Taiwan, however, is different. There are fewer interpreters here, so we would have a regular partner. Usually, when the translation service provider contacts me, they would ask 'Could you also find us another interpreter?' The ecosystem here is different.] (Interpreter N)

According to the interviewees based in southern Taiwan, the smaller Southern community enabled interpreters to cultivate consistent partnerships within circumscribed groups. While Northern counterparts juggled a higher workload requiring diverse collaborations, Southern practitioners exhibited a tendency toward stable, recurrent boothmate pairings. However, interviewees based in Northern Taiwan rarely talked about this regional difference. More data needs to be collected before conclusion on this topic to be drawn.

4.4 Cooperative Relations among Freelance Interpreters

A key aspect of collegial relations among freelance interpreters is cooperation. Interviewees were asked about their collaborative efforts within the booth during assignments, as well as before, during, and after assignments. This section examines the rationale and methods of interpreter collaboration, alongside their perspectives on these cooperative relationships. Common forms of cooperation include assignment preparation, sharing work opportunities, and unified client communication. The primary motivation for such cooperation is to ensure high-quality interpreting services, with additional benefits acting as incentives. Most interviewees highlighted the significance of cooperation, viewing it as a crucial element of their profession. The following paragraphs will detail the findings of this subsection, emphasizing the most frequently mentioned responses.

4.4.1 How Freelance Interpreters Cooperate

4.4.1.1 Division of Work The interviewees consistently cited several core aspects of cooperation among interpreters. Predominant were collaborative preparation by sharing glossaries, materials, and pre-assigning research responsibilities to reduce individual workload. Additionally, referring work opportunities through recommendations or delegation when unable to accept

assignments was widely mentioned. Communicating with clients cohesively, either designating a representative or ensuring mutual agreement during negotiations, was another frequent collaboration method described. Most respondents viewed such cooperation as benefiting their careers by streamlining workloads, maintaining service quality, and providing emotional support. Cooperation was frequently labeled "important" and "necessary."

Regarding preparation, the typical approach involved jointly sharing reference materials and pre-assigning sections for individual research based on speaker assignments. As Interpreter G summarized, collaboration spanned pre-assignment preparation through research delegation, in-assignment support via terminology sharing, and post-assignment logistical coordination like invoicing when applicable. This underscores how cooperation among interpreters is a multi-faceted, continuous process transcending individual assignments, enabling synergistic workflow, quality assurance, and professional solidarity.

工作上的支援，不管前中後...前就是準備上，比如今天有十個講者，我們是不是一人分五個，工作間就是幫忙記數字或是寫一些重點...工作後比較少，除非請款單或者是報價要由其中一個人負責，那就由他來收尾，可能案子他是主要承接人... [We support each other before, during and after the assignments. Before means for preparation. For example, if there are ten speakers at a conference, we might study and prepare for five of them each. During the assignment means to help in the booth. We jot down numbers or keywords for each other... Cooperation after assignments is rather infrequent unless one is responsible for the invoice or quote. In that case, that person will be finishing up the assignment. Perhaps they were the window for the assignment.] (Interpreter G)

The ideal of mutual cooperation does not always align in practice. Interpreter C

recounted an instance where her suggested approach to collaboratively prepare for a two-day, 16-speech conference by pre-assigning and rotating responsibility for 8 speeches each was rebuffed by her boothmate, who viewed it as "slacking off." C adapted by accommodating the other's preference for individually studying all materials.

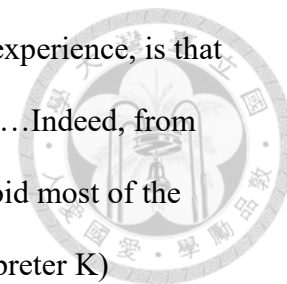
我就覺得..他沒有要分我也不能分...其實這也沒有對錯...但是會增加我的時間成本非常的多。[I accepted that. If they don't want to pre-assign materials to study, I can't just force them to. It's not about who's right or wrong, but this has significantly increased my time cost.] (Interpreter C)

Two interviewees, F and K, highlighted the importance of pre-discussing preparation strategies with boothmates. F preferred an accommodating approach by soliciting input on joint preparation methods rather than dictating a process. K viewed upfront communication about whether and how to cooperate as crucial for avoiding issues during assignments.

...這個工作投影片一大堆，我覺得我一個人看不完，我可能需要同事幫忙...分一半，但是我也一定會尊重同事的意願，我一定會請問同事...想不想要跟我對分，如果 he 不想那也沒有關係，我並不會覺得他很難相處或怎麼樣...這件事情本來就是要依照跟同事熟不熟而定。[There might be tons of slides to read. If I feel like I can't complete them all alone, I'll need my boothmate to help share the workload. However, I would have to respect whether or not they are willing to share with me. If not, that's okay. I wouldn't think they are difficult or something. Cooperation depends on how close I am with this person.] (Interpreter F)

不管是我聽老師說、聽同學分享或是我自己的經驗，我都覺得事前溝通是最重要的，...然後我覺得的確，事前講好可以解決掉很大一部分在工作期間遇到的合作上的問題。[I've listened to my instructors and classmates

share their experience. What I learned, along with my own experience, is that communication before the assignment is the most important...Indeed, from my experience, having communicated beforehand could avoid most of the problems on cooperation that appeared during work.] (Interpreter K)



At times, agreed cooperative practices deviated from what was taught during formal training. Interpreter N described experiences as an in-house interpreter where continuous 45–60-minute interpreting stretches without rotation were expected, building endurance beyond standard 20 to 30 minute shifts. When regularly partnering with familiar colleagues, N appreciated mutual trust allowing legitimate breaks during the other's interpreting turn. However, N only adopted this extended rotation style with consensus, otherwise deferring to colleagues' preferences for shorter individual stretches.

我通常會看，如果是跟比較年輕的譯者合作的話，...甚至是事先沒有得到任何資料的情況下，我們還是會就是十五分鐘換一次這樣子。[It depends. If I am working with a younger interpreter, or when we don't have the materials to prepare in advance, we still rotate every 15 minutes.]

(Interpreter N)

These examples illustrate how interpreters navigate conflicts between idealized cooperation and pragmatic realities, negotiating personalized approaches through adapting to colleagues' needs, frank discussions, or flexibly alternating styles based on mutual agreement and professional trust.

4.4.1.2 Referring Work Beyond collaborative assignment preparation, at least seven interviewees identified referring work opportunities as a major aspect of cooperation among freelance interpreters. This dynamic extends beyond the interpreting booth, enabling mutual professional support. Interpreter I directly cited "passing cases" as a main cooperative method, detailing scenarios where interpreters

share assignments they cannot accept personally or enlist colleagues for larger team-based projects requiring multiple professionals.

...合作的方式可能還有互相介紹工作吧，可能接到一個案子，然後剛好手上太多事情在忙，或者是時間喬不攏的話，那你可能把它 pass 給認識的人。[Another way of cooperation might be passing cases to each other.

Maybe I got a case but I was too busy, or the timing just does not align. Then I would have to pass it to somebody.] (Interpreter I)

Interpreter C also highlighted "exchanging work-related resources" as a form of cooperation complementing synchronized interpreting efforts. A reciprocal introduction of assignments often arises, where one interpreter invites another as a partner with the expectation of reciprocation for future work opportunities.

另一個就是工作資源上的交換，譬如說你今天找我做工作，那我下禮拜會找你做一個工作，就是工作資源上面大家可以互通有無... [Another way to cooperate is exchanging work-related resources. For example, if you give me an assignment today, I'll return the favor by giving you one next week.

Interpreters can exchange information and resources on work.] (Interpreter C)

For some, this reciprocity has transitioned from an informal expectation to an unwritten market norm. Interpreter A recounted the existence of an implicit "rule" mandating the exchange of assignments and referrals. While not strictly enforced, A noted that violators risk losing access to future work introductions from those whose referrals went unreciprocated, despite no formalized regulation.

以前有個不成文的規定，比如說今天我來找你接這個會，那你就欠我一個，所以下一次你接到會，那你也還我一個這樣...有點禮尚往來...我做 freelancer 的時候...就會去遵守。[There was this unwritten rule: if I, as an interpreter, introduce you to an assignment today, then you owe me once. So if you get an assignment next time, you will be expected to partner

with me on that case... It's kind of like reciprocity...When I worked as a freelancer, I abided by this rule.] (Interpreter A)

This referral symbiosis exemplifies the established cooperative norms and mutual dependence within the interpreting community. Experienced practitioners strategically nurture these networks not only for efficient job distribution but as a professional courtesy reinforcing collegial solidarity. Navigating these implicit dynamics becomes essential for career sustainability and upholding the collaborative culture.

4.4.1.3 Unified Front The third most frequently cited cooperative method was "communicating with clients as a team," where interpreter partners present a unified front when interacting with clients. Five interviewees, two each from Schools Y and Z and one from School U, acknowledged this approach as crucial for avoiding misunderstandings or discrepancies between the interpreter pair and clients. Interpreter I, a School Z graduate, emphasized that when clients make new requests, such as overtime, the interpreter team should internally discuss and respond collectively.

