Risk in Political Interpreting:
A Case Study of Interpreters during the First Opium War between Britain and China (1839-1842)

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1 Introduction

Since Cronin's call for "a cultural turn" in Interpreting Studies in 2002, a growing number of research exploring the social and cultural elements in interpreting started emerging, especially regarding the various challenges faced by legal, medical and community interpreters. The activity of interpreting was increasingly recognised as "a social practice that is conditioned by social, political and cultural contexts" (Takeda, 2007, pp. 176-177). Nevertheless, political and diplomatic interpreting still remains largely unexplored in Interpreting Studies to this day. In major international political events, the interpreters who quietly trail behind powerful political figures are often left working in their shadows and neglected by historians. However, it does not mean that the interpreter's task is simple or insignificant. According to Roland, "without their services, there could have been no 'international relations'" (1997, p. 7). In her book *Memo to the President-Elect*, the first female U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, mentions the following:

> When you travel, you will be crowded by top aides elbowing each other to be allowed into meetings. Ironically, the one person essential to have in the room may not officially be an advisor at all but your interpreter. The interpreter plays a pivotal role because negotiations demand precision in language and often some degree of personal warmth. An interpreter's job, therefore, goes well beyond the literal translation of words; he must convey the negotiator's desired emphasis, nuance, and tone. This is only possible if he has a sophisticated knowledge of the subjects under discussion.
>
> (Albright, 2008, pp. 66-67)

As stated by Albright above, the role of a political interpreter goes beyond the seemingly straightforward process of linguistic transfer. Contrary to popular belief, the job of a political interpreter is not a mechanical process of translating words from one language into another. Instead, in high-level political events where serious consequences may occur, the interpreter must take social, cultural, and political risks into consideration in order to achieve the most optimal effect. In the present study, political interpreters are viewed as social actors who produce their services through interaction with other actors. The author aims to explore the various types of risks political interpreters may encounter and how such risks may affect their behaviour as social actors. For the purpose of this research project, the interpreter-mediated event to be examined is the First Opium War between Britain and China.

In the history of China, the First Opium War from 1839 to 1842 is an event of great significance. It signifies the first large-scale armed conflict between China and the Western world. It ended in China's failure, and the signing of the *Treaty of Nanking* is considered by many Chinese people as the beginning of China's "Century of Humiliation". Some of its knock-on effects are still felt in China today, including various political issues related to Hong Kong. Many historical studies are dedicated to the First Opium War (Fay 1975, Beeching 1975, Hanes & Sanello 2004, etc.). According to these studies, the primary cause of the First Opium War was an economic one.

In the eighteenth century, there was a trade imbalance between Britain and China. In contrast to the massive British demand for Chinese products such as silk, porcelain and tea, the Chinese market did not have an appetite for British goods. To counter this trade imbalance, the British East India Company (hereinafter referred to as "the EIC") started growing opium in Bengal. The drug was then sold to Chinese smugglers in the Canton region (now known

as the Guangdong province in China). As a growing number of people were addicted to opium, local consumption soared, and the negative effects of the drug caused significant economic and social issues that eventually alerted Emperor Daoguang of the Qing dynasty. A senior government official was sent to Canton to deal with the issue, and a large amount of opium was confiscated and destroyed, which then caused Britain to deploy more military forces to China. At the time, Britain had one of the strongest navy forces in the world, whereas China's military development stagnated. After defeating the Chinese army in multiple important battles, Britain threatened to attack the city of Nanjing (formerly Romanised as *Nanking*), which China could not afford to lose. Under such circumstances, the *Treaty of Nanking* was signed between China and Britain in an effort to end the war. Among the main terms and conditions proposed by the British government, the most notable requirements included China's cession of the island of Hong Kong to Britain, a large sum of indemnity to be paid by China to Britain, and five Chinese ports to be entirely open to foreign trade.

After the signing of the *Treaty of Nanking*, the existing Canton Trade system was abolished, and strict regulations regarding foreign trade were no longer in place. As a result, opium became a regular commodity. As the supply increased, the price of opium dropped, and the drug began to penetrate all levels of Chinese society. As Fay (1975) argues, the Opium Wars were justly named as they began and ended in the trading of opium. However, the influence of this historical event goes way beyond the profits gained through the sale of the drug. After the First Opium War ended, foreign merchants were able to access a much larger Chinese domestic market. Foreign missionaries travelled deep into the interior of mainland China and spread religious beliefs and western ideologies to local villagers. As a result, the mysterious and ancient country in the Far East was forced to connect with the Western world.

The First Opium War left some long-lasting influences that are still relevant today. The *Treaty of Nanking* became the first of several unequal treaties signed between the Qing regime and various Western powers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government has put in strenuous efforts to revoke such "unequal treaties". Even though the authority over Hong Kong was handed over from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China in 1997, to this day, Hong Kong still operates as a special administrative region of China with its own government under the constitutional principle of "one country, two systems".

Many Chinese historians believe the *Treaty of Nanking* and its subsequent treaties are "unequal" in nature as their contents are not mutually beneficial (Mao 2005, Zhu & Lin 2003, etc.). For example, all the terms and conditions listed in the *Treaty of Nanking* benefit British interests. However, the author of the present study believes that the word "unequal" manifests itself in another aspect of the First Opium War that is rarely mentioned. China and Britain were very much "unequal" in their cultural and military knowledge of the opposite side, and this difference is mainly caused by the capabilities of their political interpreters.

In existing historical studies about the First Opium War, the vast cultural divide between Great Britain and Qing China is largely neglected. As a result, the political interpreters who played a vital role in mediating the communication between the two governments also received very little academic attention. During the war, not only were the British political interpreters relied upon for their linguistic skills, but they were also trusted by higher authorities to perform the roles of cultural specialist, military advisor and diplomat. For example, in February 1840, British Admiral Charles Elliot wrote a letter to British Prime

Minister Lord Palmerston. In this letter, he referred to the political interpreter John Morrison as a "friend" and a trustworthy advisor (Hu, 1993, p. 606). Representing the British party during the war, interpreters John Morrison and Karl Gutzlaff capitalised on their linguistic and cultural skills and acquired critical military intelligence from various sources. Their insight proved to be highly valuable in the strategic decision-making of the British military operation.

On the other hand, the Qing government of China knew very little about Britain. In fact, towards the end of the First Opium War in 1842, Emperor Daoguang still had no knowledge of exactly how far away Britain was from China, its land area, and whether it shared borders with Russia (First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 4, p. 264). Emperor Daoguang's attitude reflects a general ignorance of Britain that is shared by most officials serving the Qing government. Throughout the war, China's knowledge of the British force was nearly non-existent. Moreover, unlike their British counterparts, the Chinese government officials did not trust their interpreters. Instead of relying on the interpreters to build a better understanding of British culture and collect more information about Britain's military operations, the Chinese officials frequently questioned the interpreters' loyalty. An interpreter named Peng Bao was put on trial for suspicions of treason.

Although the interpreters were generally neglected in historical studies of the First Opium War, the author believes that they reflect the vast cultural divide between Britain and China that requires more academic attention. The first aim of the present study is to explore the lives of the political interpreters who participated in the First Opium War but are oblivious to the history as it is known today. An overview of the interpreters' background is provided, including where they acquired their language skills and how they were selected as government-affiliated interpreters.

The second objective of the present study is to investigate the relationship between the social, cultural and political risks and the interpreters' behaviour. With special attention paid to the broader socio-political context, some of the critical decisions made by political interpreters during the First Opium War are analysed in detail from a risk perspective. Although the interpreters' behaviour is affected by their awareness of their position in the political setting, their perceived risk is not always the same as the actual objective risk. In a political event, the interpreters' actions are not only a result of their own judgement but also shaped by other social factors. As Baker notes (2010, p. 218), in the context of war, interpreters are "made to fit into the dominant accounts of the war irrespective of what they themselves believe", and they "have to perform tasks that strain their loyalties and disrupt their sense of identity".

In order to achieve a fundamental understanding of risk in political interpreting, Chapter 2 of the present study presents a review of the literature covering various aspects of political interpreting and the concept of risk. First, political interpreting is defined, and an overview of political interpreting in history is provided to reveal the different roles played by political interpreters in the past. The second part of the literature review focuses on the notion of risk and how its application may be used in Interpreting Studies. Finally, the third part of the literature review is oriented towards the social and cultural aspects of interpreting. Literature covering the topics of professionalisation, ethics, the interpreter's role and the concept of "agency" in interpreting is examined to consolidate the understanding of interpreting as a social practice conditioned by different social contexts.

Chapter 3 explains the main research methods used in the present study. As the venue of the interpreting activity examined in this study is a historical event that took place in the 1840s,

a significant part of the analysis relies on historical and archival research. This chapter evaluates the validity and limitations of the documents and materials used in this study. The materials come from various sources, including government documents, historical records, and diaries and memoirs of people who participated in the war. Based on the historical and archival research, the most prominent political interpreters from the British and Chinese parties are selected as the subjects of the case studies. In addition, the text analysis method is also used to examine the English and Chinese versions of the *Treaty of Nanking*.

In Chapter 4, three prominent political interpreters affiliated with the British government during the First Opium War are analysed in detail. Throughout the war, John Morrison, Karl Gutzlaff and Robert Thom did not only serve the role of interpreters, but also actively participated in other aspects of the war, such as the collection of intelligence, peace negotiations and the creation of strategic plans for the British military operation in China. In the case of each interpreter, their personal background is first examined so that their main goals and motivations as individuals are better understood. Although they all served as political interpreters, their personal aspirations varied. For example, Morrison was primarily politically motivated, whereas Gutzlaff is religiously oriented, and Thom came from a business background. Next, the case studies analyse a few typical examples where the interpreters had to deal with risky situations. By analysing these examples, the risk management strategies employed by the interpreters are explored in relation to the social, cultural and political setting of the events.

Similar to Chapter 4, Chapter 5 presents the experiences of the political interpreters affiliated with the Qing government in China. The examinations of the Chinese interpreters are conducted in the same fashion as those of their British counterparts, with an overview

of their personal background followed by an analysis of scenarios that required risk management. However, a key difference should be noted. The social environment where the Chinese interpreters operated was very different compared to the interpreters working for the British side. As briefly mentioned above, the Chinese government officials were generally more suspicious of the interpreters' loyalty and less willing to rely on their linguistic and cultural expertise throughout the war.

As a key aspect of the First Opium War, the translation of the *Treaty of Nanking* is examined and discussed in Chapter 6. Even though the main focus of the present study is risk in political interpreting, it is not uncommon for political interpreters to be put in charge of translating critical political documents. Therefore, as a part of the work profile, the author believes that some aspects of risk management in political interpreting could be revealed in the analysis of text translations. In this chapter, notable differences between the Chinese and English versions of the *Treaty of Nanking* are examined in detail from a risk management perspective.

In light of the second objective of the present study, Chapter 7 presents a discussion of the risk related to the interpreter's identity in the context of war and conflict. As briefly mentioned, regardless of the interpreters' personal beliefs or values, political interpreters are cast in very distinctively defined roles: us or them, friend or foe. As Baker (2010, p. 218) mentions, the linguistic and non-linguistic actions of political interpreters are shaped by their pre-defined roles, which may not necessarily align with their personal values. In this regard, the political interpreters' decision to fulfil their roles may reflect the process in which they perceive, assess and manage social, cultural and political risks.

The concluding chapter provides a summary of key findings, and the research objectives are revisited. Throughout the case studies, it is revealed that political interpreting is a complex social practice. To the political interpreters, the perception of risk is a dynamic element shaped by various social, cultural and political factors of the context where the interpreting takes place. Using the risk analysis framework, the present study presents a way to understand and explain the behaviour and decisions of political interpreters who find themselves in a unique position. Finally, the limitations of the present study are evaluated, and recommendations for future research in the area of risk in interpreting are provided.

2 Literature Review

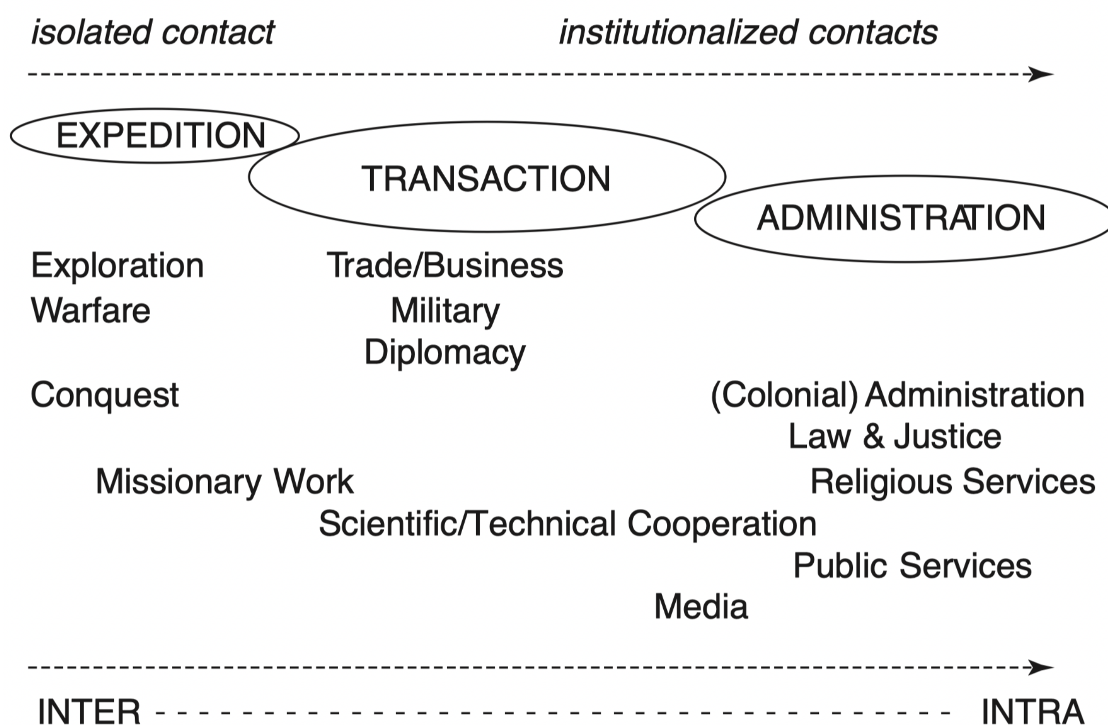
2.1 Political Interpreting in History

As mentioned in the Declaration part of this thesis, it should be noted that the following section (section 2.1 Political Interpreting in History) is based on an article that the author has previously published (Zhou, 2022, pp. 19-22).

