

# **Non-professional interpreting carried out by vets and veterinary staff for British pets' owners in the South of Spain**

María Gracia Torres Díaz, Málaga University



# The aim of the study

- The study is devoted to non- professional interpreters belonging to the health profession (Vet clinics and human health sector)
- **1.** To see the similarities and differences in the health and vet sector, regarding:
  - Psychological issues of interpreters
  - Language issues of interpreters
  - Three tests were carried out
- **2.** To compare the situation to that of other countries in the same context and language combination

# The interpreting context: 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)
- Why?: Gibraltar, after Southafrica, International state agents, cheaper.
- 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?

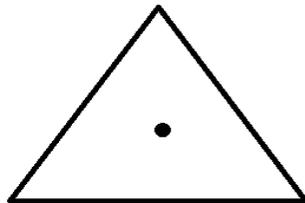
- English vets in English clinics: *Diva Dogs*
- The vets (between pet owners and agencies dealing with paper work: entry requirements in the UK) and auxiliary staff (between pet owners and vets)
- Professional interpreters and other non-professional interpreters
- What?: Paper work + interactions

# Similar to the health sector?

Difficult terminology and heartbreaking stories

The context although similar: differences: space and noise

Child health cases:



# The study of psychological issues regarding interpreters in the health sector

VT: The cumulative exposure to traumatic testimony

80s: VT: SLI

90s: war refugees, asylum seekers in medical and court interpreting. After 2000

Psychology journals

Blogs: remedies

<https://traduciresdescubrir.wordpress.com/2015/11/11/l-a-gestion-de-las-emociones-en-la-interpretacion-biosanitaria-2/>

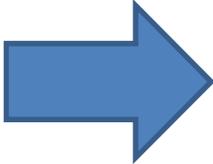
# Literature on vicarious trauma and interpreting

- 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”
- Nothing on vet interpreters. Temple Grandin (2006) *Animals in Translation* (autistic animal mediators)

# 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

# A test concerning the medical and vet sector and VT. TEST A

- **Test A: VT**
- 10 nurses hospital
- 8 veterinary staff from local vet clinics

**Results:** Both sectors expressed not to be really affected by the cases they worked with: “it is part of my job anyway”

(We had previously done a survey that interviewed 8 volunteer vet interpreters that showed signes of VT) (Indialog 2015)

# Studying the language interpreting services provided by staff at hospitals. TEST B

- Medical schools: English not part of study programs offered
- Studied by Angeleli (2004) interpreting performed by hospital staff in addition to their regular work: omissions, additions and substitutions and condensation of what was said, that led to misdiagnosis
- In Spain, volunteer interpreters deal only with insurance issues often via the phone, doctors and nurses do the interpreting
- Other sectors (paramedics: out of hospital environments: emergency medical services): knowledge of little English may lead to problems (holiday and my wife)
- **A TEST: TEST B:**
- 10 audio recordings, 8 nurses and 2 doctors from hospitals (doctors and nurses have spent some years in the UK. Only 5% return)
- **Results:**
- 6 very efficient and 4 with difficulties: words used by patients and staff, use google translator, write numbers on paper, struggled to set a common ground of understanding

# Studying the language interpreting services provided by staff at vet clinics. TEST C

- Veterinary studies: Córdoba: optional subject taught in English (B1): *Caring, feeding and training of dogs*. 3c. To acquire vocabulary
- Zaragoza University: 2nd year. Optional. *Scientific English for vets*. 3c.
- Courses for veterinary auxiliary staff: no English taught
- **A test: TEST C: use of language in interpreting sections.**
- Video recordings of interactions in 8 vet clinics involving 12 people (vet staff) that did interpreting:
- **Results:**
- 2 subjects: communication was effective, clear and accurate: successful (had worked as “meat inspectors” in the UK-Evill & Jones). Only 5% return)
- 10 subjects: words, never sentences, *atrezzo* and gestures (wag). Limited.
- A thesis: *Assessing the Preparedness of the Veterinary Profession to Communicate with Limited English Proficient Spanish-Speaking Pet Owners* by Ruth Ellen Landau, Purdue University, Indiana. (Spanish-English)

# Conclusion

If we compare with study presented in the USA:

Written to ask for language inclusion in veterinary degrees, important to control pets in society, risks for others. In USA also a call for more hispanic medical students.

The best: bilingual staff.

**Comparing human and animal health sector regarding interpreting provided:**

Differences and similarities noticed.

# Main References

- **Angelelli**, Claudia. 2004. *Revisiting the Interpreter's Role*; Philadelphia, John Benjamins.
- **Antonini**, R. 2011. 'Natural translator and interpreter' en Gambier, Y. y Van Doorslaer, L. (eds.) *Handbook of Translation Studies*, Vol. 2; Amsterdam, John Benjamins.
- **Grandin**, T. & **Johnsson**, K., *Animals in Translation*, Scribner, New York, 2010.
- **Harris**, Brian: Unprofessional Translation Blog (2010): <http://unprofessionaltranslation.blogspot.com.es/2010/11/from-natural-to-expert-translator.html> [checked july 2015].
- **Landau**, R.E. *Assessing the Preparedness of the Veterinary Profession to Communicate with Limited English Proficient Spanish-Speaking Pet Owners*, Purdue University, Indiana.
- **O'Reilly**, K. (1995). A new trend in European migration: contemporary British migration to Fuengirola, Costa del Sol. *Geographical Viewpoint*, Vol. 23.

**THANK YOU!**

gracia@uma.es