向外的口徑是要一致的...就是要講好...客戶提出了這個要求我們要不要答應，那我們答應了之後，...開出的條件又是怎樣...等等。[We need to have a consistent response for the client. We need to discuss and decide whether or not we are accepting the client's request. If we accept,... things like under what condition will we accept to work overtime should also be discussed.] (Interpreter I)

Interpreters D and F, sharing an educational background, provided examples illustrating the importance of unified client communication. D noted the significance of interacting as a team during pre-assignment briefings, while F described a scenario where interpreters should jointly decide on their response to a client's sudden request for recording their output before replying cohesively.

比如說會前要跟客戶做 briefing...我們兩個是一起去參加，然後這個時候其實兩個人要一致地來面對客戶，...我覺得是蠻重要的。[For instance, we might have to have a briefing with the client before the conference... We would go together. Here I think the interpreters should interact with the clients conformally... This is quite important.] (Interpreter D)

我剛剛講的這段話的重點就是討論，對客戶要有一致的說法...客戶...有可能明天需要錄音，但是...目前簽約是說不用...那我們是不是要有一定的口徑，是堅決不要讓他錄還是錄。[What I was trying to say is that discussion is important. We need to have a consistent response to the clients. For example, maybe the client wants to record our interpreting output during the conference, but it was not mentioned in the contract. Then the interpreters should have a unified response. Should we not let them record us? Should we let them?] (Interpreter F)

Interpreter N shared a similar practice when regularly partnering with a familiar colleague. They designate a primary contact person for the assignment to streamline communication and avoid confusing the client with multiple inquiries. This main point of contact is responsible for requesting materials and logistical details from the client.

In summary, beyond in-booth assistance, the three most common forms of interpreter cooperation are collaborative assignment preparation, referring work opportunities, and presenting a united front when communicating with clients. Other mentioned cooperative practices include pricing support, pre-assignment briefings, and exchanging career-related information. These multifaceted cooperative strategies underscore the professional interdependence and collective problem-solving integral to the interpreting community.

4.4.2 Why Interpreters Cooperate and Thoughts on Cooperation

4.4.2.1 Indivisibility For many freelance interpreters, the rationale for cooperation is straightforward: interpreters function as a team. Eight out of fifteen interviewees emphasized the perception of interpreter pairs as a unified entity during assignments, arguing that cooperation maximizes benefits for all involved. Interpreter A described the challenges audiences face in distinguishing between two interpreters' voices, except in mixed-gender pairings, leading to the booth output being perceived as a singular product. Interpreter B highlighted the significance of "presenting as a team" due to clients' holistic assessment of the interpreting service. Given Taiwan's compact, private-sector-oriented interpreting market, B argued that interpreters' collective performance is crucial for gaining client approval. Clients evaluate the overall cohesion and conference enhancement provided by the interpreting team. This perspective was echoed by early-career interpreters like J, who prioritized the idea of clients not differentiating between individual interpreters when providing feedback.

同口來講合作很重要，因為 Interpreting is teamwork，因為你們就是一個 united front, 人家不會去分辨...除非你們聲音很不一樣...他根本無法判斷誰是誰，所以合作很重要啊。[Cooperation is very important for simultaneous interpreting because interpreting is teamwork. The interpreters are a united front. People wouldn't tell you apart... Unless you have very distinct voices, ...or they wouldn't be able to tell who's who. That is why cooperation is important.] (Interpreter A)

第一，你的口譯品質...客戶可能不會去分別說『我覺得第一個翻比較好，第二個...』可能就會直接說，『我覺得今天這個口譯廂的兩個人翻得很爛』，那就會影響到你啊。[First thing I think of is about the quality of interpreting... The clients would not say something like "I think the first interpreter did better". They just say "I think the interpreters did not do well today". This can affect you as an interpreter.] (Interpreter J)

Interpreter M, with 11 years of experience, strongly endorsed the necessity of interpreter cooperation.

在同一個案子裡，有時候客戶聽的是一個整體的產出，他就會整體覺得這個案子...翻得好或不好...因為我們不能夠保證所有的 listener 或 audience 都是對英中或者是翻譯這三個東西...都是專家...，他們對你的批評跟指責，有時候不是針對你。[In an assignment, sometimes the client was listening to the interpreting output as a whole. They would judge whether the interpreters did a great job. It is unlikely that all the listeners and audience are either experts in English, Chinese, or translation... Oftentimes the criticism and feedback are not directed to one interpreter. (Interpreter M)]

Interpreter M also emphasized risk management as a crucial factor in interpreter cooperation. She asserted that collaboration among interpreters in the booth serves to mitigate individual risks, thereby reducing the overall risk exposure of the interpreting team. M argued that without mutual assistance and information sharing during assignments, interpreters face heightened risks and an increased likelihood of failure.

Cooperation emerges as a strategic imperative in the interpreting profession, serving multiple functions. It acts as a risk-reduction mechanism, enabling interpreters to navigate the challenges and uncertainties of their work by leveraging collective knowledge and timely support. In a market where individual contributions merge into a collective output, cooperation is essential for ensuring consistent service quality, client satisfaction, and professional reputation. The indivisibility of interpreter pairs underscores the inherent interdependence of the profession, making collaboration a crucial tool for resilience and success. Cooperation allows interpreters to effectively manage the complexities of their work while positioning themselves competitively in the market.

4.4.2.2 Securing Future Work Opportunities A distinct trend emerged among

three early-career interviewees who believed that effective cooperation leads to future work opportunities. Interpreter I directly stated that the purpose of cooperation is to establish positive industry relationships, explaining that strong connections with other interpreters yield more and better assignment prospects. Similarly, Interpreter K viewed cooperative relationships as potential conduits for shared work opportunities in the future. Despite acknowledging the inherent competitive dynamics among interpreters (discussed in the next section), K believed that competition is temporarily suspended during collaborative assignments. Maintaining excellent cooperative ties with colleagues enables reciprocal job referrals, transcending the underlying competitive landscape.

保持一個良好的同事關係，保持良好的合作關係，就是在今天沒有這個競爭條件之後，我們也可以互相分享其他的案子。[To maintain a good collegial relation, a good cooperative relation means that regardless the competitive relation between us, we can refer cases to each other.] (Interpreter K)

Interpreter L, with 5 years of market experience, also considered cooperation a means to secure work but offered a nuanced perspective on its benefits. For L, collaborating with other interpreters allows him to meet clients' additional needs, fostering client loyalty. When clients request supplementary services like translation or hosting, L passes this information to his interpreter colleagues and introduces them to the clients, ensuring comprehensive service provision. By leveraging his professional network to fulfill clients' diverse requirements, L emphasizes the indirect benefits of cooperation in retaining clients.

...客戶來他可能不是只有口譯，...畢竟他是我們原本自己就有的客戶，我們會盡量去滿足他不同的需求，...會議資料需要翻譯的話，假設...我跟另外一位同事搭，那我們可能就會問說你要不要把這個筆譯接下

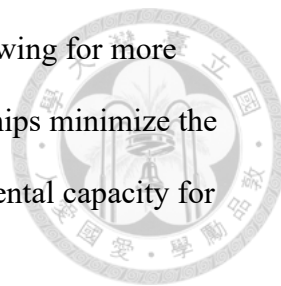
來，...口譯員之間會相互配合...所以我們合作主要原因應該是鞏固原本自己現有的業者（客戶）。[Clients might need more than just interpreting service....They are my clients, so I would try my best to meet their needs... If the documents of the conference need to be translated, I would ask my partner whether they want to take the case... Interpreters cooperate... And the main reason for that is to foster client loyalty.] (Interpreter L)

These perspectives highlight the strategic role of cooperation in career development and market positioning. For newer interpreters, collaborative relationships serve as a gateway to expanded job opportunities through referral networks. More experienced professionals recognize cooperation as a tool for enhancing client satisfaction and loyalty by offering a holistic service portfolio through colleague recommendations. Cooperation thus emerges as a multifaceted strategy for navigating the competitive landscape, securing work, and cultivating long-term client relationships.

The question "What does cooperation bring to interpreters?" elicited a wide range of responses from the interviewees. Some common themes emerged, such as the potential for future work opportunities (as mentioned by Interpreters I and J) and the ability to save time and energy through collaboration (noted by Interpreters C, D, M, and O). Other benefits mentioned included building one's personal image (Interpreter I), gaining access to valuable client information (Interpreter M), and experiencing positive impacts on both professional and personal life (Interpreters A and M). Many interviewees strongly emphasized the importance and necessity of cooperation, with some even comparing the process of finding a compatible interpreter partner to the search for a life partner (Interpreters B and C).

4.4.2.3 Benefits on Cooperation Cooperation saves time and energy through shared preparation and long-term partnerships. Interpreter C stressed that her

cooperative relationships significantly reduce preparation time, allowing for more quality family time. Interpreters M and O noted that stable partnerships minimize the cost of familiarizing oneself with new partners and provide more mental capacity for other matters.