In terms of the scope of this study, the author believes that it is necessary to clarify the definitions of several terms and concepts to avoid misunderstanding. The main focus of the present study is risk in political interpreting. Before diving into the specific characteristics of political interpreting, the activity of interpreting itself must be defined. Pöchhacker, the author of *Introducing Interpreting Studies,* defines interpreting as "a form of Translation in which a first and final rendition in another language is produced on the basis of a one-time presentation of an utterance in a source language" (2016, p. 11). Indeed, the nature of interpreting is the rendering of words from one language into another. Therefore, it can be considered a form of translation. However, compared to other types of translation, interpreting is distinguished by its unique feature of immediacy. As interpreting is usually performed as a "one-time presentation" for immediate use, it takes place in the "here and now" of the communication itself.

Within Interpreting Studies, there are several ways to categorise the activity of interpreting. For example, Alexieva proposes four parameters to define different types of interpreting, namely mode (simultaneous or consecutive), participants, topic, and "the spatial and

temporal specificities of the communication" (2004, pp. 221-222). As political interpreting involves many complex social factors, the author believes it may be beneficial to examine the concept from the perspective of social settings. In this regard, Pöchhacker (2016, p. 13) provides a method in which interpreting can be classified into different categories based on the setting or the "social context of interaction" of the interpreted event. For example, in the image shown below, it can be seen that each type of interpreting corresponds to a unique social environment.



(The image is extracted from Pöchhacker 2016, p. 16)

At the bottom of the illustration, "INTER" and "INTRA" are shown as two ends on a spectrum. Regarding these terms, Pöchhacker (2016, p. 14) explains that contacts between two social entities occur in "inter-social settings", referred to as "INTER". Here, social entities are identified as a group of people who share the same social and cultural

conventions and values. In most cases, a nation can be seen as a social entity. Therefore, interpreting activities that take place in the contexts of exploration, warfare, and conquest are unmistakably "inter-social".

On the other hand, "INTRA" stands for "intra-social settings". It can usually be found within one social entity that is heterolingual in nature. For example, legal, medical and religious interpreting, usually performed between parties residing in the same country, can be seen as "intra-social" interpreting. In Pöchhacker's illustration demonstrated above, this type of interpreting is categorised as "Administration" in the top right corner of the image.

Another essential spectrum that needs to be considered is the degree to which the interpreter's contact with the client is institutionalised. As shown on the top of the diagram, in situations where interpreters mainly work with other individuals, they are involved in "isolated contact". On the contrary, when one of the participating parties is an institution, the social contact is "institutionalised". Although political interpreting is not shown in Pöchhacker's model, he presents several forms of interpreting with varying degrees of similarity to political interpreting. For instance, the social settings of military and diplomacy involve political factors. According to Pöchhacker's diagram mentioned above, diplomatic and military interpreting are both situated in the middle of inter-social and intra-social settings and involve isolated and institutionalised contact. In terms of the difference between these two concepts, Pöchhacker (2016, p. 14) gives an intriguing description. According to him, when representatives of different linguistic and cultural communities wish to communicate and establish constructive political relations together, diplomatic interpreting is usually performed by mediators.

Nevertheless, when such goals cannot be achieved peacefully, conflict and warfare may lead to the necessity of military interpreting. Therefore, Pöchhacker argues that military interpreting "bears a historical relationship to the diplomatic kind" (ibid.). The author believes that, depending on the situation, the dynamic nature of international relations makes it possible that some interpreters may need to serve both diplomatic and military functions. Furthermore, the volatility of the political situation may make it difficult to differentiate between these two forms of interpreting. As a result, the author would like to assert that it is necessary to re-visit the definitions and scopes of diplomatic and military interpreting to explain and appreciate the concept of political interpreting for the purpose of the present study.

According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 24), diplomatic interpreting is defined as the following:

> Where the representatives of different linguistic and cultural communities came together with the aim of establishing and cultivating political relations, they will have relied on mediators practising what is usually called diplomatic interpreting.

Based on Pöchhacker's definition, diplomatic interpreting is performed when the nations come together to establish a peaceful relationship and develop cooperation. The definition of diplomacy also highlights the intention to seek peace. According to Hamilton and Langhorn, diplomacy is "the peaceful conduct of relations amongst political entities, their principals and accredited agents" (1995, p. 3). In contrast, Pöchhacker believes that military interpreting is usually performed in the context of conflict. He explains, "When relations turned sour, or maybe before they were even pursued, armed conflict would have necessitated mediated communication in a military setting" (2016, p.24).

The author of the present study would like to argue that international relations are highly dynamic in nature, and the relationship between two countries may not simply be classified as a clear cut of “war” or “peace”. For example, along the territorial border shared by China and India, military troops from both countries have been engaged in skirmishes since May 2020, which is still an ongoing issue. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that economic cooperation is sought by both China and India, and the two countries share a growing number of economic and strategic ties. In today’s political world, China and India are not the only countries that maintain an overall diplomatic relationship while still being involved in border disputes. In such situations, it is difficult to determine whether their government-affiliated interpreters perform diplomatic or military interpreting. The main focus of the present study is British and Chinese interpreters during the First Opium War. At first glance, it may seem that the interpreters worked in a military or conflict setting. However, as will be mentioned in the case study chapters, the tasks of those interpreters cannot simply be described as “military interpreting” as their work often involved various diplomatic missions. Therefore, the author would like to use the term “political interpreting” to describe this type of interpreting.

According to Brown (2008, p. 8), political interpreting is a type in which “either the primary participants or the topic discussed is political”. This definition is relatively vague, and a few examples may show why this definition may not be appropriate for the present study. For instance, political speeches and statements of national leaders may be interpreted and broadcast on media platforms worldwide, yet the interpreters are not necessarily directly involved politically. Furthermore, diplomatic talks and political meetings are frequently used as training materials for students of interpreting. They may have interpreted many

recordings where the discussion topic is political, but it does not make these students and trainees political interpreters.

As Brown argues (ibid.), when she wrote her Master's thesis in 2008, there was no widely accepted definition of political interpreting, so she needed to come up with "a hard and fast definition" for her analysis. Nonetheless, it would appear that a lack of theoretical focus on political interpreting is still a reality when the present study is conducted. Recently, a book by Kadrić et al. (2021) was published. It is titled *Diplomatic and Political Interpreting Explained*. This book discusses various topics related to diplomatic and political interpreting in detail. However, no concrete definition of political interpreting is provided apart from the generic expression of "interpreting in political and diplomatic contexts" (Kadrić et al., 2021, p. 29). For this study, the author would like to define political interpreting as a type of interpreting that serves political functions in international relations in which one or both parties involved in the communication represent a political entity. In this framework, both diplomatic and military interpreting, as defined by Pöchhacker, belong to the concept of political interpreting.

While playing an essential role in the establishment and maintenance of political relations, traces of political interpreters and their state of the craft are hard to locate in historical archives and records. It is because, as Gehman (1914, p. 61) argues, historians tend not to be "troubled by the difference of language". Similarly, the academic field of Interpreting Studies is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, buzzing with exciting new developments in areas such as the cognitive processes involved in the task and technology related to remote interpreting and automation. However, there has been a general lack of interest in the historiography of interpreting. Pöchhacker (2016, p. 158) notes that, until the 1990s, our

knowledge of the history of interpreting was limited to a few dozen publications only. He believes this could be due to "the ephemeral nature of an activity which left no tangible trace through the ages". Furthermore, to historians, there is a "frequent tendency to regard it, […] as a commonplace sport activity" (ibid.). According to Lung (2011, pp. xiii-xiv), one possible reason why the historical pursuit of interpreting tends to be neglected by scholars is the idea that it has very little to contribute when it comes to the discipline's theoretical development. Nevertheless, she argues that:

> [...] the theoretical study of translation is best grounded in translation practice through which the nuances, features, and limitations of interlingual exchanges can be analysed, specified, and explained. It warrants the investigation of, ideally, authentic translation practices – not just of modern times, but throughout histories, not just in the Western setting, but applied in non-Western settings as well – ever since translation started to play a part in rudimentary human interaction (ibid.).

It should be noted that even though the term "translation" is used in the argument above, based on Lung's study, it is clear that "translation" is used as an umbrella term that includes both the activities of written translation and interpreting.

Pöchhacker (2016, p. 159) describes the landscape of interpreting history studies as an "uneven" picture. First of all, in terms of historical periods, he notes that most research focuses on the twentieth century or later, with only a few exceptions that cover as early as the late fifteenth and late eighteenth centuries. Secondly, there is an imbalance in the geographical regions the research mainly involves. Overall, an emphasis is placed on the Western or Greco-Roman contexts. However, the author of the present study notes that an increasing number of research projects are conducted on interpreters from Asia and Africa (Torikai, 2009; Lung, 2011, etc.). Pöchhacker also mentions that most historical studies on

interpreting have primarily been based on particular events such as wars, expeditions, negotiations and tribunals instead of offering a more comprehensive perspective on various types of interpreting throughout different historical periods (ibid.). The narrow focus denoted in Pöchhacker's argument could be associated with the scarcity of available resources, as historical records of interpreting activities are incredibly challenging to locate.

The thematic emphasis of a few most notable research projects can be divided into three central geographical regions. These are Ancient Egypt and Rome, China and Korea, and early modern empires such as the Spanish Empire and the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, the historical landscape of interpreting is still far from complete. As Takeda and Baigorri-Jalón assert, there is "much uncharted territory to explore to bring the canvas closer to completion. We are still at the stage of filling the gaps" (2016, p. viii).

In order to illustrate the key concepts and findings related to the social and cultural aspects of interpreting in a political setting, the author believes that it is necessary to begin by establishing a fundamental understanding of the history of interpreting. Firstly, this section will review past studies dedicated to providing a general overview of the historiography of interpreting. Subsequently, the author will analyse research projects with a more specific thematic focus to better understand the different roles of political interpreters and the various risks involved in their work.

2.1.1 The Historiography of Interpreting

Baigorri-Jalón (2006, p. 104) argues that a "handbook" that encompasses the entire history of interpreting does not exist. It would appear that this is still the case in 2022 when this

paper is written. According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 152), most publications related to the history of interpreting "have a more specific thematic orientation, in many cases based on a combination of two or more chronological, geographical and typological parameters". However, a few publications do indeed cover a broader range of historical periods and geographical regions. One of the most comprehensive of these studies is Bowen's (2012) chapter titled "Interpreters and the Making of History" in the book *Translators through History*. At the beginning of the chapter, she acknowledges that the "minoritization" of interpreting could result from the evanescence of the spoken word. As for the absence of interpreters in historical records, for the most part, she offers two explanations. The first one is the primacy of the written text over the oral dialogue, and the second reason is the social status of interpreters.

In many cases, the interpreters that contributed to the communication between different powers were of cultural and ethnical minorities and "often women, slaves or members of a 'subcaste'" (Bowen, 2012, p. 248). In the first section of the paper, Bowen (2012) gives an overview of the evolving forms and methods of interpreting, including the consecutive and simultaneous modes of interpreting, the professionalisation process, and the training of interpreters in the twentieth century. Next, she summarises a few prominent interpreters who worked in the area of religion, such as Judaism and Christianity. The third section describes interpreters who worked in the contexts of exploration and conquest, notably the Spanish Empire in the Americas, the French colony of Canada and the Lewis and Clark expedition in the United States. In the fourth section titled "War and Peace", Bowen examines the history of military interpreters in different regions, such as the Middle East, Europe and North America. From the "dragomans" in the Middle East during the third millennium BC to French interpreters during the American Revolutionary War in the eighteenth century, a

diverse range of historical events and individual interpreters are surveyed. She then discusses the history of interpreting during World War I and analyses the experiences of a few interpreters that played an essential role in the political talks and negotiations of that time.

It is clear from the examples presented by Bowen that the interpreter's task often goes beyond merely providing linguistic assistance. For example, interpreter Paul Mantoux was able to provide vital historical records during the Paris Peace talks. According to Bowen (2012, p. 269), Mantoux compiled "the only complete record of the deliberations of the Council of Four" based on his notes as the official interpreter, and his work was even mentioned in the memoirs and autobiographies of Robert Lansing and other delegates. Instead of being the invisible voices that conveyed messages from one language to another, interpreters played an active role during the Paris Peace talks and left lasting impressions. Another prominent interpreter, Stephen Bonsal, was described by journalist Wilson Harris as "knowing the world from North to South and from East to West and spoke many alien tongues. When delegates came from unfamiliar lands, they were placed under his intelligent and sympathetic care. His interpretations and observations were invaluable, and there was no man upon whom I leaned more heavily" (Bonsal, 1944, p.7).

Similarly, in Henry Kissinger's memoir about the Vietnam peace negotiations, General Vernon A. Walters, who also served as an interpreter, was mentioned several times. According to Kissinger, Walters' "skill at translating was phenomenal; he was also a great actor, able to render not only the words but the intonation and attitude of the speaker" (Kissinger, 1979, p. 279). According to Bowen (2012, p. 272), in addition to keeping detailed records of the negotiation talks, he also carried out his own diplomatic missions.

Although most of the examples shown in Bowen's chapter are interpreters from Western backgrounds, some of them are involved in diplomatic activities related to Asian countries. Robert Brainerd Ekvall, for instance, participated in the Korean War negotiations as an interpreter. Another notable interpreter with proficiency in multiple Asian languages is Ernest Mason Satow, who was both an interpreter and also a diplomat. He was eventually appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Tokyo from 1895 to 1900 and served as British High Commissioner in Beijing from 1900 to 1906 (Bowen, 2012).

