Interpreting between English pet owners and veterinary services in the South of Spain

María Gracia Torres Díaz, Málaga University
British people in the Costa del Sol

- Spain is the most popular destination after Australia ("Lifestyle migration"- Krit, 2012)
- Málaga: 72,852 (60%: 55-70)
- O’Reilly (2002): not interested in language and culture
- They need services: web: angloinfo
- Rescued battered animals (dogs, cats, donkeys and horses)
Who does the interpreting in the vet clinic? And what they interpret?

• English vets in English clinics: Diva Dogs
• The vets
• Non professional interpreters
• Female interpreters

Cases:
Vaccinations, surgery, illnesses (endemic in the area, specific to rescued animals), death, pet passport documentation
Similar to the health sector?

Difficult terminology and heartbreaking stories

The context

Child health cases:
The study of psychological issues regarding interpreters

Moser Mercer (1998)
80s: VT: SLI
VT: The cumulative exposure to traumatic testimony
90s: war refugees, asylum seekers in medical and court interpreting. After 2000
Psycology journals
Blogs: remedies
Literature on vicarious trauma and interpreting

• Harvey (2003): “interpreters are in danger of empathically drowning”

• Granger & Baker (2003): Traditional models of interpreting require the interpreter to be neutral, invisible: non feeling, non thinking.

• Elaine Hsieb (2010): “it makes everybody in the room uncomfortable when a human being is acting like a computer”

Trauma suffered by pet owners

• Wrobel & Dye (2003); Meyers (2002); Coules (1985)
  “Frequently transcends the emotional attachment which we form for humans”
  “Disenfranchised grief” isolation
Living alone
Why VT?

• No training for VT and Seflcare
• Code of ethics: Confidentiality
• Interpreters hear it twice
• Use of the first person

Must remain invisible

VT can be unnoticed and untreated
Is the interpreter in the vet sector affected by VT?

- A survey distributed in vet clinics
- 18 collected,
- Content survey:
  Nationality, gender, training as an interpreter, affected when interpreting difficult cases, how do you recover, use of the first person, follow a code of ethics.

Results: women, third person, non profesional, Uk.
Results 1
Results 2

Country of origin

- Finland
- Switzerland
- Germany
- Spain
- G.Britain

Country of origin
Results 3

![Bar Chart]

- **Yes** ( Experienced VT )
- **No** ( Experienced VT )
Conclusion

• To include VT in Interpreting training programmes
• Further studies of VT with non professional interpreters
• Further studies:
  compare strategies used by veterinary staff and interpreters regarding VT in Spain. + Compare veterinary practices in Spain and UK (VT)
• Final anecdote:
When there is no interpreter for the patient: veterinary medicine:
www.centerforhealthjournalism.org/resources/lessons/lost-translation
THANK YOU!

gracia@uma.es