相互合作就可以減輕工作量，...時間就是金錢，...這一點是...很多口譯員尤其是很繁忙的口譯員他非常重視的，其實對我來說，我是非常注重可以節省時間這件事情...我就可以多花一點時間去陪小孩。[Cooperation reduces workload... Time is money...A lot of interpreters whose schedules are packed care about this very much. For me, it is important to save myself time,... because that way I can spend more time with my children.]

(Interpreter C)

我喜歡他們兩個...你會知道他們不會跟你計較這些東西，但是我也不跟他們計較，他們也完全可以感覺得到...價值觀跟想法是一樣的。[I like these two interpreters... I know they wouldn't mind these things, and they know I wouldn't. They can feel... that we all share the same values and beliefs.] (Interpreter O)

Increased work opportunities were another benefit, as maintaining connections with colleagues improves the likelihood of future assignments (Interpreter I). Cooperation also provides resources and benefits to interpreters' personal lives and careers. Interpreter A provided an example of how some tight-knit groups of interpreters she knows not only share information but also clothes with each other, creating a feedback loop where working together strengthens relationships. On assignments where an interpreter needs a certain attire for hosting an event, the close group would lend this interpreter an appropriate suit or dress, sharing resources and reducing this interpreter's work cost.

比如你幫忙一個同事，你介紹一個案子給他，或者是你跟他有很好的合

作關係，那之後也許這位同事有一些工作的機會他就會想到你。[For example, you helped a colleague by introducing them an assignment, or that you two have a great cooperative relation. Next time when they have a work opportunity, they would think of you first.] (Interpreter I)

他們之間都會互相支援服裝，還有也會共享...做頭髮、化妝，也都會分享化妝師跟美容師的這種資訊。[They share clothes for work, as well as information about getting their hair done and makeups. They also share contacts of makeup professionals and beauticians.] (Interpreter A)

Interpreter M mentioned the benefits of community gatherings and information exchange.

例如說口譯聚會、筆譯聚會跟字幕譯者的聚會...這都是私底下有幫助，那小到像是這樣子的身心靈，或者是聚會，大到例如說我今天要搬家，你可以幫我介紹搬家公司或裝潢公司... [There are gatherings for interpreters, for translators and subtitle translator. These all help in interpreters' private lives. It could be helpful for physical and mental health, or others such as introducing a moving service company.] (Interpreter M)

Most interviewees described cooperative relations as important (Interpreters A, J, and O), natural (Interpreter D), or necessary (Interpreter M), with benefits outweighing drawbacks. The concept of "collective prosperity" was mentioned (Interpreters D, F, G, and H), emphasizing the importance of contributing to an ideal market where everyone can thrive. Interpreter F, who teaches interpreting while freelancing, reflected on how teaching might create competition but ultimately contributes to co-prosperity by expanding the market.

很多人說教學是培養競爭對手，which is very true，但是我覺得如果學生能夠做得比我更好，...我非常樂見，...為什麼老師和學長姐會願意介紹工作給潛在的競爭對手，因為我們希望能夠把餅做大，大家能夠雨露均

落。 [Many said that teaching interpreting is letting in more talents to compete with ourselves, which is very true. But I believe that of the students can do a better job than I can, I would be happy to see that happen....Why do senior interpreters or instructors pass assignments to these supposed-to-be competitors? That is because we want to expand the market. And we want everyone to benefit from it.] (Interpreter F)

However, Interpreter N believed that personal career development primarily depends on individual efforts rather than relying solely on collegial cooperation.

4.4.3 Summary

The study revealed several motivations for interpreter cooperation. Most interviewees reported that interpreters naturally formed teams during assignments, partly because audiences often couldn't distinguish between individual interpreters. This teamwork mentality extended beyond single assignments, as collaboration helped establish valuable professional relationships. Early-career interpreters particularly benefited from these connections, which could lead to future work opportunities (Interpreter L). Additionally, cooperation served to maintain service quality and mitigate risks.

Interviewees highlighted various advantages of collaboration among freelance interpreters. These benefits ranged from professional development to personal gains. Some noted that cooperation saved time and energy (Interpreters C, M, and O), while others emphasized its importance for career advancement and networking. The majority of interviewees expressed positive attitudes towards cooperation, describing it as "important" (Interpreters A, J, and O), "natural" (Interpreter D), or "necessary" (Interpreter M). Notably, several participants (Interpreters D, F, G, and H) introduced the concept of "collective prosperity" as a key outcome of collaborative practices.

4.5 Competitive relations among freelance interpreters

Interpreters primarily compete for income, clients, and fame, with these elements often interlinked, as success in one area can lead to gains in another. Interviewees also mentioned sources of assignments and professional connections as additional competitive factors. . Among freelance interpreters, income emerged as the top competitive incentive, followed closely by the availability of assignments. Most interviewees agreed that competition for income, largely driven by client acquisition, is a dominant concern. However, the focus of competition shifted as interpreters' careers progressed. Early-career interpreters mainly vied for clients to establish themselves, while mid-career professionals competed for income, aiming to maintain reasonable prices for their services. Later-career interpreters, having secured stable income sources, often turned their attention to pursuing fame and prestige.

4.5.1 How Freelance Interpreters Compete

Price wars are the most frequently mentioned form of competition among interpreters, where some agree to provide services at a lower price to secure work opportunities. At least five interviewees specifically mentioned price wars as a way interpreters compete. For instance, Interpreter M described a situation where a client requested multiple quotes from different interpreters. Assuming an interpreter normally charges NT\$30,000 for a day (approximately 6 hours of interpreting), another interpreter determined to secure the job might quote NT\$10,000.

最常聽到的是譯者的競爭狀況是削價競爭，例如說一個同步口譯，...一天一整個這個六小時的同步口譯他可能一個人報價是三萬塊，...有譯者會竟然報價一萬塊，...他就是為了要搶下這個案子。[The most common way to compete for the case is to charge a very low price. For example, let's assume the rate is around NT\$30,000 a day for six hours of interpreting service. There would be some interpreter who only charges NT\$10,000, just to

compete for the case.] (Interpreter M)

However, price wars do not always involve charging less for interpreting services. They can also occur when an interpreter agrees to offer additional services (e.g., tour guide, free translation) at the same price or accepts less ideal working conditions. Two interviewees discussed this "alternative price war." Interpreter A described an experience where another interpreter agreed to work alone for an hour doing simultaneous interpreting, typically a two-person job. Interpreter F described scenarios where interpreters might forgo recording fees or agree to share a room with another staff member during the assignment.

應該就是削價競爭吧，就是願意在條件上面比較寬鬆，...比如說即使是一個小時，我也會堅持兩個人，那我也碰過學生就說一個小時，那就一個人獨撐吧，然後當然客戶就去找他了。[I think price war is the main thing. Some people might be willing to work in a rather compromised condition. For example, if it's a one-hour simultaneous interpreting assignment, I would insist that there should be two interpreters. But I've also seen a student of mine think it is acceptable to do simultaneous interpreting for an hour alone. And of course, the client went for them.] (Interpreter A)

有的時候口譯費用他可能沒有像削價，可是他可能其他的東西他就少收一點，比如說錄音費，我就不收，或者是出差的時候，我沒有辦法談到單人房，那你就要跟一個陌生的工作人員住在一起，或者是說，那我今天就用小蜜蜂導覽機來做同步，不用 booth 沒關係，反正才一個小時... [Sometimes it's not a typical price war. But the interpreter might charge less for other services. For example, they might give in and not charge the recording fee or agree to share a hotel room with someone else on a business trip. Or the interpreter might agree to use a portable microphone for a simultaneous interpreting assignment even though they should have requested

to interpret in a booth.] (Interpreter F)

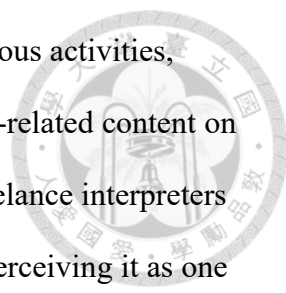
Another common form of competition is withholding information or contacts from colleagues. In the interpreting industry, connections are a crucial source of assignments and income. Interpreters cooperate by introducing work opportunities to each other, adhering to an unwritten rule against directly contacting clients if another interpreter has introduced the assignment. t. However, if an interpreter contacts the client without informing the introducing interpreter, the latter might lose the client. Therefore, it is common practice for the introducing interpreter to act as the contact for the assignment or refrain from sharing the client's contact information.

Other forms of competition include branding, networking with clients or agents, keeping colleagues from contacting clients directly, and not sharing materials or information. Several interviewees mentioned establishing oneself as a brand, believing it to be a healthier or more positive way to compete in the market. This concept is associated with the idea of co-prosperity. Interpreter F advocated for this approach, believing that highlighting one's advantages is the most ideal way for interpreters to compete.