Bowen's chapter gives a comprehensive summary of the historical landscape of interpreting. A broad range of themes and topics are included, and it was one of the most comprehensive historical studies of interpreting at the time it was written. Although Bowen's chapter offers an impressive overview of prior research conducted in the past, the author of the present study believes that it cannot be seen as a systematic study of the field. As Takeda argues (2007, p. 7), it "contains no in-depth analysis of any particular aspect of past interpreting activities". Another limitation of Bowen's study is the lack of clarity in establishing a systematic categorisation of the history of interpreting. In her paper, interpreting history is divided into four different thematic focuses: religion, exploration and conquest, war and peace, and "interpreting diplomats". However, as many interpreters served more than one role in the past, some of the examples she presents could inevitably be put into more than one category. For instance, an interpreter with religious motives could also be part of a diplomatic mission, and the interpretation in question might have even occurred during wartime. In this case, should this particular example be labelled as "religious", "diplomatic", or "during wartime"? Bowen herself mentions at the beginning of the third section, "religion was only one of several motives for the many expeditions from the Old World to the New"

(1995, p. 261). Similarly, the interpretation also has multiple social and cultural aspects. The author believes that the historiography of interpreting could benefit from a more precise categorisation, perhaps with multiple axes of parameters such as time, geographical region, the interpreter's personal background and social status.

Apart from Bowen's study, another generic overview of interpreters in history can be found in *The Encyclopaedia of Applied Linguistics* under an entry titled "History of Interpreting" written by Dörte Andres (2013). Like Bowen, Andres presents a collection of past studies on interpreters who participated in different historical events. She divides the article into five parts according to a combination of time periods and geographical regions: Interpreters in Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, the Modern World and interpreting in the twentieth century. Each section includes several prominent interpreters during the time. The article provides a comprehensive summary of the history of interpreting, covering an extensive range of historical events. However, it could still be said that the summary is primarily Western-centric. In recent years, there has been a growing number of research projects that focus on non-European regions, such as Takeda (2007), Torikai (2009), and Lung (2011). However, there is still an asymmetry regarding different geographical regions within the historical research of interpreting, especially in papers written and published in English and other European languages.

Another publication that covers the comprehensive history of interpreting can be found in Pöchhacker's *Introducing Interpreting Studies* (2016). As mentioned previously, he divides the historical landscape of interpreting until the twentieth century into three main parts: interpreting in Antiquity (Ancient Egypt and Rome), China and Korea, and Early Modern Empires such as the Spanish Empire and the Ottoman Empire. In the first category, Gehman

(1914), Kurz (1985), Vermeer (1992), and Thieme et al. (1956) 's studies are selected to represent the history of interpreting during Antiquity. Lung's (2011) and Kim's (2015) research projects, on the other hand, contribute to the understanding of the history of interpreting in the Far East, providing many potential topics for future research. Regarding the Early Modern Empires section, Karttunen's (1994) and Valdeón's (2013) papers on Doña Marina during the Spanish conquest of the Americas and Rothman's (2015a/2015b) research into the "dragomans" and "Jeunes de langues" are included.

According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 157), while interpreter-related arrangements and training are sometimes shared in Europe and across the Eastern Mediterranean to the Americas, the practice of interpreting in Japan's Edo period developed independently. In particular, the Dutch interpreters called "Oranda Tsuji" in the port of Nagasaki were involved in various diplomatic missions that connected Japan to the West, playing an essential role during Japan's Era of Modernisation.

2.1.2 Roles of Political Interpreters

As mentioned above, the historical records of interpreters can be traced as far back as the third millennium BC. However, as Pöchhacker argues (2016, p. 157), "it is fair to say that the decisive political, technological, economic and social developments that turned the millennial practice of interpreting into a profession recognised worldwide occurred in the twentieth century". Today, aspiring interpreters often have access to various training programmes, certification schemes and legal assistance from professional organisations. However, prior to the professionalisation of the interpreting industry, speakers of foreign languages often served multiple roles in diplomatic and political contexts. Without legal

provisions or protection from professional bodies, the interpreters might have found themselves vulnerable to various threats and dangers.

Nevertheless, at the same time, the lack of regulations also presented windows of opportunity for those who were willing to take the risk for greater rewards. In this section, the author explores some of the unique roles political interpreters played in history, such as trade brokers, cultural mediators and military advisors. In addition, the concept of "interpreter, traitor" is also analysed in detail.

2.1.2.1 Trading brokers - Sillan Interpreters during Tang China

According to Lung (2016, p. 2), the earliest record of interpreters in China dates back to 1000 BC in the *Royal Institutions of the Book of Rites (礼记·王制)*:

> 五方之民，言语不通，嗜欲不同。达其志，通其欲，东方曰寄，南方曰象，西方曰狄鞮，北方曰译。

A literal translation provided by the author of this study can be found below:

> The people of the five regions have different languages, predilections and desires. Those who can help them express their ambitions and desires are called Ji in the East, Didi in the West, Xiang in the South and Yi in the North.

According to Roland (1999, p. 83), translators and interpreters were, in fact, among China's first civil service appointees after the introduction of Confucian-style examinations in 165 BC. It is noted by Meng (1962, p. 5) that these linguists were recruited to facilitate communication between China's tributary satellite states, where a total of ten different

languages were spoken. However, little has been written about these translators and interpreters in historical documents. According to Lung (2016, p. 21), "in China's standard histories, interpreters are mostly anonymous and textually transparent, as if they were obsolete in mediated exchanges". In fact, in the *Elder Dai's Book of Rites* (*大戴礼记·小辩*), the interpreter's task is described by Confucius as a simple process: "传言以象，反舌皆至，可谓简矣", which can be translated as "using Xiang officials (interpreters) to transmit your words, and those who speak a different tongue will all come around, it is indeed simple". As Araguás and Baigorri-Jalón (2004, p. 129) note, "most of the time interpreters are not newsworthy and are absent from the sources. What we often find is the fiction of intercommunicability between different cultures and languages".

From 838 to 847 AD, a Japanese monk named Ennin visited China and kept a detailed diary of his journey. Ennin's diary includes lengthy records of his experiences in seven provinces of China and is considered a precious resource to the historical studies of this era. For example, Lung (2016) notes that, in Ennin's travelogue, 38 references to interpreters from the Kingdom of Silla (located in the central and southern parts of the Korean Peninsula) were found. The diaries offer valuable insight into the Sillan interpreters' lives and their various roles and responsibilities as cultural mediators during the Tang dynasty of China.

During the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries, Japan frequently sent missions to China to learn from Chinese civilisation, culture and science. A detailed account of the Japanese mission between 838 and 839 AD can be found in Ennin's diary, including descriptions of Sillan interpreters that were recruited to assist the Japanese officials during their expedition to China. According to Lung (2016, p. 10), when Japan sent nine ships on their mission to

China in the year 838, some interpreters were freelance professionals explicitly hired for the trip. Judging from the spelling of their names, i.e., Kim Chŏngnam and Bak Chŏngjang, it could be inferred that they are of Sillan ethnicity. It may be a surprise that the Japanese government employed Sillan interpreters to represent their country in diplomatic affairs. However, according to records in the *Nihon Kōki* (*日本後紀*, officially commissioned Japanese history text), it appears that it was common for the Japanese government to employ Sillan interpreters in various diplomatic missions. Lung (2016, p. 11) further suggests that in the 839 Japanese mission to Tang China, no trace of Japanese scepticism of the use of ethnic Sillan interpreters could be found. As the nation of United Silla was located between China and Japan, it became an important commercial hub that dominated trade between China, Korea and Japan during the eighth and ninth centuries. Edwin O. Reischauer was the US ambassador to Japan who translated Ennin's travelogue into English. Reischauer mentions that:

> [...] from what Ennin tells us, it seems that commerce between East China, Korea and Japan was, for the most part, in the hands of men from Silla […]. While there were limits to the influence of the Koreans along the eastern coast of China, there can be no doubt of their dominance over the waters off these shores […]. The days of Korean maritime dominance in the Far East were numbered, but in Ennin's time, the men of Silla were still the masters of the seas in their part of the world. (Reischauer, 1955, pp. 276-283)

The Sillan interpreters were likely hired for their proficiency in Korean, Japanese, and Chinese and their expertise in naval exploration. Unfortunately, it is impossible to assess their language skills based on references in Ennin's diary alone. However, a few scholars have noted that translation and interpreting officials in Ancient China tended to have limited

linguistic abilities. For example, according to Xin (2010, p. 201), in 1058 BC, a message from a country named Yueshang (越裳) had to be translated into eight other languages before it could finally be rendered into Chinese. It is, therefore, likely that the Japanese government employed Sillan interpreters not because they had complete trust in them but also because they had no better alternative.

According to references in Ennin's diary, interpreting was only one of the various types of tasks of the Sillan interpreters. Lung (2016, p. 14) divides their activities into three categories: 1) Liaising, networking, and transferring messages; 2) Logistics (transport, staffing, room, storage, etc.); 3) Trading brokers. No record of interpreter-mediated encounters or dialogues was found in Ennin's diary. Therefore, the Sillan interpreters might not have directly interpreted conversations between Chinese local authorities and Japanese officials. Instead, as cultural and language mediators, they might have been directly put in charge of tasks such as arranging for transport and maintaining supplies and storage.

With the increase of responsibilities comes more opportunities. As the Sillan interpreters were in a position where they had ready access to resources, means of transport and an extensive personal network, it is hardly surprising that they chose to become trading brokers. Even though foreign trade through individual brokers was banned in China at the time, their unique status as diplomatic interpreters meant that the risk of them getting caught out was kept at a bare minimum level. Moreover, although the Japanese government paid the Sillan interpreters for their services, being involved in trade brokerage offered them even more financial rewards.

During the Tang Dynasty in China, foreign embassies could only trade through official channels, and there were various restrictions for foreign citizens to trade within China. Those who violate the rules may be arrested and detained. Although not explicitly described, Ennin's diary gives the readers a glimpse into trader brokerage services offered by Sillan interpreters. According to some of the entries, Ennin gave "two large ounces of gold dust and an Osaka girdle" to the Sillan interpreter named Yu Sinŏn as "gifts" and received "ten pounds of powdered tea and some pine nuts" in return on the following day (Reischauer, 1955a, p. 94). At a time when foreign trade was strictly banned in China, these interpreters faced the risk of being arrested or detained for exchanging the so-called "gifts". No historical evidence of any monetary gain by the Sillan interpreters can be found. However, their actions must have been motivated by personal objectives such as financial considerations. In fact, according to Lung (2016, p. 17), although the interpreter named Yu Sinŏn was of Sillan descent, he became a staff interpreter affiliated with the Sillan enclave office of the Chu prefecture, thus considered a Chinese civil servant who was allowed to trade freely within China. Therefore, it can be assumed that Yu offered brokerage services under the disguise of "gift giving" to foreigners without having to violate the law directly. In this particular example, it can be seen that diplomatic interpreters during ancient times performed multiple duties and served various roles either at the request of their employers or due to their personal aspirations. Becoming a trade broker came with its own risks but also offered rewards of some form.

In the past, when resources required to learn a new language were not available to the average person, interpreters often emerged by happenstance. For example, the Sillan interpreters in Tang China acquired their language skills through trading with Japan and China. However, in other parts of the world, learning to speak a new language may be a

means of survival. In extreme situations such as war and conquest, interpreters may need to face far graver risks and dangers.

2.1.2.2 Slave, Mistress and Betrayer - Dona Marina

According to Bowen (2012, p. 263), Doña Marina (also known as Malintzin or La Malinche) was one of the most documented interpreters during the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Valdéon (2014, p. 3) even claims that “Doña Marina is probably the most famous interpreter in the history of Spain’s involvement with the New World”. She was portrayed as “the perfect metaphor, that of the women violated by the Spaniards” and “a traitor to her own people” (ibid.).

Bowen (2012, p. 264) notes that Marina was born around 1505 of noble lineage in the province of Coatzacoalcos and later sold to Mayan merchants after her father died. Marina’s mother tongue was the language of the Aztecs. However, after living among the Tabascans for some time, she quickly learned to speak Maya. She was one of the twenty women that were offered by Tabascans to the Spaniards as a gift and was then chosen by Cortés to be his mistress. She is said to have learned Spanish very quickly, obtaining an important and influential position as Cortés’s “tongue” and “ears”. Valdéon (2014, p. 33) believes that “from the very beginning, the encounter between Europeans and Native Americans, between the conquistadors and the indigenous was marked by translation (or the absence of it). Translation marked the establishment of the colonial administration and the evangelisation process”.

After she became Cortés' interpreter, Marina played an essential role in the encounter between the Europeans and the natives. As a result, many regarded her as the embodiment of betrayal, disloyalty and treachery. According to Valdéon (2014, p. 51), she is seen as "a betrayer, a sexual siren, a feminist symbol, the mother of the nation, and the ultimate victim of rape". As mentioned above, interpreters were often of a cultural and ethnic minority in the past. Marina was an interpreter, but she also played many other roles. She was a woman, an enslaved person, a mistress to the conqueror of her country and the "mother of a bastard race" (Mirandé & Enríquez, 1979, p. 24). Although many historians had a negative view of Marina, some evidence shows that she was sometimes portrayed as an influential figure in the sixteenth century. For example, the indigenous Nahuatl people referred to her as "Malintzin", and "-tzin" was an honorific term used to denote respect and reverence (Restall, 2003, p. 83). Restall also suggests that the local Nahua people described Marina as incredibly close to Cortés. Some even say it was "as though captain and interpreter were one" (ibid.).

Furthermore, according to Valdéon (2014, p. 51), Marina's importance was also acknowledged by some Spanish historians, such as Díaz del Castillo, who frequently mentioned Marina as "the tongue" and highlighted her invaluable contribution as the mediator during the conquest. On the other hand, Restall (2003) asserts that Cortés seems to have given Marina little credit. In Cortés' letter to the King of Spain, Marina was only mentioned twice. The first time was in 1520, and he referred to Marina as "my interpreter who is an Indian woman". The second time was in 1526. Cortés mentioned that "Marina, who traveled always in my company after she had been given to me as a present" (Restall, 2003, p. 83). However, regardless of whether she was portrayed positively or negatively, Marina's importance was widely acknowledged by historians. For instance, Seed (2008, p.

6) claims that “Malinche also spied for Cortés, providing him with crucial military intelligence without which he and his men might not have survived”.