要把自己當作是一個產品、一個品牌然後試著向市場或者是客戶同事、潛在雇主傳遞訊號、讓大家知道你是一個什麼樣的口譯員，我覺得找到自己的定位，是這個口譯員競爭很重要（的方式），就是...不會故意去攻擊你，讓你都沒有飯吃，但是我會希望凸顯自己的很特別的地方。

[Promote yourself as a product. It's like, you are a brand and you try to send the message to your clients, colleagues, and potential employers, letting them know what kind of interpreters you are. I think finding your place is a very important way to compete. It is an approach that does not...hijack their livelihood. But this is a way to highlight one's strength.] (Interpreter F)

Seven out of fifteen interviewees identified "visibility" as the key leverage in



competition among interpreters. Visibility encompassed various activities, from introducing oneself to potential clients to posting work-related content on social media platforms. Interpreter M elaborated on how freelance interpreters attempted to enhance their visibility through social media, perceiving it as one of the primary methods to gain exposure and increase work opportunities.我身旁...大部分都是有自己在開工作室的人，或者是他是全職的自由業者，大部分都會盡量在社群媒體上露出。[Interpreters around me who have their own studios or work as freelancers often run social media accounts to increase visibility.] (Interpreter M)

4.5.2 Interpreters' Attitude Toward Competition

Several interviewees suggested that competition among freelance interpreters is "natural" (Interpreter C, E, F, K), while others believed that the competition in the Taiwanese market is not intense or visible to the public (Interpreter C, D, G, J, N). Some interpreters view "branding" as one of the healthiest ways to increase their competitiveness, with four interviewees pointing out that creating one's image as a brand is a rather positive approach to compete. Overall, most interviewees consider themselves "lucky" (Interpreter A, B, F) as they have not experienced fierce competition among their colleagues. The majority of the interviewees see themselves as interpreters who don't engage in cutthroat competition with others, openly expressing their preference for cooperation over competition. Most of them stressed that the ideal environment for interpreters should be a market of "co-prosperity" (Interpreter D, F, H).

Interpreter K, considering competition among freelance interpreters as a "normal" interaction, explained the close relationship between cooperation and competition among interpreters. He believes that competitive relations are the default state for freelance interpreters. However, when two interpreters pair up for an

assignment, the interaction shifts to a cooperative one.

兩個必須要合作，是因為那個工作就是兩人...有相同的目標，在工作當下其實不是競爭關係，兩個人的目標就是要讓客戶可以得到高品質的翻譯服務...當然一定會存在一些競爭關係，因為自由口譯員就是自己代表一個品牌，彼此之間會為了...案子而競爭...這個在市場上就是事實...這是很自然的事情。[The pair of interpreters must cooperate because the assignment provides them with the same goal. While working together on an assignment, the relationship is not competitive; instead, the mutual goal is to provide high-quality interpreting services. However, there is still some level of competition, as interpreters are brands of their own, competing for assignments. This is a very real and natural occurrence in the market.]

Some interpreters have adopted a more "zen" mindset regarding price wars and competitive relationships. For instance, Interpreter A explained how she used to be concerned about some interpreters' behavior in the market, for the behavior is considered competition or even "unethical". However, she has now accepted and tried to understand those interpreters' viewpoints. She stated that she understands where they are coming from, and the approaches they adopted as ways of competition are now more acceptable to her.

早幾年會，有時候（別人）...做出一些事情，我會有道德上面的疑慮，可是...我也了解，就是大家要進入市場其實不容易，我覺得我這幾年...比較釋懷。[Years ago, I used to consider what they do unethical, but I understand, entering the market is hard. I became more forgiving in recent years.]

On the other hand, Interpreter B, for instance, believes that price wars are common in most industries and that the ability to consistently secure assignments through undercutting is a form of competency. She considers

competition among freelance interpreters to be natural but not something she constantly thinks about. Moreover, Interpreter B believes that freelancers have the freedom to accept assignments even when they are underpaid, viewing this as an inherent part of freelance work.

有的時候是有些人會跟你說，某某譯者很差勁，他用這樣的價錢承接...連對這種事情，我都不會覺得很生氣，因為我覺得是一個自由的市場，...，這是他的充分的自由...，對方也許非常急需要用錢，...如果有各式各樣的原因，別人接走了，我真的是覺得這個就是 **freelancer** 要接受的。[Some might say ‘that interpreter is unethical because they are willing to provide interpreting service for a lower rate.’ I don’t really get upset over these things. Because I think interpreting is a free market. It’s their freedom... They might need money. Assignments can be taken away for various reasons. I think this is a part of interpreters’ lives.]

Several interviewees have observed that competition in the Taiwanese market is less visible to interpreters. Some consider the competition less intense, while others believe that the competitive process exists but is rather hidden from the public eye. For instance, Interpreter D reflected on her experience with competition, explaining that most of the time, competition occurs before interpreters are contacted for assignments. In other words, clients first consider and "choose" interpreters, then contact them to check availability. This competition refers to the clients' thought process, which is not seen or known by the interpreters. It does not indicate an absence of competition, but rather that it is not always visible to interpreters.

會來的 inquiry 的都已經是...被篩選一輪被選中了，所以...我並沒有特別明顯的感受到...我們在競爭，...所以絕對有競爭啦。但是我自己沒有覺得是很白熱化。[Being contacted or getting the inquiry means we’ve passed the first screening process. So I don’t really “experience” the competition. Of

course, there is competition among freelance interpreters. It's just that I don't find it heated.] (Interpreter D)

Similar statements can be found in Interpreter G's response. She believes that competition among interpreters often occurs indirectly, as it is typically only visible to clients who make the final selection. This competitive dynamic is not characterized by confrontation but rather by interpreters vying for assignments based on their qualifications, such as experience and educational background.

可能不是直接的競爭...而是，我們彼此可能是看不見彼此的，但是客戶看得見我們...他從中挑選一位譯者...但並不是這五個人彼此要殺個你死我活，就是我們拿出...資歷...學歷，然後用這些 qualifications 去競爭這個工作機會。[The competition might not be direct. It could happen when the interpreters aren't able to see each other but they are only visible to the clients. The client would choose one interpreter, but that does not mean the interpreters would have to battle to win. They are competing for the assignment through their qualifications such as experience and educational backgrounds.] (Interpreter G)

Another competition strategy mentioned during the interviews is the overall embracing attitude toward branding as an approach to market competition. When asked about their competitive strategies, interpreters often responded that they avoid confrontation and direct competition, instead viewing themselves as a "brand."

Interpreter B considers this something others cannot take away.

我真的還是覺得其實，...你是你自己的品牌，你不是別人要搶的話搶得走的東西，...，就是說真的搶得走的，那這個就是本來就不是你的，跟你很合的、一些能夠做得長長久久的是最適合你的。[I truly believe that you are your own brand. You are not something that people can just snatch away. If people can take things from you, those things were never yours

anyway. What is compatible and can accompany you for the long term is what suits you.] (Interpreter B)

With the idea of branding as a preferred competition strategy, several interviewees added the concept of co-prosperity, where freelance interpreters do not have to engage in cutthroat competition. For instance, Interpreter F emphasized this concept at the end of the interview. He reckons that the strategies he shared during the interview are based on the wish for co-prosperity in the freelance interpreter market.

這個就是 underlying philosophy behind everything I said , 就是我剛剛講的, 我講的這一切都是秉持著共好的原則。 [This is the underlying philosophy behind everything I said. As I mentioned, everything I said was based on the principle of co-prosperity.] (Interpreter F)

In summary, freelance interpreters primarily compete through price wars, where some lower their rates while others offer additional services voluntarily at the same price. Competition also involves branding, networking, and measures to prevent direct client contact. "Visibility" is the key leverage, according to seven out of fifteen interviewees. Some emphasize brand creation, while others stress delivering high-quality work. Interpreters compete for income, clients, and fame, which are often interconnected. Some also compete for sources of assignments and connections. Most interpreters view competition as natural, with many believing the market in Taiwan is not highly competitive. They advocate for a market of "co-prosperity" rather than cutthroat competition.

Chapter 5 Discussion



Chapter Four presented the interview results addressing the following research questions:

1. What characterizes the collegial interactions among freelance interpreters in Taiwan?
2. What traits define the dilemma in interpreters' relations, particularly with respect to the intertwined cooperative-competitive dynamics?
3. How do the cooperative-competitive dynamics and the characteristics of these relationships impact freelance interpreters' career development and workplace experience?

The findings were organized across four main themes: collegial relations taught in interpreting training settings, social networks of freelance interpreters, and cooperative and competitive relationships among freelance interpreters. These themes provided insights into the complex nature of professional relationships in Taiwan's interpreting industry.

The collected data revealed that collegial relations among freelance interpreters in Taiwan are characterized by a nuanced interplay of cooperation and competition. While cooperation is more prevalent, it often serves as a strategy to remain competitive in the field. This intertwined dynamic is deeply rooted in Taiwan's collectivistic culture and manifests in various aspects of interpreters' professional lives.

Institutional training for interpreters primarily focuses on technique-oriented skills, often overlooking the social and career-related aspects of the profession. As a result, interpreters largely learn about professionalism and peer interactions through experience. Many interpreters cultivate close-knit circles of colleagues for sharing

work-related information, with the degree of mutual trust and cooperation varying based on the intimacy of these relationships.

Educational background plays a significant role in shaping these professional networks. Interpreters tend to form stronger bonds with those who have similar formal training, exhibiting greater trust towards colleagues with comparable educational backgrounds. This phenomenon highlights the importance of shared experiences and knowledge in building professional relationships.

Geographical factors also influence the dynamics of the interpreting market. Differences across regions may both stem from and perpetuate variances in industry development, affecting how interpreters interact and compete within their local contexts.

Notably, several interpreters indicated that collaboration with colleagues is essential for maintaining or enhancing their competitiveness. This perspective frames cooperation as a competitive strategy, with one interviewee aptly describing cooperation and competition as "two sides of the same coin." This view underscores the complex nature of professional relationships in the field, where cooperation often deepens friendships and vice versa.

The nuanced perspectives offered by participants allow for a comprehensive analysis of freelance interpreters' networks and collegial relations in Taiwan. Most interviewees presented a more cooperative than competitive view of their professional relationships, suggesting that the industry values collaboration despite inherent competitive pressures.

Subsequent sections will provide an overall analysis of cooperative and competitive relations, examine the intertwined nature of these dynamics, apply Isabella's categorization of peer relationships to the interviewees' networks, and draw comparisons with Giustini's analysis of the UK interpreting market regarding

competition. This analysis will explore how the cooperative-competitive dynamics impact freelance interpreters' career development and workplace experiences, including the crucial role of trust in shaping professional relationships in Taiwan's interpreting industry.



5.1 Trust in cooperation and competition

Cooperation among freelance interpreters in Taiwan manifests in various ways. A fundamental aspect is co-preparation before assignments, with a shared expectation of glossary exchange and collaborative preparation. While interviewees remained neutral when discussing negative experiences, an undercurrent of unspoken rules and expectations regarding cooperation was evident. This is particularly true for passing on assignments, where reciprocation and collegial loyalty are considered standard practice.

Interpreters often form closer ties with colleagues who share similar backgrounds, such as attending the same graduate school or receiving training from the same institution. The concepts of "team" and "co-prosperity" were frequently mentioned, emphasizing the importance of cooperation. However, responses suggested a nuanced understanding beyond simply wishing everyone well. While most interviewees support a cooperative market based on respect and seamless collaboration, a delicate balance is implied. As one interviewee noted, the key to cooperation is "trust."

It was first demonstrated by Cook and Wall (1980) that trust in coworkers enhances output efficiency by fostering social capital, which facilitates cooperation and the exchange of resources and information. Interpreters heavily rely on mutual trust for effective cooperation, yet ensuring boothmate loyalty remains a challenge. Consequently, interpreters often prefer collaborating with familiar

colleagues, confident in their trustworthiness. Simon Baron-Cohen's "mindreading" model (1995) suggests that we constantly and unconsciously interpret others' mental states, aiding social interaction. For successful cooperation, Baron-Cohen emphasizes the need for a shared focus on mutual benefits. This aligns with his Trust Reciprocity (TR) hypothesis, stating that individuals interpret actions as signals of trust, anticipating reciprocation when given the opportunity.

Applying this to freelance interpreters in Taiwan, it is plausible that a similar approach is employed, with the interpretation of colleagues' intentions influencing decision-making. "Trust" and understanding colleagues' intentions appear crucial in fostering long-term cooperative relationships, aligning with Baron-Cohen's model. Interpreter colleagues with similar educational backgrounds are expected to share comparable professional views, work ethics, and values. This shared understanding fosters a baseline level of trust, regardless of familiarity. Conversely, negative experiences with self-taught interpreters and the emphasis on training backgrounds contribute to lower trust levels when interpreters are paired with those from different educational paths.

Distinct default pathways to trust or distrust can lead to unfair market outcomes. Interpreter colleagues with potential may need to work much harder to "earn" the trust of their peers solely due to their educational backgrounds, potentially jeopardizing their promising careers. It is up to all interpreters in the market to remember that educational background is not the only indicator of ability. While it is natural to trust some more than others, it is crucial to be mindful of one's judgment to avoid excluding competent talent from the market.

Baron-Cohen's model does not fully encompass the complex web of relationships an interpreter has with multiple colleagues. The intertwined dynamics within a non-specific group are far more intricate than a single model can explain. While Baron-

Cohen's model primarily focuses on cooperation in consistent workplaces with consistent colleagues, it offers valuable insights from psychological and behavioral economics perspectives into the complexities of collegial relationships.



5.2 The Intertwined Cooperative-competitive Relations among Interpreters

5.2.1 Work competence and collegial recognition

As presented in Chapter 4, work referral can be a major source of work opportunities for freelance interpreters. Interpreters choose their partners based on previous successful collaborative experiences, as they strengthen professional relationships and foster future collaborations. The observed tendency to cooperate with certain colleagues to ensure pleasant collaboration and mitigate risk aligns with Betzler and Loschke's suggestion (2021). The paragraphs below will discuss the idea of collegial recognition in the context of freelance interpreters in Taiwan.

Betzler and Loschke's (2021) study emphasized that professional competence is a prerequisite for being considered a good colleague (p. 224), a finding corroborated by the present research. Nearly all interviewees expressed a preference for working with partners who share similar values and standards regarding interpreting as a profession. This preference ensures a mutual understanding of what constitutes a good interpreter. The concept of interpreter invisibility, discussed in Chapter 4, further underscores the importance of competence in the field. Clients and audiences typically perceive interpreting peers as a unified team; consequently, if one interpreter performs poorly, it jeopardizes the professional image of both partners. This perception explains why interpreters place significant importance on collaborating with highly competent colleagues. The emphasis on shared professional standards and competence not only facilitates smoother collaborations but also serves as a protective measure for interpreters' individual and collective reputations in the industry.

Collegial recognition and collegial solidarity, also discussed by Betzler and Loschke (2021, p. 219), are the relationship goods produced by collegial relations, which are suitable to explain the reciprocity among freelance interpreters. It is interesting to note that the scholars specified the difference between collegial relations and collegial relationships, believing that the former “can (but need not)” (p. 219) be the basis for the latter. Collegial relationships are maintained through “interconnected and behavior chains” (p. 218), as they produce relationship goods and imply the presence of reciprocity.

According to Betzler and Loschke (2021), colleagues are uniquely positioned to evaluate and affirm each other's work-related experiences and skills due to their shared professional context. Recognition from colleagues validates an individual's professional experiences and associated emotions, offering levels of understanding that surpass the empathy found in non-collegiate relationships. This is particularly true for freelance interpreters, who often lack a supervisor to evaluate their performance. Furthermore, feedback from clients or the audience does not always accurately reflect their work. When an assignment does not go well, an interpreter colleague is more likely to recognize the effort behind a failed attempt, seeing their partner's overall quality beyond a single unideal rendition, rather than merely criticizing the performance. Fellow interpreters are also more likely to recognize each other's value as they have a better understanding of the challenges involved in establishing an interpreting career than non-professionals do. Therefore, other freelance interpreters often serve not only as colleagues but also as ideal sources of feedback on one's interpreting performance. They share similar contextual information about the assignment and understand the potential challenges their partners may face. Interpreter colleagues “see” one another and validate their reactions and emotions to certain work-related situations.

Collegial solidarity serves a similar purpose to recognition, referring to the mutual assistance and support exchanged among colleagues. Interestingly, it can be non-instrumental, meaning that the shared endeavors and goals are inherently valuable. Betzler and Loschke (2021) argue that the aspect and level of assistance provided depend on the characteristics and nature of the profession. In the context of interpreting, mutual support can encompass both instrumental aspects, such as work-related information exchange and career strategizing as a freelancer, and non-instrumental elements like emotional support.

Betzler and Loschke (2021) also suggest that collegial solidarity, as one of the collegial relationship goods, alleviates competition among colleagues. This concept applies to freelance interpreters, as the trust and solidarity among them drive them to avoid competing against those within trusted groups. Collegial solidarity can foster a less competitive environment for interpreters, serving both instrumental and non-instrumental purposes. Beyond mitigating competition, mutual support has evolved into more than just cooperation; it has become an approach to compete, a topic that will be further discussed in section 5.2.2.

For freelance interpreters, collegial solidarity and recognition share a common goal: to communicate and demonstrate support from colleagues. Rather than competing, interpreters often choose to stand together, ensuring that their fellow professionals feel heard and supported.

5.2.2 Cooperation as a Strategy

The results indicated a complex interplay of cooperative and competitive relationships among freelance interpreters. Despite their apparent contradiction, these interactions coexist within the market. For instance, many interpreters reported that cooperation with colleagues is a strategy for maintaining competitiveness. When working as a team, interpreters often avoid competing against trusted colleagues

within their close groups. This suggests that competition is mitigated when interpreters work with those they trust. Cooperation within these groups, therefore, becomes a mechanism to compete against others outside the group.