Curiously, around the time when Marina was interpreting for Cortés, another mediator who spoke both Spanish and Maya turned against his own country, Spain. According to Valdéon (2014, p. 40), Gonzalo Guerrero, a Spaniard who survived a shipwreck in the Yucatán, was initially enslaved by a Mayan lord but soon regained his freedom and married a local woman. When Cortés arrived in Yucatán, he wanted Guerrero to be his interpreter. However, not only did Guerrero refuse to offer his services and join the Spanish, he helped Mayan military forces by teaching them how to defeat the Spanish conquerors. “Guerrero’s defection”, Valdéon (2014, p. 40) asserts, “was not merely military but, above all, cultural”.

2.1.2.3 Traitor - Interpreters during the Sino-Japanese War

In Zhang & Sun’s study in 2005, villagers living in occupied China during the Second Sino-Japanese war were interviewed about their perception of the Chinese interpreters that worked for the Japanese army. It is demonstrated that people can have very contrasting views about the roles played by interpreters who worked for the occupiers. Below are two quotes from their interviews that may give the readers a glimpse of how the villagers viewed a Chinese interpreter named Su:

> The Japanese lived in our village for a few years. At that time, there was an interpreter known as Su. He was a Chinese but worked as an interpreter for the Japanese army … If you were caught and suspected as a spy from the Eighth Route Army, you would be buried alive [by the Japanese army]. But if you met Interpreter

> Su, he would ask the reason and then set you free. If anyone from the [Chinese communists"] Eighth Route Army was caught, Interpreter Su would try to get him out. When the day of liberation came, Interpreter Su was not killed [by the communists] but was sent to feed cows on a farm.
> (Zhang & Sun, 2005, pp. 156–157)

> Interpreter Su was a nice man, a very nice man. He was polite and very nice to others … [Q: Did interpreter Su try to protect many people at that time?] Interpreter Su said, if you were caught with evidence, [he] wouldn't be able to argue for you; but if there was no evidence against you but only suspicion of you as a communist, [he] could guarantee that you would be fine. He was really a nice man (Ibid.).

According to Guo (2015, p. 7), during the Second Sino-Japanese War, there was a great demand within the Japanese military force for interpreters. In many aspects of their operations, the assistance of interpreters was essential. For example, tasks such as obtaining supplies, acquiring military intelligence and information, and communicating with local people within the occupied areas could not be completed without the help of interpreters fluent in both Japanese and Chinese. Zhao (2002, p. 53) suggests that Japan had initially tried to train its own interpreters domestically. However, according to Barrett & Shyu (2001, p. 8), approximately 800,000 to one million Japanese troops were positioned within China during the war, and a large number of interpreters were needed.

For this reason, the supply of qualified interpreters from Japan was never enough to meet the massive demand for the service in their day-to-day military operations. Furthermore, although the same script and writing system is shared within mainland China, many local

dialects are specific to different geographical areas. In order to perform interpreting activities, the knowledge of the correct dialect is absolutely essential. The author suspects that this may have been why it was so difficult for the Japanese government and military force to train a large number of interpreters tailored to various dialects. As a result, it was much easier to recruit local Chinese people to work as interpreters. These Chinese interpreters often spoke the local dialect as their first language. Moreover, they were familiar with local customs and cultural traditions that could make the operations of the Japanese military go more smoothly. Their knowledge of the city or village and their pre-established social network were also considered highly valuable.

It is not difficult to see that the ethnic Chinese interpreters played a vital role in assisting Japanese military operations in China. As a result, much criticism and even hatred were often directed at these interpreters that worked for the occupiers, and they were known amongst local Chinese people by the word "hanjian", which means "traitor". The interpreter named Su mentioned above was captured by the Japanese military and had no choice but to work for them in order to survive. According to the interviews in Zhang & Sun's study (2005), Interpreter Su was willing to take a certain amount of risk to help the local civilians and the Chinese military. It could be argued that his acts of "side-switching" between the Chinese and the Japanese forces may have come from practical concerns to increase his chances of survival no matter which nation wins the war. Regardless of what his intention was, it is undeniable that Interpreter Su's actions significantly impacted the lives of the villagers and the Japanese military operations. For the Japanese army, Su enabled them to communicate with the local villagers who did not speak a word of Japanese. Su's interpreting services were essential for the Japanese army in terms of obtaining supplies, managing the villagers and acquiring necessary information regarding the occupied areas.

For the villagers, Su's presence provided an opportunity for them to consult, make requests and seek help where needed. It is difficult to envisage what would happen if an interpreter was not present in those situations. It could be assumed that both the Japanese army and the villagers would have encountered significant difficulties in their operations and daily lives. Interpreter Su, in this case, served the role of a "cushion" that softened the impact of the occupation for both parties involved.

Guo (2015, p. 7) suggests that, in some cases, the interpreters were captured by the Japanese army and forced to work for them. Nonetheless, in other cases, it was the interpreter's own choice to work for the occupiers. She (ibid.) argues that even though working for the Japanese military meant that the interpreters would have had to face severe criticism from the public, there were a few practical reasons why some people would still choose to join the Japanese forces. First of all, in areas that had been under Japanese occupation for an extended period of time, working for the Japanese military at least meant that the interpreters and their families were less likely to be in danger and more likely to have enough food supplies and safe lodging. Secondly, as shown in the interviews with local villagers mentioned above, the local people may benefit from the interpreter's role as a mediator. The interviews mentioned above also demonstrate that working for the "enemy" did not guarantee the interpreter's loyalty to them in the context of war. Instead, to the best of their ability, some Chinese interpreters would attempt to provide protection and help for local residents and also the Chinese army. As Guo argues (2015, p. 8), "some of these collaborating interpreters made use of their power and played a humanitarian role during the occupation".

While these interpreters were considered to be traitors by the public and were criticised and condemned by the Chinese society as a whole, their acts of kindness and provision of support for the local people did not entirely go unnoticed or unappreciated. This dichotomy of public perception and the act of frequently "switching sides" make Chinese interpreters working for the Japanese military a unique subject of academic interest. It is particularly relevant in researching how identity, risks and power dynamics between two conflicting parties can affect the interpreter's political positioning and decision-making.

Guo's 2015 study explores the roles played by a particular interpreter who worked for the Japanese military but later joined the Chinese "Guomingdang" or Chinese Nationalist Party as an intelligence agent positioned in the Japanese camp. This interpreter's name was Wenyun Xia. He was born and raised in Dalian, a northern city in China. After receiving a full scholarship from the Japanese-sponsored South Manchurian Company, Xia travelled to Japan and completed his tertiary education there (Guo, 2015, p. 8). It is suggested that, unlike the interpreters who were captured and had no choice but to work for the Japanese forces, Xia's career in interpreting for the Japanese was a result of his own choice. This decision may have something to do with his personal background. Dalian, the city Xia was born and raised, was a northern city in China that had very close ties with Japan. It was a part of the State of Manchuria, the puppet state established in 1934 and controlled by the Empire of Japan. According to Guo (2015, p. 8), since Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese war between 1904 and 1905, Dalian had been under the de facto control of Japan.

Having studied and lived in Japan for an extended time throughout his university experience, Xia gained a high level of Japanese language skills and sufficient knowledge of the culture, which ultimately enabled him to work as an interpreter. As will be discussed later, during

conflicts, interpreters do not only serve as a linguistic bridge between two parties but also act as social agents that may have an active impact on the result of the conflict. The language and cultural skills acquired during the time Xia studied in Japan, according to Guo (2015, p. 8), constitute Xia's cultural and linguistic capital in his role as a social agent. Xia had lived most of his life in a city under Japanese control and received a full scholarship from the Japanese-sponsored South Manchurian Company. Therefore, one may argue that it was not surprising that his interpreting career started in the Japanese-ruled Manchurian government as an interpreter and secretary to the head of the military department. Guo (ibid.) describes this position as a turning point in Xia's career. Through his job in the government, he acquired a precious social network with senior Japanese military officers who became influential figures during the Second Sino-Japanese War, such as Wachi Takaji, lieutenant general of the Imperial Japanese Army.

Xia's qualifications, language skills and alumni network with some of the Chinese officials and politicians who also studied in Japan were particularly valued by Wachi. Wachi later chose Xia as his personal interpreter and primary contact with certain Chinese officials. According to Guo (2015), Xia not only performed his duties as an interpreter but also helped set up and mediate over 100 meetings between Japanese officials and Chinese politicians. His assistance was greatly appreciated by Wachi, who described him as his "secretary, interpreter, bodyguard, and sometimes, teacher" (Xia 1999, Vol. 1, p. 78). During one of the meetings he interpreted, Xia was invited to have a private talk with General Li Tsung-jen, head of the Chinese Nationalist Party's forces in Guangdong. According to Li's memoirs (Li & Tong, 1979, pp. 316-317), Xia "burst into tears" and claimed he was ready to die for his home country if given a chance. Li then offered for him to work as a secret intelligence agent for the Chinese Nationalist Party, which Xia accepted immediately and

refused any remuneration. From 1934 to 1941, Xia worked as a double agent for the Japanese military and the Chinese Nationalist Party. According to Li (Li & Tong, 1979, p. 178), Xia provided military intelligence on the Japanese forces with a speed and accuracy that was "unsurpassed". Xia's reports were proven to be consistently correct and "of far greater value and accuracy" than the information acquired by the intelligence department of the Chinese government" (ibid.).

According to Wadensjö (1998, p. 285), professional interpreters in a modern context often try to avoid being involved in any potential conflict of interest. They may often discipline themselves to be detached from personal feelings and perform only their linguistic duties. However, Xia's case shows that, in times of war and conflict, interpreters may utilise their linguistic, cultural and social capital to be more actively involved in the political situation for personal gain or motivations. Guo (2015, p. 9) indicates that through Xia's unique role as an interpreter and a double agent, Xia enjoyed "the privilege and convenience provided by different agents and institutions whose specific needs he met". For instance, he gained much more recognition from both Chinese and Japanese officials. In Xia's memoir (Xia 1999, Vol. 6, p. 77), he mentioned that even the leader of the Chinese Nationalist Party, Chiang Kai-shek, was made aware of his services. Chiang referred to Xia as "孤臣孽子用心良苦", or in English, "an alienated and wretched person whose heart is dedicated to the whole matter", and gave him 300,000 US dollars as a reward. Additionally, during the war, Xia was able to enjoy benefits and rewards such as "free opium, luxury accommodation, a personal bodyguard, free transportation and evening entertainment" as rewards from both the Japanese and Chinese governments (Guo, 2015, p. 9).

Xia gained a reputation and high political status by utilising his language and cultural, social and political capital. Nevertheless, working as a double agent also has its own set of risks. For example, according to himself (Xia, 2000, Vol. 1, p. 71), when Xia was working in Wachi's task forces in Shanghai, he realised that agents from the Chinese government were closely watching him, and they even wrote the word "traitor" on the door of his flat. If Xia was found to be treacherous by either the Japanese or the Chinese party, his actions could be punishable by death. As mentioned earlier, in Xia's private meeting with Li, he expressed patriotic feelings, which could have been one of his key motivations for joining the Chinese Nationalist Party. However, could it be possible that Xia had other motivations? At first glance, choosing to become a double agent may suggest a significant increase in the amount of risk Xia had to face, and one may argue that it would have been safer for him to be loyal only to the Japanese government.

Nevertheless, the author would like to argue that Xia's choice to become a double agent could also be one of his risk-mitigation strategies. As a Chinese national working for the Japanese military, there is a possibility that if the war ended with Japan's defeat, the Japanese military may simply exit China and abandon Xia. As the public held a negative view of people who collaborated with the occupying forces, Xia's fortune in China would not have been favourable. By developing a collaborative relationship with General Li of the Chinese Nationalist Party and working as a double agent, Xia secured himself the promise of protection against being punished as a traitor after the war. Guo (2015, p. 9) also points out that this indicates that Xia's connection with Li could have been motivated by his perception of the value of social networks. Xia's acts of "switching sides" are observed throughout the war. For example, as mentioned above, Xia felt threatened by some Chinese agents who wrote derogatory words on his door and immediately decided to reduce his

public appearance. At this point, he did not hesitate to seek help from his Japanese employer to change his address (Xia 2000, 1, p. 71). Ultimately, all of his decisions and actions may be explained by his desire to reduce the risk of being punished after the war and increase the chance of survival.

However, Xia's strategies to mitigate risks did not always work according to plan and sometimes generated new types of risks. For instance, at one point, he was also suspected by the Japanese military of having disclosed confidential intelligence to the Chinese government. According to Guo (2015, pp. 10-11), he had to resort to concealing himself in Hong Kong for nearly six months before Wachi helped resolve the issue. It could be argued that Xia's social capital of a close personal relationship with Wachi was, ultimately, very much worthy of his investment. After the war ended, Xia could no longer provide any value to the Chinese Nationalist Party. As a result, because he worked for the Japanese army, Xia was labelled as a "traitor" by the public and suffered from what Guo refers to as "a permanent loss of one's cultural, social capital"(ibid.). It demonstrates that the value of the interpreter's capital can change as the political environment changes. In the new post-war Chinese social order, the linguistic, social and cultural capital Xia relied on to work as an interpreter lost the entirety of its value. Meanwhile, this experience also put Xia in a vulnerable position where he could not find any employment and had to face the condemnation from the public in China. According to Guo (ibid.), in late 1945, after witnessing the relentless punishment given to "traitors" who collaborated with Japanese forces, Xia felt threatened and decided to leave China and escape to Japan, never to return to China in his lifetime.

2.2 Risk in Translation and Interpreting

As mentioned in the Declaration part of this thesis, it should be noted that the following section (section 2.2 Risk in Translation and Interpreting) is based on an article that the author has previously published (Zhou, 2022, pp. 22-29).

If the translation process were as simple as mechanically transferring words from one language to another, machines would have replaced human translators long ago. Nevertheless, the nuances of expressions and the subjectivity of understanding make translating a complex activity.

It could be said that translation is a process of constant analysing and decision-making that may involve various types of risk. One of the earliest mentions of the concept of risk in translation studies is from Gile in 1995 (1995, p. 108):

> After collecting as much information as possible, translators must decide what they will write. These decisions involve expected gain and possible loss. Gain can take the form of increased clarity, more readable and convincing texts, a lower probability of misrepresenting the author's ideas etc. Loss may involve loss of information, lessened credibility because of inappropriate terminology, lower cultural acceptability because the Target Text says something or says it in a way which is not acceptable to Target-Text readers, etc.

Most people are familiar with the phrase "lost in translation". However, Gile gives examples of both loss and gain during the translation process and suggests that translation decisions are made based on evaluations of "expected gain and possible loss", which can also be

interpreted as a form of risk analysis. As a result of the choices made by the translators, the target text may differ from the source in multiple ways, representing the loss and gain of translation. Nevertheless, Gile's argument only applies to translation at a text level. Building on Gile's observations, Akbari takes a step further and asserts that the decision-making in translation is also affected by human factors (2009, p. 511). For example, some of the personal motives of a translator may involve "self satisfaction, financial reward in forms of monthly salary, bonus or a raise in the salary, successful communication, avoidance of criticism, getting published, being well received by the society, etc". (ibid.).

Indeed, in order to illustrate a comprehensive map of the risks involved in translation and interpreting, multiple facets of the activity and the different parties involved must be considered. Although the concept of risk has been discussed a few times in translation studies, the literature base on this topic is still relatively limited. As Hui argues (2012, p. 2):

> Although risk management is not a new concept, it is an uncharted area as applied to the translation process and translator training. The idea of risk (analysis and management) has been mentioned from time to time as advice to translators (Gile 1995/2009, Pym 2003/2010, Akbari 2009), but has been defined and developed by only one or two researchers. Very little research regarding risk management in the translation process has been conducted and only a small sample of translated text has been studied.

In this section of the literature review, the author would like to explore the concept of risk and how it could be used in the context of political interpreting. First of all, an overview of the nature and history of risk is provided, followed by a discussion of existing literature on

the topic of risk in Translation Studies. Finally, the difference between risk in translation versus interpreting is explained.

2.2.1 The Nature and History of Risk

According to Mythen (2004, p. 4), "threat and insecurity have always been among the conditions of human existence". Indeed, risk has always been an integral part of our lives. However, the definition of the notion of risk has changed rather significantly throughout history. Risk is an essential concept in various academic fields, including medical science, mathematics, physics and political science, to name a few. Therefore, risk can be defined, assessed and analysed in many different ways depending on the context and the discipline. In order to establish a conceptual definition suited for the purpose of this study, the concept of risk is explored in detail in this section, from its origin, definition, historical development and perception to its analysis and management.

According to Bernstein (1998, p. 3), the modern concept of risk originated from the Hindu-Arabic numerical system, which was introduced to the West seven to eight hundred years ago. However, it was not until the Renaissance that people began to study probability and risk earnestly. According to Ore (1960, p. 411), the beginning of risk could be traced back to a French gentleman named Antoine Gombaud, the Chevalier de Méré. He challenged his mathematician friend Blaise Pascal to solve the "dice problem". Specifically, Pascal was asked to determine the probability of getting a six in four rolls of dice and two sixes in 36 rolls. Pascal brought this puzzle to the attention of a lawyer named Pierre de Fermat, and their combined intellectual collaboration led to the theory of probability. According to Bernstein, probability theory is "the mathematical heart of the concept of risk" (1998, p. 3).

After Pascal and Fermat's discovery, people could predict future outcomes based on numerical calculations for the first time in history, which fundamentally changed how decisions were made. The ability to forecast the future and make rational decisions can be seen as one of the most powerful instruments for processing information. One may even argue that scientific development cannot be made without such an ability. As Stahel et al argue, "almost all significant inventions, innovations, and developments in science, economics, technology, and health care in the past 200–300 years originated from the ability to predict future events and to make conscientious, balanced decisions on the risk and probability of our actions" (2017, p. 1).

Since the discovery of the theory of probability, various risk management techniques have been developed. According to Bernstein (1998, p. 5), Bernoulli's invention of the Law of Large Numbers in 1703 provided the key to understanding the concept of risk, and "without that qualification, everything would be predictable, and in a world where every event is identical to a previous event no change would ever occur". Nearly three decades later, the Law of Averages was established by Abraham de Moivre, which was used as an essential tool for quantifying risk. Meanwhile, as the English government promoted the sale of life annuities, risk management played a significant role in planning life expectancies. As a result, marine insurance became a flourishing new business in England.

According to Molak (1996, p. 15), risk analysis can be defined as "a body of knowledge (methodology) that evaluates and derives a probability of an adverse effect of an agent (chemical, physical, or other), industrial process, technology, or natural process". In other words, he believes that "risk" essentially refers to "an adverse effect". Similarly, according

to Adams (1995, p. 8), in the Royal Society's 1983 Risk Assessment report, risk is defined as "the probability that a particular adverse event occurs during a stated period of time, or results from a particular challenge". It would appear that the notion of risk is often associated with adverse consequences. Further examples include Beck's definition (2009, p. 9) of risk as "future events that may occur, that threaten us" and "the anticipation of the catastrophe". Likewise, Kates et al (1985, p. 5) consider risk as "the likelihood that particular adverse consequences will follow a hazardous event". It is worth noting that although "adverse events" seem to be mentioned very often in the definitions of risk, those events themselves are rarely clearly defined. According to Molak (1996:15), risk assessments traditionally deal with health effects, where an adverse result could be death or disease. In more recent cases, however, risk could also be a loss of invested money in business settings or even some vaguely defined terms such as "quality of life" or "sense of community".

Even though risk is often associated with adverse effects, Douglas (2003) believes it should not be the case. According to her (2003, p. 2), "the idea of risk in itself was neutral; it took account of the probability of losses and gains". Indeed, when the concept was first discovered in the seventeenth century, the idea of risk was simply "the probability of an event occurring, combined with the magnitude of the losses or gains that would be entailed" (ibid.). Jaeger et al. (2001, p. 17) also share this notion and argue that risk should be associated with both rewards and penalties.

Furthermore, Douglas (1992, p. 11) notes that "the public" does not see risks in the same way as the experts. She argues that objective risk is always there. However, "the baffling behaviour of the public, in refusing to buy flood-plain or earthquake insurance, in crossing dangerous roads, driving non-road-worthy vehicles, buying accident-provoking gadgets for

the home, and not listening to the education on risks, all that continues as before". As Adam Smith says in *The Wealth of Nations*:

> The overweening conceit which the greater part of men have of their own abilities [and] their absurd presumption in their own good fortune (1776, Book I, Chapter x:1).

Douglas' observations bring us to the topic of perceived risk. In the same Royal Society's 1983 report mentioned above (cited in Adams, 1995, p. 8), a distinction is made between "objective risk" and "perceived risk". The former is the probability of an adverse event estimated based on past incurrences and scientific observations, which can be measured. On the other hand, the latter refers to the public's intuitive anticipation of such an event. As mentioned previously, Douglas believes that the public does not see risks like experts do. Similarly, Adams (1995, p. 8) considers "objective risk" as an expert's assessment and "perceived risk" as a layperson's opinion. The credibility of regulatory decisions plays a significant role in how effective they are, and one may say that their credibility or trustworthiness has more to do with how the public perceives these decisions than the objective risk itself. However, when one brings perceived or "subjective" risk into the argument, it becomes increasingly difficult to measure and assess risk as a quantifiable object.

In the 1992 updated version of the Risk Assessment report, the Royal Society emphasises the objectivity of the subject by claiming that "if risk assessment is to be more than an academic exercise, it must provide quantitative information that aids decisions" (cited in Adams, 1995, p. 9). Nevertheless, the Royal Society also acknowledges that the separation between objective and subjective risk "has come under increasing attack, to the extent that

it is no longer a mainstream position" (ibid.). According to Adams (1995, p. 9), the Royal Society had since lost its collective authority on the subject of risk. Meanwhile, a growing number of scholars from the field of social sciences argued that risk should be seen as a culturally constructed concept.

Risk may exist as an objective element. However, how risk is viewed or perceived highly depends on individual differences. According to Adams (1995, p. 9), "both the adverse nature of particular events and their probability are inherently subjective". There are two major approaches to the study of risk perception: the cultural theory and the psychometric paradigm. Through the prism of cultural anthropology and sociology, risks do not exist as an intrinsic part of nature. Instead, they are socially constructed concepts based on shared norms, intellectual, juridical and moral considerations, organisational structures, etc. In many academic disciplines, risk is constantly analysed and studied from a scientific and statistical point of view. In this approach, all subjectivity should be avoided, and personal emotions and experiences should be left outside the laboratory. Nevertheless, Douglas (1992, p. 12) asserts that "anger, hope, and fear are part of most risky situations. No one takes a decision that involves costs without consulting neighbours, family, work friends". In other words, in real-life risk-taking scenarios, intersubjectivity, how consensus is reached, and the broader social influences on decision-making cannot simply be neglected.

Anthropologist Mary Douglas first introduced the cultural theory of risk in her book *Natural symbols: explorations in cosmology* (2003). In order to illustrate how risk can be culturally constructed to serve one's social relations, she established the so-called "grid/group analysis" approach based on the work of structural sociologist Émile Durkheim. "Grid" and "group" each represent one of the two principal dimensions of social relations. In summary, "grid"

refers to the extent to which one’s options and choices are conditioned by their role and position within the society (rather than by individual preferences), whereas “group” identifies the degree to which members of the society are socially committed. By using “grid” and “group” as the central axis, four types of relational patterns may be generated: Individualist, Egalitarian, Hierarchist, and Fatalist.

According to Douglas (2003, p. 64), a high “grid” way of life demonstrates a stronger sense of shared classifications in roles and authority within society. In contrast, the low “grid” type gravitates towards a more private and egalitarian system. Likewise, the high “group” pattern is characterised by a sense of ego heavily framed by other people’s pressure, whereas the low “group” exhibit an ego independent of the external society.

The “grid/group” typology has been highly controversial and has received many criticisms from different fields, and one of the central debates is its empirical validity. Attempts to provide survey data in support of the Cultural Theory were made by Karl Dake, a Ph.D student of Wildavsky. His goal was to operationalise the four cultural biases as worldviews to explain variations found in risk perceptions (1990). However, in an empirical test of its validity, Rippl (2002, p. 154) demonstrates that “central assumptions of the measurement theory are violated and that Dake’s instruments, in their published form, are inadequate measures of cultural theory”. Furthermore, Boholm (1996) and Van der Linden (2015) argue that the Cultural Theory is impossible to falsify because its logic is essentially circular. Johnson and Swedlow (2019, p. 2) comment that while both Douglas and Wildavsky claim that cultural biases fuel differences in risk perception, the definition and origin of such biases remain unexplained. Another major issue with the Cultural Theory paradigm is that it is challenging to assess perceived risk qualitatively. According to Adams (1995, p. ix),

“where scientific fact falls short of certainty we are guided by assumption, inference and belief. In such circumstances the deterministic rationality of classical physics is replaced by a set of conditional, probabilistic rationalities”. Lord Kelvin famously said that “anything that exists can be measured”. However, when it comes to the quantifiability of risk, if the concept itself is culturally constructed and varies from person to person, calculating risk would mean calculating culture itself.

As mentioned previously, there are two main approaches to studying risk perception. Apart from the Cultural Theory explained above, another method is known as the psychometric paradigm. The primary purpose of the psychometric paradigm is to discover the main factors that may affect the perception of risk and how the lay public’s perception differs from that of an expert.

Tversky and Kahneman’s experiment in 1974 was one of the first research projects that used psychometric measures to analyse a layperson’s biases when perceiving probabilities. It is suggested that people tend to rely on heuristic techniques in the perception of risk. The first one of these heuristics is “representatives”, i.e., the degree in which an event is representative of a process. Secondly, there is the element of “availability”, or “the ease with which instances or occurrences can be brought to mind” (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974, p. 1127). Finally, people may rely on “adjustment from an anchor”, which refers to the process in which a piece of information is used as the starting point and then adjusted to yield the final answer.

A few years later in 1978, Fischhoff et al.’s study showed that the public perception of risk is primarily determined by the feeling of dread, thus demonstrating that risk reception is

related to specific emotions. However, such judgment is not always correct. Slovic & Peters mentions that:

> [...] whereas risk and benefit tend to be positively correlated across hazardous activities in the world (i.e., high-risk activities tend to have greater benefits than do low-risk activities), they are negatively correlated in people's minds and judgments (i.e., high risk is associated with low benefit, and vice versa). This is often referred to as "the affect heuristic" (2006, p. 323).

Alhakami & Slovic's study in 1994 finds that the way the public determines risk seems to be affected by whether they have a favourable view of the event itself. In other words, a seemingly promising activity is perceived to have low risk and high benefit, whereas an unfavourable activity is often associated with high risk and low benefit. Furthermore, Slovic et al.'s experiment (2000) discovers that, compared to percentage numbers, equivalent linguistic representations that carry frightening images are more likely to induce the perception of higher risk. In their study, two groups of experienced clinical psychologists were asked to judge the probability of a fictional hospitalised mental patient, "Mr. Jones", committing an act of violence after discharge. A group of psychiatrists were told that "20 out of 100 patients similar to Mr. Jones are estimated to commit an act of violence". In this group, 41% of the psychiatrists refused to discharge him. On the other hand, only 20% of clinicians were against discharging "Mr. Jones" when they were told that "patients similar to Mr. Jones are estimated to have a 20% chance of committing an act of violence". This experiment shows that numerical representations of risk in the form of percentages often yield a more positive perception of the activity when compared to representations that create affect-laden images. Further studies such as Loewenstein et al. (2001) found that when powerful affective mental connections are involved in the potential consequences of certain

events, the probability of such consequences carries very little weight in the public's judgement of risk.

According to Pym (2015, p. 67), although the differences between multiple types of risks "can be confusing and require some careful definitions, the interactions between them offer a rich, non-essentialist view of translation as a social relation, as a product, and as a teachable mode of decisionmaking". In the following part of this section, the topics of risk analysis, risk assessment and risk management will be discussed.

Risk analysis and risk assessment are sometimes used interchangeably. However, clear definitions of these two concepts can be seen in Rausand & Haugen (2020, p. 59). Risk analysis is defined as "[a] systematic study to identify and describe what can go wrong and what the causes, the likelihoods, and the consequences might be", whereas risk assessment is referred to as "the process of planning, preparing, performing, and reporting a risk analysis, and evaluating the results against risk acceptance criteria". In other words, risk analysis is an intrinsic part of risk assessment. Rausand & Haugen (2020, p. 60) further explains the six steps that are involved in the risk assessment process, namely 1) Plan the risk assessment; 2) Define the study, 3) Identify hazards and initiating events; 4) Develop accident scenarios and describe consequences; 5) Determine and assess the risk and 6) Risk presentation. However, it should be noted that these procedures are not always performed in the same sequence.