To minimize constant competition, interpreters adopt several strategies. One key approach is forming close, trusted groups, which reduces the need for vigilance about competition during assignments. As discussed previously, cooperation alleviates competition and fosters a better environment for colleagues. However, the foundation of these cooperative relationships lies in a crucial element: trust.

Trust serves as a key indicator of cooperation, referring to the mutual belief that colleagues will cooperate and not compete against each other. This concept is central to understanding how interpreters navigate the complex dynamics of their professional relationships. Several interviewees highlighted the critical role of trust in shaping cooperative behaviors. For instance, Interpreter believes that competition stems from a lack of trust, while Interpreter O emphasizes the necessity of trusting one's colleagues for optimal cooperation. Similarly, Interpreter N stated that engaging in collaborative efforts while simultaneously warding off continuous competition can pose a significant challenge. Consequently, he avoids such complications through routine cooperation with specific colleagues.

5.2.3 The Unseen Competition

In Taiwan's interpreting market, cooperation is highly valued over competition. Interviewees emphasized the importance of collaboration, with many noting that 95% of their professional interactions were cooperative. Consistent with previous research (Baron-Cohen, 1995; Xu, 2016), interpreters prefer collaborative partners based on past successful experiences. Positive cooperative experiences strengthen professional relationships and create more opportunities for future collaboration.

While competition is recognized as a natural market force, interpreters expect

their peers to avoid overt competitive behavior, especially within close-knit circles. Competitive actions, understood as survival strategies, are generally disapproved of. Despite minimizing overt competitiveness, interviewees recalled subtle competitive tactics such as information withholding and strategic client relationship cultivation.

Competition is subtly expressed in Taiwan's freelance interpreting sector, avoiding direct confrontation in favor of indirect methods. Most interpreters view overt competition unfavorably, preferring collaborative approaches that align with cultural norms emphasizing indirect competition in collectivistic societies.

Interestingly, when interpreters observed overt competitive behavior in unfamiliar colleagues, they were less likely to form collaborative partnerships with them. Interpreters who display undisguised competitiveness are often frowned upon, with others even avoiding interaction with them. However, there was greater tolerance when seasoned interpreters acted similarly. For example, one interviewee shared an experience of cooperating with a senior interpreter who "does not share materials on preparation," yet no one would expose this behavior or refuse to work with them. This difference in attitudes likely stems from deeply rooted cultural values.

In East Asia, there is a strong norm of respecting elders and following the guidance of experienced individuals, which applies to both familiar and unfamiliar seniors. This cultural context provides insight into the tolerance of competitive behaviors among seasoned interpreters. Exposing a senior interpreter's lack of team spirit can lead to the destruction of one's career if the senior has significant influence in the market. The risk to one's interpreting career over a single assignment appears to be too great a cost, leading interpreters to tolerate rather than confront senior interpreters' behaviors. Consequently, when a senior interpreter exhibits a lack of cooperative spirit or displays outright competition, other interpreters tend to overlook or adapt to these behaviors.

Respect for seniority and collectivism, which will be further discussed in segment 5.4, are considered the primary drivers of the attitude and behavioral discrepancies observed between junior and senior interpreters. These deeply rooted cultural values not only guide interpreters' conduct but also contribute to overall market harmony. In the Taiwanese context, freelance interpreters must carefully balance their individual career aspirations with the well-being of the professional community. This balancing act creates a complex dynamic where deferring to senior interpreters, maintaining collegial relations, and pursuing personal career development can either conflict or complement one another, depending on the specific situation. As a result, the intertwined cooperative-competitive relations are formed and woven into the fabric of collegial interactions among interpreters. This intricate interplay reflects the broader cultural norms of East Asian societies while also highlighting the unique challenges faced by professionals in the interpreting field.

5.2.4 Central Group

The notion of a "central group" within the interpreting market emerged as a recurring motif during the interview process. When prompted to expound upon their professional social networks, a subset of interviewees asserted their lack of affiliation with this "central group," characterizing themselves as entities operating on the periphery or as "lone wolves" divorced from the market's core dynamics. However, a precise definitional delineation of what constitutes membership in this putative "central group" was never explicitly provided, nor did any interviewee overtly identify themselves as belonging to said group. Nonetheless, an observable pattern emerged wherein those who positioned themselves as outsiders reported deriving their primary source of work assignments directly from clients rather than through event-organizing companies acting as intermediaries. Those perceived as constituent members of the "central group" predominantly reported securing a substantial portion

of their work assignments through professional agents or event-organizing companies serving as brokers. From this dichotomous data, one can extrapolate that the invoked "central group" appears to refer to interpreters maintaining established connections with event-organizing companies facilitating work procurement. Through the lens of those reliant on direct client engagements as their primary assignment source, this "central group" is perceived as enjoying preferential access to resources and garnering a disproportionate share of attention within the market.

The putative "central group" appears to be comprised primarily of cohorts of interpreters who graduated from a select subset of educational institutions, as well as having passed the professional exam. The interviewees who cited event organizers or professional agents as constituting one of their primary sources for procuring work assignments had predominantly obtained their academic credentials from certain schools. This group also seems to exert a degree of determinative influence regarding their cooperative partner selection. Several interpreters who fall under the central group category reported having experienced negative interactions when paired with certain other interpreters, coupled with accounts of actively declining to collaborate with those they deemed to exhibit unprofessional conduct. From these data, one can extrapolate that members of the "central group" exhibit homogeneous characteristics, including similar educational pedigrees, analogous compositions of their professional social networks, and congruous attitudes towards the defined parameters of what constitutes "professional interpreting".

As discussed in section 5.1, interpreters who do not share the educational background of the central group may feel excluded within the ecosystem. Talented individuals who graduated from other institutions might struggle to join this small circle, feeling unwelcome not because they lack professional interpreting skills, but because they are judged solely on their educational backgrounds. Such an ecosystem

may experience less conflict, as those with significant market influence share similar values and attitudes toward interpreting. However, this can stifle different opinions and new ideas, as newcomers and interpreters from diverse backgrounds may be hesitant to offer alternative perspectives. When the most influential group of people share highly similar backgrounds and with the same values taught about interpreting, they might unconsciously exclude other interpreters' opinions due to the lack of interaction. For instance, a highly competent freelance interpreter from an institution outside Taiwan might struggle to join the central group or voice their opinions on widely accepted approaches within the interpreting business. Potential discussions on pricing, booth etiquette, and other interpreting practices may not take place due to the homogeneous composition of the central group. While the interpreting market in Taiwan may appear harmonious, it is essential to consider the costs and sacrifices involved.

5.3 Peer Relationship and Freelance Interpreters

5.3.1 *Benefits*

Isabella's (1985) categorization of collegial relationships by duration and bond intensity offers a framework for understanding how varying levels of peer connection benefit individuals at different career stages, facilitating "individual development and growth" (p. 111). Peer relationships, as Isabella argues, possess distinct advantages over mentor relationships, including mutuality, accessibility, and the potential for long-term connection. These relationships cater to different individual needs throughout a career.

The relationships observed among freelance interpreters in Taiwan align with Isabella's description of peer relations. The emphasis on cooperation, trust, and shared experiences in navigating the interpreting market underscores the importance of

collegial connections in this profession. The findings suggest that these relationships contribute to career development, professional support, and a sense of community within the freelance interpreting landscape.



5.3.2 Peer relationships in freelance interpreters

Isabella (1985) proposed several themes of peer relationships corresponding to different career stages: Establishment, Advancement, Middle, and Late Career. This study incorporated these themes as a self-report item in the interviewees' background information. Additionally, Isabella discussed three types of bonds peers share: Information, Collegial, and Special Peers. To better apply Isabella's theory to freelance interpreters in Taiwan, it is essential to first understand Isabella's definitions of these peer relationship types.

On the spectrum of peer relationships, Information peers primarily share work-related information, characterized by a low level of trust and self-disclosure (Isabella, 1985, p. 119). Collegial peers, occupying the middle of the spectrum, engage in career strategizing, job-related feedback, and friendship, with a moderate level of mutual trust and self-disclosure (p. 119). At the far end of the continuum are Special peers, representing the most intimate type of peer relationship. This category emphasizes confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback, and friendship (p. 119). Special peers share deep ambivalences and personal dilemmas related to both work and family domains (p. 121). In these relationships, intimacy, confirmation, continuity, and stability are essential (p. 121).