Regarding the management of risk, some scholars believe that any risk should be reduced or entirely avoided. For example, according to Adams (1995, p. 16), "risk management in practice is overwhelmingly concerned not with balancing the costs and benefits of risk but

with reducing it". In risk management, one of the most widely acknowledged guidelines is known as the ISO 31000. It is a set of principles and standards compiled by the International Organization for Standardization. In the ISO 31000 (2018), risk management is defined as "coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to risks". According to Rausand & Haugen (2020, p. 168), as "coordinated activities" cover the identification and description of risks, "risk assessment is thus a part of risk management".

A more detailed definition of risk management is given by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2010): "the process for identifying, analysing, and communicating risk and accepting, avoiding, or controlling it to an acceptable level considering associated costs and benefits of any actions taken". In this definition, specific processes involved in risk management are listed. Nevertheless, ISO 31000 (2018) mentions additional procedures such as monitoring, reviewing, recording and reporting the performance.

In this section, the concept of risk is explored in detail. From the definition and application of risk to the perception, analysis and management of risk, the author covers a few key aspects of risk studies in order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the notion. In the following section, the author wishes to discuss the specific application of the risk framework within Translation and Interpreting Studies.

2.2.2 Risk Management in Translation Studies

Risk management has only recently become a topic of discussion in Translation and Interpreting Studies. So far, most of the literature on this subject is limited to translation rather than interpretation. However, as many similarities are shared between translation and

interpreting, the author believes that some risk-related theories may also apply to interpreting. Therefore, before moving on to risk in interpreting, the author will review the existing literature base on risk in translation first. Then, in section 2.2.3, the difference between translation and interpreting will be clarified, and the author will explain how risk management can be used in interpreting.

In the field of risk management in translation, Anthony Pym is one of the pioneering scholars who have attempted to offer a systematic framework. He started exploring the idea of risk as early as 2005. In his article "Text and risk in translation" (2005, p. 70), Pym defines risk as "the possibility of not fulfilling the translation's purpose" and describes it in terms of "high-level" and "low-level" risks. In this model, if there are one or more alternative ways to translate a specific text, the linguistic challenge that triggers decision-making is defined as a translation "problem". The final version of the translation chosen by the translator is therefore considered a "solution". In order to reduce the level of risk involved, translation strategies are employed. According to Pym (2005, p. 72), the effort put into solutions "should ideally correlate with the degree of risk involved". Pym summarises his theory as the following (2005, p. 73):

> In sum, problems are high-risk or low-risk; solutions can be high-risk or low-risk; strategies are different ways of expending effort to manage risk; and the translator's efforts should ideally correlate with degrees of risk.

Ten years later, in 2015, Pym published an essay titled "Translating as Risk Management", which offered a more comprehensive and systematic description of the risk theory in Translation Studies. In this new framework, translation risk is divided into three categories.

The first one is credibility risk. According to Pym, within an author-translator-reader relationship, there is an imbalance in the intake of information. Specifically, the translator often is more knowledgeable about the foreign language and culture than the author or the reader. This asymmetry leads to a “special dependence” on the credibility of the translator. As a result, credibility risk can lead to various negative consequences, such as the loss of clients or compensation. As Pym argues, “when you perform a high-risk action, you could lose your money, your clients, your job, or all those things at once” (2015, p. 69). In this regard, credibility risk is mainly associated with the social and psychological dynamics between the parties involved in the translation process.

The second type of risk proposed in Pym’s model is uncertainty risk. Unlike credibility risk, uncertainty risk is more text-oriented. In translation, linguistic differences and cultural incommensurables often manifest themselves during the transfer from the source text to the target text, resulting in ambiguities and uncertainties. When more than one interpretation of the meaning is available, risk-taking and decision-making are unavoidable during the translating process. Künzli’s 2004 case study investigates risk-taking behaviour in trainee translators and experienced translators. The study shows that when ambiguity and uncertainty arise during translation, trainee translators tend to be more willing to take risks than experienced practitioners. Regarding this observation, Künzli proposes several explanations below:

> (1) they fear less a possible loss of credibility, should their interpretation turn out to be wrong;
>
> (2) they are not yet aware of the potential help they can get from colleagues or clients;
>
> (3) they fear appearing to be undecided, thinking a translator has to know everything; and

(4) they do not yet know how to distinguish between cases where risk-taking is inevitable and where it may or even should be avoided (Künzli, 2004, p. 40).

By comparison, when ambiguities occur in the source text, experienced or professional translators tend to try to reduce the risks they have to take. Instead, some risks are often transferred to the client. To achieve this effect, professional translators often communicate directly with the client to clarify the uncertainties or use footnotes and annotations to avoid responsibility for any misunderstanding (ibid.).

In Künzli's approach, risk in translation only occurs when the meaning of the source text is unclear. Therefore, risk is viewed negatively and all risks should be avoided entirely. Künzli's argument is echoed by Angelone, who believes that translators must actively employ strategies to overcome any comprehension, transfer, and production indecision (2010, p. 19). As mentioned previously, in Pym's model, risk is also associated with uncertainty in the source text. He mentions that "there must be uncertainty in order for there to be risks" (Pym 2015, p. 71). Nevertheless, he disagrees that risk should only be considered in a negative light. Similar to Gile's previously mentioned argument, Pym (2015, p. 71) believes that risk-taking should be seen "as an active positive option, corresponding to possible enhanced social rewards". In other words, Pym argues that there are situations where translators may be able to gain "enhanced social rewards" by actively taking risks. Künzli's and Angelone's approaches to risk are based on the translator's internal decision-making process. Therefore, Pym's idea of gaining "social rewards" offers a new prospect for risk analysis in Translation Studies. Regrettably, the author is unable to find Pym's elaborations on what types of social rewards there might be or how they may be considered "social".

In another paper, Pym mentions the following about uncertainties in texts:

> A text never fully determines (causes, explains, justifies, or accounts for) what a receiver understands of it. Each receiver brings a set of conceptual frames to the text, and the reception process is thus an interaction between the text and those frames. The same would then hold for translation: no source text fully determines a translation of that text, if only because translations rely on observations and interpretations (Pym, 2010, p. 90).

Furthermore, he argues that “different languages picture the relations in different ways, so no language can be assumed to be transparent to the world - we might be seeing only what our language enables us to see”. (Pym, 2010, p. 91)

In a way, Pym’s definition of text can be seen as a “culturally constructed reality”, which corresponds to the Cultural Theory of risk perception discussed in the previous section. However, one may say that such an observation is of no practical use to the translator’s task as it does not offer any detailed guidelines for how these uncertainties may be dealt with during the process of translating. Furthermore, if we all accept that people from different cultures cannot understand texts in the same way, does that mean translation is an impossible task in the first place? French theorist Paul Ricœur (2004, p. 29) once said ironically, “one must conclude, that misunderstanding is allowed, that translation is theoretically impossible, and that bilinguals must be schizophrenic”. Pym’s theory of text being culturally constructed is not entirely insensible. However, the author of this study still believes that the risk framework in Translation and Interpreting Studies should not only be based on abstract and theoretical assumptions but aim to deliver practical solutions for translators and interpreters.

The third type of risk in Pym's model is called communicative risk. According to Pym (2015), risk management can benefit the communicative purpose of the translation. He uses the example of birth certificate translations. Birth certificates are a type of source text containing relatively little information that needs to be translated. Pym suggests that, depending on the communicative function of each element, given that the level of uncertainty is the same, the level of risk may vary. In his example, the translation of a person's name and date of birth entails more risk than the name of the midwife or the reporting officer. Pym uses this example to illustrate how risk may benefit communication. However, the author of the present study would like to argue that this approach is essentially functionalist. Therefore, criticisms about functionalism in Translation Studies also apply to this model. For example, the communicative function of a translation is often defined on a subjective basis, and different translation decisions can be justified in more than one way, making this type of decision-making challenging to evaluate.

Furthermore, although Pym emphasises that risk management can bring benefits to communication, prioritising high-risk text to low-risk text can hardly be seen as a benefit or improvement of the translation quality. Allocating more effort to the most critical information may be more cost-effective for the translator, but it does not "improve" the translation and cannot be viewed as a form of "gain" from risk-taking in that regard.

Pym elaborates on the relationship between levels of risk and effort in his model below:

> In this model, if the level of effort invested in a translation challenge is low and the chance of "non-cooperation" is low, it results in a low level of risk and it is suggested that a risk-averse approach should be taken by the translation through the means of

> “omission, explicitation, simplification, generalization, attenuation” (Pym 2015, p. 73).

Pym also argues that if a high level of effort is spent on a low-probability consequence, it might lead to “overwork” or “inefficient labour” during translation. Overall, the author would like to argue that this model has several limitations. First, the risk level is determined based on the effort spent by the translator and the probability of a consequence. Therefore, it assumes that an effort has already been made before the risk level is determined. Pym argues that assessing the risk level helps translators with solutions and strategies for translation problems. However, if an effort is already made, the translator must have taken action before the risk level is measured. Either an analysis has been performed, or the translator has started considering a solution. Suppose the decision-making happens even before the risk is measured. In that case, very little value can be offered by this model in terms of applying risk management to facilitate the decision-making process in translation. Furthermore, according to Pym’s approach, when a high level of effort is spent on a low-probability consequence, it leads to “overwork” and “inefficient labour”. However, the author would like to argue that low probability does not necessarily equate to low severity. In summary, further exploration and improvement in this theoretical approach are needed to prove its validity in practice.

2.2.3 Difference between Translation and Interpreting

As mentioned previously, the existing literature on risk mainly concerns translation rather than interpreting. In this section, the similarities and differences between translation and interpreting will be examined so the reader can better understand the present study's subject

and scope. It should be noted that Translation Studies and Interpreting Studies are often considered two connected but independent disciplines. In most cases, translation is understood as the written rendition of a text from one language into another. In contrast, interpreting is the rendering of speeches in an oral or sign language form. Although some aspects of risk in translation may not entirely apply to interpreting, there are a few similarities.

For instance, the decision-making process is also frequently discussed in Interpreting Studies. When examining the concept of "creativity" in interpreting, Horváth (2015, p. 94) believes that strategic decision-making and problem-solving in the interpreter's mental process can be seen as a form of creativity. Notably, during simultaneous interpreting, the decision-making process "consists in envisioning a variety of possible linguistic solutions for an interpreting problem while the source language message is still unfolding" (ibid.). Furthermore, in Dean and Pollard's 2015 research into community interpreting, a decision-making model based on four types of demands is developed. These demands are "environmental, interpersonal, paralinguistic, and intrapersonal (EIPI)" (Dean & Pollard, 2015, p. 101). Dean and Pollard's approach is outcome-oriented. According to their theory, the interpreter should reach a controlled decision after analysing the different demands of the job and predicting the consequences that are likely to arise. In a way, this can also be viewed as a type of risk management.

Traditionally speaking, one of the critical differences between written translation and oral interpreting (excluding sign language interpreting) lies in the "orality" of the communication process. Even though Pym's research mentioned in the previous section is mainly based on written translation, he also explores risks that may be involved in oral

interpreting in several ways. Regarding the difference between translation and interpreting, Pym argues that the common perception of "interpreters speak, translators write" is not always correct (2016, p. 248). Indeed, interpreting is usually defined by its "spokenness". However, Pym notes that there can also be an element of writing or "writtenness" in interpreting. For instance, note-taking that is often observed in interpreting is a form of writing. Furthermore, sight translation may be required when a scripted speech is interpreted.

If that is the case, exactly how does interpreting differ from translation? Some may argue that simultaneity is another critical feature that distinguishes interpreting from translation. Nevertheless, Pym believes otherwise. For example, he argues that "eye-tracking indicates that touch-typing translators can read while they write (so there is a degree of simultaneity in written translation)" (2016, p. 249). Furthermore, another widespread perception is that interpreters do not have time to correct themselves during their work. In contrast, translators can make revisions and corrections after their first attempt. Pym disagrees with this and asserts that conference and community interpreters do correct themselves, and they have the responsibility to do so if any mistake is made. He concludes that "so all the arguments about simultaneity and non-corrections logically fly out the window" (Pym, 2016, p. 249). Therefore, Pym believes that one of the crucial differences between interpreting and translation is the "relative mutual presence of the communication participants". He further elaborates that this difference has two main features:

1. it theoretically enables the direct involvement of the participants in the spoken situation, with feedback and dialogic corrections becoming easier to enact than in written communication.
2. possibility in turn allows for different intensities of interaction and different probabilities of recourse to non-linguistic action (ibid.).

Spatial presence is only a dimension of the "presence" meant by Pym. According to him, the most important aspect of mutual presence does not lie in the physical space but in sharing the same time frame. Modern technology allows us to communicate directly with others in different physical locations. Nonetheless, the mutual presence is only truly created by the shared time frame. Furthermore, Pym argues that the simultaneous exchange of words allows the participants to "construct meaning together" (Pym, 2016, p. 250). In this way, when uncertainty arises, the speaker could provide clarification and explanation. The possibility of immediate feedback and adjustment makes spoken encounters different from written ones. Pym also emphasises the importance of non-linguistic features of speeches in interpreting:

> Visual presence, body language, and awareness of multiple addressees all play parts in the creation of meaning. One might further suppose that visual identity and the possibility of feedback allow for greater individuation of the participants ("the" interpreter becomes this particular interpreter), greater scrutiny of signals of trustworthiness, greater attention to the specific interests of each party, and perhaps greater communicative leeway (and less linguistic exactitude) so that those specific interests can be coordinated to a successful outcome (Pym, 2016, p. 250).

To Pym, even though the element of "spokenness" is not necessarily exclusive to interpreting, it is nonetheless an important feature that indicates the level of risk involved in the rendition of speeches. He claims that "the more spoken the situation, the greater the risk of alternative non-linguistic action". (2016, p. 248)

The interpreting workflow encompasses three main stages. Prior to the event where the interpreting takes place, during the event, and after the event. Contrary to popular belief, the interpreter's job usually starts before the event. There are several ways preparation work could be completed. For instance, creating a glossary of technical or context-specific terms likely to be used in the speech. Also, when it is anticipated that some terms and expressions may be particularly challenging to translate, interpreters often need to devise solutions and prepare multiple alternatives for such problems beforehand. Therefore, the author would like to argue that if we consider the entirety of the interpreter's work as a risk management process, this preparation stage can be viewed as a risk assessment stage.

As Rausand & Haugen (2020, p. 61) believe, “risk assessments are normally performed to provide input to decisions about risk – whether we need to do something with the risk and if so, what should be done”. As one of the key features of the activity of interpreting is its simultaneity, the decision-making process sometimes has to be finished within an instance. If we see the output of every interpreted word as an individual decision, that will significantly increase the level of complication involved in quantifying the risk assessment process. Therefore, adequate preparations for potential risks may be made by focusing on “problematic” or ambiguous words and expressions. From a risk management perspective, the author of this study believes that it is beneficial for interpreters to establish some guidelines and principles to follow before they start interpreting. These guidelines may include the correct use of terminology and the appropriate expressions used to describe sensitive and controversial issues. Even though it is implausible that such guidelines cover all challenges and ambiguities that arise during the interpretation, they can be viewed as valuable references when establishing risk acceptance criteria.

Take political correctness as an example. Being “politically correct” is extremely important in a political or diplomatic setting. In itself, political correctness is a relative concept. Behaviours and expressions that may be considered normal in one country or region may be considered completely unacceptable in another country. Asserting one's status quo is important in international relations. Therefore, in political communication between two or more countries, it is often quite crucial to note how particular words should be used and how not to use certain “taboo” words. When a part of the speech is considered inappropriate in the receptor culture, will it be more beneficial to try to mitigate the risk and “tone it down”? Or will that be seen as unfaithful to the original speech? There is no clear boundary as to when it becomes acceptable to tweak the original speech. However, being prepared for such situations may increase the chance of risk avoidance or mitigation.

One method that could be used in studying risk management in interpreting is to identify “challenges” or “what can go wrong”, which could be ambiguities, inappropriate or politically incorrect usage of language, metaphors, and humour. In an attempt to define risk, Rausand & Hauge (2020) pose three questions: what can go wrong? What is the likelihood? What are the consequences? If we are to understand interpreting as a risk management process, these three questions must be answered before we can identify the specific risks involved in the process. Some significant challenges and difficulties may be identified based on ambiguity, uncertainty, and issues such as political correctness. However, it is not so easy to answer the question of “what is the likelihood” of such a scenario taking place. The preparation stage of interpreting, as mentioned above, mainly serves the function of reducing the likelihood of a mistake being made due to a lack of groundwork. Due to the fast-paced nature of the activity, interpreting decisions are usually made very quickly, as a result, it is difficult to calculate the likelihood of something “going wrong”. When a crisis

arises, the interpreter often finds himself/herself in one of the following situations: I do not understand this word; I understand this word but do not know what it is in the target language; or "I do not think the speaker meant what he/she said". Quantifying the probability of a hazardous event taking place in this case is a monumental task, and one that is extremely difficult to start in the first place.

One of the possible approaches that could be used is associating the level of risk with the severity of different possible consequences and how likely they may happen in the given context. For example, if the sentence or speech in question is exceptionally controversial or expected to be quoted verbatim on media, it will likely attract a high level of attention. Therefore, the interpreter should perhaps take adequate measures to ensure that the speech is rendered in a way that best corresponds to the speaker's intention. This way, the interpreter's risk of being personally responsible for potential adverse consequences is mitigated. On the other hand, if the ambiguity or uncertainty is concerned with stylistic or rhetorical devices, and they bear relatively little importance to the central topic, perhaps it would be reasonable for the interpreter to take a higher degree of liberty in adjusting or optimising the original utterance.

Another aspect worth being taken into consideration is what is known as "decision-making fatigue". Decision-making fatigue is a concept in decision theory and psychology where the quality of our rationale decreases as more decisions are made. In conference interpreting and simultaneous interpreting in particular, interpreters have to deal with an almost constant flow of information and decisions are sometimes made on a word-to-word basis. Therefore, the AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters) suggests that interpreters should not be performing simultaneous interpretation for any longer than 15 minutes at a

time (AIIC, 1999, p. 8). The same applies to consecutive interpreting, which is the most common mode of interpreting adopted in high-level political talks and events to guarantee the quality of the communication. Interpreters often need to rely on their note-taking skills to keep track of important information and are encouraged to notify the speaker if the speech is too long. Therefore, it can be assumed that the longer the speech, the more likely mistakes and omissions may be made in interpreting. In other words, when considering interpreting as a process of risk analysis and management, the speech's length could impact the level of risk based on the probability of mistakes being made.

According to Kade (1968), another key feature that makes interpreting unique is that it can be considered a particular form of translation in which the source text is presented only once and thus cannot be reviewed. Even though Pym argued that interpreters could technically correct themselves if absolutely needed, it is still rare compared to revisions made in written translations. In addition, interpreting is usually performed under much tighter time constraints. The characteristic of immediacy and the lack of opportunity to make corrections or revisions add an extra layer of risk to interpreting. Often, the decisions made by the interpreters need to be quick and "correct" at the same time, which means interpreters must carefully weigh the loss and gain in their decisions.

2.3 Social and Cultural Aspects of Interpreting

According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 6), interpreting is considered a "translational activity, as a special form of 'Translation'". Although Interpreting Studies is a relatively young discipline, the practice of interpreting as a form of language exchange has existed since ancient times. In fact, some expressions in Germanic, Scandinavian and Slavic languages

used to describe the act of interpreting could be traced back to the ancient Semitic language Akkadian around 1900 BC (Vermeer, 1992, p. 59). Within the realm of Interpreting Studies, there are various thematic focuses such as the cognitive process of interpreting, psycho-linguistics, and other theoretical frameworks originated from Translation Studies, such as the functionalist approach and the Relevance Theory. However, during the past two decades, especially after Croinin's call for the "cultural turn" in Interpreting Studies (2002), an increasing amount of research has been attributed to the social and cultural aspects of interpreting. In particular, a growing academic interest could be found in court, medical, and community interpreting. Pöchhacker described this trend as Interpreting Studies "going social" (2006, p. 215).

Pöchhacker (2016, p. 10) asserts that, compared to other types of translational activities such as written text translation, interpreting has a distinct feature of "immediacy". He argues that "in principle, interpreting is performed 'here and now' for the benefit of people who want to engage in communication across barriers of language and culture" (ibid.). Indeed, in the case of written translation, translators often do not need to interact with the original author or the readers to perform their tasks. In an interpreter's case, however, the task is usually conducted within the same time and space as the two other parties involved in the conversation. Therefore, there is inevitably an element of social interaction during an interpreter's work.

Due to this unique feature of "immediacy", it could be argued that the interpreter's role as a participant should be considered an important social aspect of the interpreted event. Takeda (2007, p. 176-177) defines the act of interpreting as a social practice that is "conditioned by social, political and cultural contexts". As interpreting services are usually

relied upon as a means to achieve the goal of a communicative activity, the act itself cannot be separated from the historical, social, political and cultural contexts of the interpreted event. Setton & Dawrant's definition of interpreting below also shows the importance of the social element involved in the process:

> Interpreting is a social, communicative act (calling for a theory of communication in contexts), using languages (pragmatics, bilingualism) under special cognitive constraints (memory, attention, expertise) (Setton & Dawrant, 2016, p. 471).

In 2006, a book titled *Sociocultural Aspects of Translating and Interpreting* was edited by Anthony Pym, featuring research papers on a broad range of topics focusing specifically on the social and cultural aspects of translating and interpreting. Traditionally speaking, product-oriented methodological approaches are usually adopted in Translation and Interpreting Studies. For instance, in academic fields such as sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics and cultural studies, the emphasis is often placed on the "product", i.e. the translated text or the interpreted speech. However, Pym argues this is not the case in the sociocultural approach. Within the sociocultural approach, the focus is not on the product of the translation and interpretation. Instead, the emphasis is placed on translators and interpreters as individuals (Pym, 2006, p. 14). Therefore, in an interpreted event, the interpreter is analysed as an individual with his or her personal background, motivations and subjectivity. In this way, the human factor throughout the mediation process can provide valuable insight into how the external social and cultural context might influence the interpreter's behaviour.

Pym further asserts that the concepts of "social" and "cultural" in the term "sociocultural aspects" must be differentiated. Whilst the social aspect focuses on the social relations

between people, the cultural aspect is more oriented towards elements related to specific strategies adopted to solve linguistic and cultural issues during the interpreting process (Pym, 2006, pp. 14-15). As a result, in Interpreting Studies, findings in the social spectrum can usually be used to explain cultural differences. However, by exploring these two aspects together instead of as two separate entities, a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the interpreters' role as mediators in different settings can be achieved.

As Takeda (2007, p. 27) notes, Pym's focus on the human factor in translation and interpreting can be traced back to his earlier book published in 1998 titled *Method in Translation History*. It should be noted that even though the term "translation" is used here, it refers to various types of translational activities, including interpreting. In this book, Pym (1998) proposes four principles to abide by when studying the history of translation (and interpreting). First of all, the researcher should pay attention to the social factors related to why the translation and interpretation in question needed to be produced in the first place. The second principle is that the main focus of the research should always be on the translators and interpreters themselves rather than their products. Compared to translation and interpretation, an in-depth understanding of translators and interpreters as individuals can shed more light on the broader social context in which the final product was produced. The third principle is that when investigating the translators, one must consider the external social environment they worked in and regard translators and interpreters as "interculturals" instead of only belonging to the target culture. The fourth and final principle is that the study of translation history must still have a certain level of relevance to issues that exist in the present day. Even though Pym's book (1998) focuses mainly on translators instead of interpreters, the author of the present study would like to argue that, similar to translating, interpreting is also an activity that serves a social function. Therefore, to fully understand

such an activity, one must not overlook the potential influence that can be brought forth by the sociocultural context where the interpreting takes place.

As mentioned previously, interpreting can be seen as a social activity. In the context of international relations, the interpreter's actions and decisions are particularly affected by not only the social and cultural aspects of interpreting, but also political factors. In the following section, four different areas related to how interpreters function within a social environment will be explored in order to build a better understanding of their behaviour. These areas are the professionalisation of interpreters, ethics and code of conduct, the interpreter's role and the notion of agency in interpreting.

2.3.1 The Professionalisation and Training of Interpreters

As mentioned previously, although the practice of interpreting can be traced back thousands of years to the ancient civilisations of Egypt, China, the Roman Empire, etc., it was not until the twentieth century that interpreting began to be recognised worldwide as a profession. Today, the interpreting industry is highly professionalised, with an established system of professional organisations, regulations, and protocols related to standard practice. However, the professionalisation of interpreting was not a smooth process. Instead, it was a path created through trial and error and tireless efforts from practitioners in the field. Each milestone of the professionalisation process represented problems that needed to be solved and new requirements that needed to be met. Therefore, the author maintains that learning about the professionalisation process of interpreting can allow us to see the various risks and challenges that interpreters as a community have faced in the past.

One of the key events that fostered the development of the professionalisation of interpreting was the Paris Peace Conference at the end of the First World War. In 1919, the leaders of the four supreme Allied powers, known as "the Big Four", met at the Paris Peace Conference to negotiate the peace terms. According to Roland (1999, p. 121), during the first three weeks of the talks, only one "outsider" was present. His name was Paul Mantoux, respectfully referred to as "the first conference interpreter" by Jean Herbert (1952). Roland notes that two preliminary Supreme War Council sessions were held to determine the official languages of the peace talks (ibid.). Although the French delegations argued that French should be the only working language, British and American deputies Lloyd George and Wilson argued that the number of English speakers at the time reached 170 million, outnumbering the number of French speakers. Therefore, they suggested that English be used as the official language.

Eventually, both English and French were selected as the official languages of the Paris Peace Conference and later of the *Treaty of Versailles*. Adopting English as an official language marked the end of using French as the only language on the diplomatic scene for over two hundred years. The signing of the *Treaty of Versailles* also signified the creation of the League of Nations. It is stipulated in the *Rules of Procedure for the Assembly* that English and French are the official languages of the League (quoted in Roland, 1999). All documents were therefore to be translated into these two languages. This new reality generated a need for language specialists who could serve the roles of interpreters, translators, revisors, and précis-writers to be recruited to facilitate the smooth functioning and operation of the League of Nations.

As conference interpreting essentially did not exist until then, the staff recruited by the League of Nations were not trained in providing interpreting services in a conference setting. Rather, they were linguists who happened to have acquired some foreign language skills through education and personal experiences. According to Baigorri-Jalón (1999, p. 20), "no one — including the interpreters themselves — had a clear idea of the tasks entailed. They had to improvise and learn on the job". Similarly, an interpreter named Jean Herbert, who worked at the League of Nations, wrote about his experience: "I am grateful that my interpretations were not recorded, because if I heard them now I should certainly blush. However, that was the best that could be done at the time and, strange as it may sound, it was appreciated" (Herbert, 1978, p. 6).

Two of the most prominent conference interpreters at the time, i.e. Mantoux and Camerlynck, both came from the teaching profession. Although they did not go through any official training, it would appear that their ability to render long speeches in a smooth and accurate fashion left a lasting impression on the users of their services. For instance, in his memoir, American Secretary of State Robert Lansing described Mantoux's work in detail:

> It is fitting to digress for a moment and to say a word of Professor Mantoux, who wore a French captain's uniform, and was inherited by the Council of Ten from the Supreme War Council. No interpreter could have performed his onerous task with greater skill than he. Possessing an unusual memory for thought and phrase, he did not interpret sentence by sentence, but, while an address or statement was being made, he listened intently, occasionally jotting down a note with the stub of a lead pencil. When the speaker had finished, this remarkable linguist would translate his remarks into English or into French as the case might be, without the least hesitation and with a fluency and completeness which were almost uncanny. Even if the

> speaker had consumed ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes, the address was accurately repeated in the other language, while Professor Mantoux would employ inflection and emphasis with an oratorical skill that added greatly to the perfectness of the interpretation. No statement was too dry to make him inattentive or too technical for his vocabulary. Eloquence, careful reasoning, and unusual style in expression were apparently easily rendered into idiomatic English from French, or vice versa. He seemed almost to take over the character of the individual whose words he translated, and to reproduce his emotions as well as his thoughts. His extraordinary attainments were recognised by every one who benefitted by them, and his services commanded general admiration and praise (Lansing 1972, p. 105-106, quoted in Roland 1999, p. 158).