The manifestation of the three types of peer relationships may vary across different industries. In the context of freelance interpreters, boothmates are anticipated to provide mutual assistance during assignments, as previously discussed. Special peers among freelance interpreters may exert a more profound influence on an individual's life, given the frequent absence of a shared institutional affiliation



(Betzler, 2021). This research observed all three types of peer relationships among interpreters, ranging from colleagues who have worked together for over 30 years to those who interact solely on work-related issues. Information assumes a pivotal role in the interactions of freelance interpreters, influencing both cooperation and competition. Consequently, the exchange of information, encompassing work-related details and knowledge of materials, constitutes a critical aspect of interpreters' careers. Interviews revealed that several interpreters cooperate by sharing information, while some also indicated that maintaining competitiveness sometimes involves withholding certain information from colleagues. Thus, the dual role of information sharing in interpreters' interactions warrants careful consideration. Information peers emerged as a prevalent relationship among interpreters, particularly among boothmates who need to cooperate and share work-related information. While the research questions primarily focused on interviewees' close networks, many examples illustrated interactions with less familiar colleagues. Interpreter M described her network as concentric circles, with the outermost circle comprising colleagues she "only interacts with on the internet regarding work-related issues." She referred to this group as the "eggshell group," noting that she rarely passes interpreting assignments to them. This aligns with Isabella's definition of information peers, characterized by low levels of self-disclosure and trust.

Freelance interpreters often lack shared institutional affiliations, resulting in work being conducted from home or various other locations. Consequently, interpreters seldom have a supervisor to provide career development advice or strategic guidance. This lack of supervisory support and consistent daily interactions with colleagues heightens the uncertainty in freelance interpreters' careers. As a result, interpreters may increasingly rely on peer advice and support. In this context, collegial peers offer not only work-related information but also personal connections

that extend beyond simple information exchange. Such assistance can help secure the market connections essential for an interpreter's career. Collegial peer relationships were the most frequently observed during the interviews. These relationships exhibit a moderate level of trust and friendship, involving the sharing of work-related information and career strategies (Isabella, 1985). Interpreters E, F, and O exemplified such relationships. For instance, Interpreter F described his relationships with colleagues as primarily professional, despite being part of a "tightly knit community." Interpreter O characterized her friendship with two other interpreters as "going with the flow," spending time together when convenient. The prevalence of collegial peer relationships can be attributed to interpreters' tendency to collaborate with those they already share a friendly rapport with, as well as the close connections fostered by the compact nature of the Taiwanese market.

Special peers, which appear on the furthest end of Isabella's continuum, provide an additional level of emotional support, forming connections that surpass common friendships. Intimacy, confirmation, continuity, and stability are crucial in these relationships, making them relatively rare compared to the other two types. In the context of interpreters' ties, the continuity of special peer relationships should be emphasized, given that interpreters must invest time and energy to sustain such connections, fostering emotional support and reciprocity of the relations. Special peer relationships were also observed in the Taiwanese freelance interpreter community. These relationships provide confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback, and friendship, extending beyond professional boundaries. Interpreter A, for example, maintains close ties with some colleagues that have evolved into broader and deeper connections. Interpreter B recounted participating in colleagues' life milestones, such as attending weddings and supporting them through parenthood. These special peer relationships demonstrate the continuity and reciprocity suggested by Isabella (1985),

with time investment and participation in private life being key factors.

An interesting correlation emerged: interviewees who reported having distinct "special peer" connections were often those who acquired a significant portion of their work assignments from event-organizing companies acting as intermediaries. These interpreters, who appear to be part of the central group discussed in section 5.2.4, emphasized the importance of cooperative practices and how their close-knit relationships with select peers complemented their positive collaborative experiences. They have obtained not only work-related resources but also irreplaceable friendships in the interpreting market.

This analysis demonstrates the applicability of Isabella's (1985) peer relationship categories to the Taiwanese freelance interpreting community, highlighting the importance of various peer relationships in both professional and personal contexts.

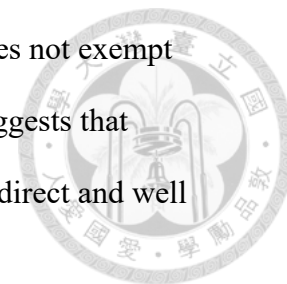
5.4 Comparative Analysis among Cultures

5.4.1 Competition in different markets

Giustini's research on the UK interpreting market reveals a landscape where personal and collective interests are deeply entangled. Although her work does not extensively explore interpersonal dynamics among interpreters, it provides insights into collegial relationships within the UK profession. This section compares Giustini's findings with observations from the Taiwanese market, focusing on several key themes.

In stark contrast to Giustini's findings, the data indicate that in-booth competition is virtually non-existent in Taiwan. Interviewees, such as Interpreter O, described the notion of outshining a boothmate as "ridiculous." Most respondents view their colleagues as team members rather than rivals. This disparity can be attributed to cultural differences, as competition tends to be more prevalent in individualistic

societies than in collectivistic ones (Berry, 1997). However, this does not exempt individuals in collectivistic societies from competition; rather, it suggests that competitive behaviors among freelance interpreters often remain indirect and well hidden from public view.



The competitive forces in Taiwan's interpreting field appear significantly subdued or less overt compared to Giustini's observations in the UK. While most interviewees indicated an absence of perceived overtly competitive dynamics, this should not be misconstrued as a lack of competition. Instead, it suggests that competitive undercurrents are either more skillfully concealed or less visible to external observers.

In Taiwan, a cooperative predisposition among interpreters is anticipated, as the community's modest size renders direct, in-booth competitive actions unseemly. Consequently, Taiwanese freelance interpreters pursue alternative avenues to remain professionally relevant. Some interviewees advocated for “co-prosperity”, positing that cooperation yields collective benefits for the community. While this premise holds credence, an underlying expectation still exists for all market participants to comport themselves amenable. Interviewees also suggested that the most ideal manner of competition is through self-branding initiatives, an approach that enhances one's competence without compromising others' interests or performance standards.

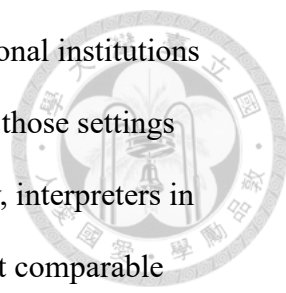
Interpreter G posited that competition for assignments may occur surreptitiously, with clients potentially evaluating and making selection decisions before contacting interpreters. Most documented accounts of competitive conduct were characterized by indirectness or moderated intensities. These include deliberately serving as the point of contact to withhold information from colleagues or purposefully cultivating closer rapport with client personnel to ensure a continual stream of future work opportunities.

Despite the market's ostensibly congenial surface, underlying competitive forces persist. Taiwanese interpreters must still actively vie for assignments and professional prospects, yet conspicuous displays of competitive behavior are generally regarded unfavorably when they become overt transgressions. For instance, compromising working conditions to secure an opportunity is deemed unethical and subject to disapproval from professional peers.

5.4.2 Professionalism as a culture-bound social practice

In accordance with Rudvin's (2007) and Tiselius' (2010) works reviewed in Chapter 2, it is likely that the Taiwanese culture also shaped the professional practice of interpreting. Rudvin (2007) explored how professionalism is intertwined with cultural notions of selfhood, suggesting that it is a practice shaped by cultural contexts rather than a universally applicable corporate value. This perspective highlights how interpreters from different cultural backgrounds might have varying perceptions of what constitutes a "good colleague". Such cultural perspective on the formation of professionalism can be used to explain how interpreters in Taiwan value cooperation more than competition, as well as several "unwritten rules" conducted among interpreters such as reciprocity on assignments.

Rudvin (2007) also emphasized how social factors influence interpreters' role perceptions and strategic choices. The backgrounds of Western (individualism) and non-Western (collectivism) professionalisms were also analyzed, providing insight into different cultural heritages as the factor of the landscape in different regions around the world. Taiwan's entrenched collectivistic cultural orientations (Ali & Lee, 2005), coupled with the market's compact scale, inherently constrain the boundaries within which interpreters can openly exhibit competitive conduct. Collectivism, in this case, contributed not only to the cooperative culture but also to the inhibition of overt competition.



Tiselius's (2010) research on interpreters in European international institutions provided an argument along similar lines, noting that interpreters in those settings form a homogeneous group with a strong joint habitus. Interestingly, interpreters in Taiwan, who operate under a collectivistic cultural construct, exhibit comparable characteristics. In the Taiwanese context, close groups of three to five interpreters with shared educational backgrounds have emerged as key players in the interpreting market. These tight-knit groups in Taiwan serve multiple purposes: they provide professional support, facilitate information sharing, and help navigate the complex balance between cooperation and competition. The collectivistic cultural norms in Taiwan further reinforce these group dynamics, potentially leading to even stronger in-group cohesion than observed in Tiselius' European study.

5.4.3 Freelance Interpreting Community in Taiwan

The tendency to maintain superficial peace in a close-knit market can be challenging for participants, especially newcomers. Novice interpreters are expected to "read the room" when they first enter the market, as there are numerous ways to lose the trust of other interpreters and potentially sabotage their careers before they even start. Overzealous self-promotion can be perceived as hijacking assignments from veteran interpreters. Being labeled as an "assignment stealer" can occur even due to a misunderstanding. The social pressure can demand significant attention and mental energy from freelance interpreters, as maintaining social connections is crucial for securing future work opportunities. Considering possible survivorship bias, some former freelance interpreters may have left the market due to unsuccessful collegial relationships or offending a key figure in the industry. Interpreters who have managed to survive in the market must remain vigilant, as even a single unideal interaction with colleagues can jeopardize their established careers. However, aside from potential drawbacks to the interpreting community, collectivism also allows cooperative

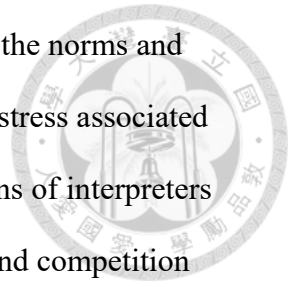
conduct to be passed down among generations of interpreters. As collegial solidarity and collegial recognition facilitate cooperative relations, the social norm of respecting seniors and the expectation for cooperation shape the cultural structure of the market and alleviate competition. The professionalism valued by the interpreters urges newcomers to comply, forming a community where competition is expected to be mitigated and cooperation encouraged. Participants in the market conduct subtle, indirect competitive behaviors, while engaging in collegial relations that can have a significant impact on one's career.

In conclusion, while Taiwan's freelance interpreting market may outwardly project an impression of amicable coexistence, the underlying tone of responses suggests a more complex reality. The collectivist culture and market compactness in Taiwan discourage direct competition, compelling interpreters to find alternative ways to remain relevant while maintaining a facade of cooperation. Newcomers often have to invest time and energy into exploring the market atmosphere to ensure successful social bonding with other interpreters. The theories and comparisons presented in Chapter 5 contribute to understanding the habitus of the Taiwanese interpreting market, illustrating the potential factors shaping such a landscape.

5.5 Advice and Future Direction

This research endeavors to enhance general awareness of collegial relations among freelance interpreters, recognizing the significant impact these relationships have on both social and professional spheres. It is recommended that training institutions incorporate and expand discussions on professionalism and collegial interactions within their curricula. By providing interpreting students with comprehensive information regarding realistic career prospects, they can better navigate their career paths with a more informed perspective. Additionally, novice

interpreters entering the market will gain a clearer understanding of the norms and social structure prevalent among their peers, thereby alleviating the stress associated with adaptation. Moreover, it is crucial to impart to future generations of interpreters the importance of achieving an ideal balance between cooperation and competition within the Taiwanese interpreting market. Increased attention to this issue will facilitate better adaptation among interpreters from diverse backgrounds, ultimately fostering a more collaborative and efficient professional community.



Chapter 6 Conclusion



6.1 Conclusion

This research has examined the cooperative and competitive relations among freelance interpreters in Taiwan. Findings indicate that while professionalism is often emphasized during training, most institutions remain technique-oriented, overlooking collegial relations. Many Taiwanese interpreters form close-knit groups with colleagues they frequently collaborate with, fostering trust and generating career benefits such as additional work opportunities.

The concept of a central group emerged, characterized by congruent traits among its members. Cooperation among interpreters is deemed important and necessary, encompassing joint preparation for assignments, unified client communication, mutual work referrals, and the provision of quality interpreting services as a team. Reciprocity is considered a key element in these cooperative relationships. Concurrently, competition among freelance interpreters in Taiwan is evident. Competitive strategies include price wars, alternative price wars, information withholding, and self-branding. While competition is viewed as "natural," most interviewees express a preference for cooperation.

Trust emerges as a crucial factor in the intertwined cooperative-competitive relations. Within trusted close groups, interpreters predominantly choose cooperation over competition. Colleagues expect cooperation and discourage competition within these groups. Although competitive behaviors are acknowledged as part of professional life, they are generally frowned upon within close communities.

The importance of work referrals for freelance interpreters was emphasized. Interpreters often choose partners based on successful past collaborations. Competence is crucial for being considered a good colleague, with interviewees

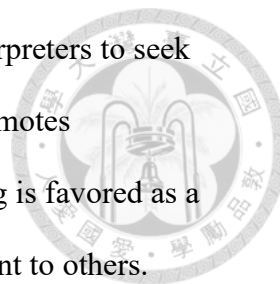
preferring partners who share similar professional values. Collegial recognition and solidarity, which include mutual support and trust, are essential for fostering a collaborative environment. These elements help interpreters navigate career challenges, reduce competition, and provide meaningful feedback. Collegial relations among freelance interpreters in Taiwan are thus vital for both professional success and personal support within the interpreting community.

Despite the apparently harmonious nature of the freelance interpreting market, competition persists in an undercurrent manner, influenced by the collectivist cultural context. Taiwanese interpreters seek alternative methods to secure work opportunities without appearing overtly competitive, while collectivism and East Asian relationship dynamics continue to impact the foundational level of trust and respect among freelance interpreters.

This study observed the three primary types of peer relationships suggested by Isabella (1985) within the freelance interpreting context: information peers, collegial peers, and special peers. Information peers, commonly encountered as boothmates, engage in essential work-related data exchange with minimal trust. Collegial peers exhibit moderate trust and camaraderie, sharing career insights and professional information. These relationships thrive due to preexisting amicable ties and the compact nature of the Taiwanese market. Special peers provide profound emotional support and personal feedback, with connections transcending professional boundaries to encompass significant life milestones, reflecting enduring continuity and mutual reciprocity.

Taiwanese interpreters largely collaborate rather than compete, influenced by cultural differences. Competition in Taiwan's market is subtle, often occurring behind the scenes through client decisions or information withholding. Despite an outward appearance of harmony, competitive dynamics persist, though overt competition is

discouraged. The Taiwanese market's collective nature prompts interpreters to seek alternative methods of professional advancement. Peer pressure promotes cooperation, with some advocating for mutual benefit. Self-branding is favored as a competitive strategy, emphasizing personal success without detriment to others.



Interpreters prioritize cooperation over competition and adhere to unwritten norms such as assignment reciprocity, rooted in Taiwan's collectivist culture. This collectivism fosters a collaborative environment and restricts overt competition, resulting in homogeneous, cooperative groups of interpreters that reinforce these cultural dynamics within the Taiwanese market.

Navigating Taiwan's close-knit interpreting market poses challenges, especially for newcomers who must carefully manage social dynamics to avoid losing trust and being labeled as "assignment stealers." This social pressure requires significant attention and mental energy, as maintaining connections is vital for securing future work. Survivorship bias indicates that poor collegial relationships may push some interpreters out of the market. Nonetheless, collectivism fosters cooperative behavior, with collegial solidarity and recognition promoting respect for seniority and collaboration. This cultural structure mitigates competition and encourages cooperation, forming a professional community where subtle, indirect competitive behaviors coexist with impactful collegial relations.

These findings underscore the complex interplay between cooperation and competition in the Taiwanese freelance interpreting market, shaped by cultural norms, market dynamics, and personal relationships.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research

Despite the comprehensive results presented in this research, several limitations should be noted. Firstly, individual differences could impact one's career

development, social network and interpersonal relations, which are multifaceted and difficult to include in the research. It should also be noted that survivorship bias might appear in this research. The interviewees who have more than ten years of market experience are those whose careers are rather established as interpreters. Hence, certain information about cooperation and competition might be underrepresented. Self-taught interpreters are not included in the research, leaving a possibility of biased perspectives of the interviewees.

The present study offers a comprehensive overview of the collegial dynamics among freelance interpreters operating in Taiwan, thereby establishing a foundation for future scholarly inquiry. While technique and interpreting skills play a pivotal role in interpreting as a profession, collegial relations are suggested to be included in the curriculum. Potential avenues for further research include an examination of the interpreting market ecosystem within Taiwan, the social relationships between self-taught and institutionally-trained interpreters, and an extended analysis of the intricate cooperative-competitive interplay among freelance interpreters. By maintaining a focus on the sociopsychological dimensions affecting interpreters, additional factors influencing their well-being can be identified and addressed through subsequent investigations.

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Appendix



Interview Questions

Section I: sociodemographic information

1. age:
2. gender:
3. educational background:
4. source of assignments:
5. year of experience:
6. language combination:

Section II:

1. When you were studying interpreting, aside from interpreting skills, what was taught about professionalism or how to be a good interpreter?
2. When you were studying interpreting, aside from interpreting skills, what was taught about booth etiquette or how to be a good interpreting partner/colleague?
3. How would you describe your social network in the freelance interpreting market? Have you built close relationship with other freelance interpreters?
4. About how many interpreters have you worked with? What are their backgrounds? Are there people that you often/regularly/rarely work with? Why?

cooperation

5. Please describe the cooperative relations among interpreters. (your own experience/what you have seen/heard)
6. Why do interpreters cooperate with each other?
7. How do interpreters cooperate in/outside the booth, before the assignment?
What does cooperation bring interpreters/to their career?

competition

8. Please describe the competition relations among interpreters. (your own experience/what you have seen/heard)
9. What do interpreters compete for? (clients, income, prestige, fame, status)
10. HOW do interpreters compete with one another?