In Lansing's testimony, Mantoux's interpreting work was highly respected and admired by users of his services. Furthermore, it is also highlighted in the testimony that language proficiency is not the only factor that is crucial to producing high-quality interpretation. Mantoux's "unusual memory", note-taking skills, active listening techniques, oratorical artistry, and ability to render words, emotions, and thoughts all contributed to his remarkable performance that seemed "almost uncanny" to his listeners. Also, as Baigorri-Jalón (1999, p. 20) points out, the interpreters usually performed their task standing behind the podium or in the centre of the room, which made them highly visible in the conference setting. Therefore, it could be assumed that public speaking skills and confidence were in the repertoire of attributes required from the conference interpreter. The high visibility of the role can be seen as both a reward and a risk. Skilled interpreters such as Mantoux could gain respect from high-profile politicians with his "performance" on the stage. However, with high exposure to public attention, less experienced interpreters may risk damaging their

professional reputation if they make mistakes or fail to deliver a satisfactory service in front of the audience.

Even though no training was provided, each linguist had to demonstrate unparalleled linguistic skills before they were chosen to join the League of Nations. Roland (1999, p. 125) suggests that most governments, perhaps out of long-standing tradition, would actively attempt to translate and submit their documents and messages to the League of Nations in either French or English. These translations, however, caused even more challenges to the language professionals working for the League. As Roland argues, "the League's translators were probably the best in the world; Foreign Office employees were not" (ibid.). In an environment where some of the most skilled interpreters worked together to deliver fast and reliable services on a daily basis, it is hardly surprising that conference interpreting went through a rapid phase of development in terms of professionalisation. According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 29), when the League of Nations and its affiliated body, the International Labour Organisation (hereinafter referred to as "ILO"), started operating in 1920 in Geneva, linguists specialising in providing conference interpreting services were already performing on a highly professional level. During this time, consecutive interpreting was mainly used in conferences, and special note-taking techniques were developed to render relatively longer speeches.

According to Baigorri-Jalón (1999), Edward Filene first proposed the idea of simultaneous interpreting at the ILO in the early 1920s. Filene suggested that devising a simultaneous interpretation system would benefit several aspects of international conferences. For example, it saves time, maintains the participants' general interest, and makes communication more effective by enabling participants to listen to the interpretation in real-

time. Furthermore, simultaneous interpreting allows for prompt rejoinder or reference and creates a greater cohesion or “esprit de corps” among the participants by speeding up the conferences in general (Baigorri-Jalón, 1999, pp. 31-32). Experiments of simultaneous interpreting were conducted in the late 1920s. The interpreters were asked to interpret and speak directly to microphones while the speeches were being made. The listeners could, in turn, listen to the interpretation in real time through headphones. Although the technology was relatively primitive compared to modern standards, it marked the birth of simultaneous interpreting as a new mode of interlingual communication. This invention led to more significant challenges for the interpreters and an even more impressive repertoire of skills. Baigorri-Jalón notes, “if no special training had been required for consecutive interpreters, it was clear that training was necessary for their simultaneous counterparts” (1999, p. 32). In order to improve the quality of the product, interpreters were instructed to take various measures. For instance, the interpreters were expected to know the background of the speaker and to obtain and translate scripts of the speeches in advance where possible (Roland, 1999, p. 128).

As the need for international communication grew, new skills related to simultaneous interpreting were required. As a result, training courses for conference interpreters were soon established. According to Baigorri-Jalón (1999, p. 32), the first simultaneous interpreting course in history was sponsored by Filene and conducted within the premise of the ILO Conference. In a report about the training course, it is suggested that a room in the office building was equipped with the same technology used in the actual “telephonic interpretation” of the conference and used as the main premise for the training programme. Speeches delivered during previous sessions were used as training materials and mock conferences were held to give “an atmosphere of reality to the training course”. (quoted in

Baigorri-Jalón, 1999, p. 33). After completing the course, it is reported that a strict examination was conducted for the final selection of interpreters that were deemed capable of mastering the new craft of simultaneous interpreting. Those who passed the final examinations became qualified simultaneous interpreters, or as they were called back then, "telephonic interpreters".

As mentioned above, the earliest adoption of simultaneous interpreting was recorded in conferences within the ILO in the late 1920s. However, it was not until the Nuremberg trials that this new method of interpreting flourished. Even though it was proven far more efficient than the traditional approach of consecutive interpreting, several reasons led to an almost complete halt in the development of simultaneous interpreting. The first reason, as Baigorri-Jalón (1999, p. 33) mentions, is the hostility from consecutive interpreters. As simultaneous interpreting is usually performed from a small booth hidden away from attention, it represents a relegation of the interpreter's position to a less visible role. The second reason is related to the historical and political context at the time. The Wall Street crash in 1929 created massive economic problems for many countries, and political tension began to rise again in some parts of the world.

High unemployment rate and poverty in Germany eventually led to the Nazi Party's seizure of power; economic depression in Japan led to its invasion of Manchuria of China in 1931; and in 1935, Italy took over the African nation of Ethiopia (formerly Abyssinia). During this time, the League of Nations failed to respond to these crises with effective measures. The 1932-1934 World Disarmament Conference ended in a complete failure, and by 1937, Japan, Germany, Italy and Spain all withdrew from the League, rendering its decisions powerless and ineffective. As the world's citizens started to lose faith in international peace

dialogue, international organisations such as the League of Nations became increasingly silent. They began to lose their relevance in the 1930s in the face of major events that ultimately led to the Second World War. Under such circumstances, further experimentation and innovation in the field of simultaneous interpreting also seemed to have reached a state of impasse.

After the Second World War, however, simultaneous interpreting re-emerged as the principal mode of conference interpreting and entered a rapid expansion and development stage. Francesca Gaiba's study on the language personnel at the Nuremberg Trial provides a detailed account of the interpretation process during the proceedings (1999, p. 9). As the Main War Crimes Trial between 1945 and 1946 was the first major international conference to adopt the method of simultaneous interpreting, it marked an important milestone in developing this new mode of interpreting.

As with many other historical events, historians and journalists largely neglected the roles of interpreters during the trial. Shawcross (1969, p. 120) notes that in the official records, interpreting was only mentioned as a part of the technical requirements of the trial. However, the truth is that simultaneous interpreting played a critical role during the proceedings. Gaiba argues that "simultaneous interpretation was not just a technicality of the trial; few realised that interpretation not only made the trial possible at all, but it also affected the way the proceedings were carried out" (1999, p. 10). In other words, the Nuremberg Trial could not have been possible without simultaneous interpretation.

Before the trials, the need to out proceedings in four languages (German, French, Italian and English) caused great concern among the organisers. Gaiba notes that American Prosecutor Justice Jackson mentioned the following about the language issue of the trial:

> I think there is no problem that has given me as much trouble and as much discouragement as this problem of trying to conduct a trial in four languages. I think this has the greatest danger from the point of view of the impression this trial will make upon the public. Unless this problem is solved, the trial will be such a confusion of tongues that it will be ridiculous, and I fear ridicule more than hate (International Military Tribunal 1945, October 29, p. 16, quoted in Gaiba, 1999, p. 11).

There were some disadvantages associated with using existing methods such as consecutive interpreting. First of all, it would significantly slow down the proceedings. Furthermore, there was also the possibility of allowing defendants who could speak multiple languages more time to prepare their answers. As a result, the organisers of the trials started investigating more expeditious approaches. As Gaiba (1999, p. 11) mentions, the simultaneous reading of pre-translated texts, while being able to considerably speed up the trial process, did not apply to spontaneous speeches and responses that were not scripted. After several pre-trial meetings, it was eventually decided that simultaneous interpreting was the most optimal solution to the multilateral nature of the Nuremberg trials. IBM provided the same equipment that was previously used in Geneva. Therefore, the organisers did not encounter many difficulties in acquiring the supply of equipment, such as headphones and microphones required for the job. However, finding the necessary personnel for the job proved to be challenging.

According to Tusa and Tusa (1983, p. 218), with only 22 days left before the trial, the U.S. delegations were the only ones considering carrying out pre-trial interrogations. The U.K. chose not to interrogate, and France and the Soviet Union simply could not find enough interpreters to perform the task. In the U.S., applicants for the role of interpreters were given a comprehensive language test. Those who passed the initial test were sent to Nuremberg and tested for their aptitude for simultaneous interpreting. According to Gaiba (1999, p. 14), "only few were selected" for the highly challenging task. Even though some of these language specialists had previously worked as consecutive interpreters, no one was explicitly trained for simultaneous interpreting. Gaiba (ibid.) suggests that some of them received training once they arrived in Nuremberg and learned how to perform the task through on-the-job training during the pre-trial interrogations.

The use of simultaneous interpreting at the Nuremberg trials signified a revolution in the interpreting industry. Many modern-day standard practices and traditions in conference interpreting could be traced back to the trials. For example, according to Gaiba (ibid.), the interpreting system in the courtroom featured two teams of 12 interpreters, with three interpreters sitting at each of the four language desks, producing interpretations in that specific language. These two teams would take turns to rest after 90-minute sessions, which is very similar to arrangements made in simultaneous interpreting today. Furthermore, after the Nuremberg trials had ended, many interpreters who worked there joined other newly established international organisations such as the United Nations and UNESCO. Their experience working at the Nuremberg trials has, in many ways, influenced the professionalisation of interpreting as a whole.

After the Nuremberg trials, international organisations started to offer internal training programmes to prepare staff interpreters for diplomatic and political services. Meanwhile, other training courses for interpreters working in a business setting were also provided by private institutions. According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 29), the first institution to offer such training programmes in twentieth-century Europe was a college founded in Mannheim, Germany. The course was subsequently transferred to the University of Heidelberg in 1930. In the 1940s, similar interpreting schools were also established in Geneva and Vienna, mainly as a part of university courses. As Pöchhacker argues (ibid.), the use of simultaneous interpreting at the Nuremberg trials and its subsequent adoption by the United Nations was a significant driving force for the professionalisation of interpreting. As a result, more interpreting schools were established worldwide, and the growing demand for language services in an increasingly global society also increased the establishment of professional bodies representing the community of translators and interpreters in the 1950s. These professional organisations include the International Federation of Translators (FIT), and the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC). In particular, the AIIC successfully regulated the working conditions of conference interpreters. According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 30), the AIIC established a high profile of conference interpreters on an international scale and contributed to the research of various significant areas of the profession, including the training of new interpreters.

After the Nuremberg trials, conference interpreting experienced an expeditious process of professionalisation. In contrast, interpreting in community-based settings saw a much more stagnated development in professionalisation. Pöchhacker notes that it was not until the late twentieth century that professional standards and measures for the testing and certification of court interpreters were established (ibid.). In the field of sign language interpreting, the

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, hereinafter referred to as the “RID”, was founded in 1965 and played a vital role in setting up professional standards and a code of ethics for its members. The RID also created a system for the testing and certification of its members. Soon, national professional bodies such as the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) in Australia and the Chartered Institute of Linguists and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) in the U.K. were established, providing help and support for professional interpreters operating domestically. The increasing number of professional bodies representing interpreters worldwide is another critical step in the professionalisation of interpreting. Most of these organisations have ethics standards and codes of conduct to regulate their members. Such codes of conduct primarily focus on how interpreters should behave in a social environment and maintain a professional relationship with their clients and employers. The author believes that ethics and codes of conduct provide guidelines for interpreters to deal with challenging situations during their work. In other words, examining such standards may reveal potential risks the interpreters may encounter. Therefore, in the following section, the author of this study will review the ethics and codes of conduct in the interpreting industry concerning ethical dilemmas in an interpreter’s task.

2.3.2 Ethics and Code of Conduct

According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 167), “An occupation takes shape as a profession as the values and principles underlying expected and accepted behavior are codified and reaffirmed collectively by its practitioners”. Indeed, a milestone in the professionalisation of interpreting was the establishment of standards of ethics and codes of conduct. As the number of professional organisations for interpreters grew, one of their primary concerns

was for the actions and behaviours of their members to be regulated. By nature, interpreters are required to interact closely with other members of society during their work. For professional bodies representing interpreters, it is, therefore, a priority to ensure that the conduct of their members complies with social norms. Although some professional codes cover aspects related to the quality of the interpretation, such as "accuracy" and "faithfulness", the notion of the interpreter's role, or "social position", is the most crucial element in professional codes. When dealing with sensitive information or underprivileged communities, the interpreters may encounter ethical dilemmas. Professional codes offer practical guidance for interpreters regarding how they interact with clients. Furthermore, they were also established to protect the interpreters when it comes to situations where they may be involved in financial, legal and personal issues. As ethical standards and codes of conduct are created based on the interpreter's social position, the author believes exploring this topic as an essential sociocultural aspect of interpreting may be beneficial.

As Mikkelson (2000, p. 50) notes, standards of conduct can also be found in private interpreting agencies, government entities and language policy makers, apart from professional organisations of interpreters. However, she notices that, instead of conference interpreting, most professional codes are mainly concerned with interpreters working in community-based settings such as interpreting for the hearing-impaired, court interpreting and medical interpreting (ibid.). The particular focus on community interpreting may be related to various social and cultural factors.

It should be noted that unlike conference interpreting, community interpreting attracted relatively little academic attention and only became a topic of interest within Interpreting Studies in the early 1990s (Pöchhacker, 2016, p. 31). Before that point, the notion of ethics

was only mentioned in several professional bodies such as the RID (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf). Compared to interpreting that is conducted in a conference setting, community interpreting was initially regarded as a non-professional activity or even seen as a type of volunteer work. Bowen even asserts that community interpreting had a similar connotation to "community service" (1998, p. 319). In fact, in the book *Fundamentals of Court Interpretation*, community interpreting is even defined as "any interpretation provided by non-professional interpreters" (Gonzálezet al., 1991, p. 29). Indeed, in some cases, interpreting in a community setting is not performed on a professional level. For example, it may be performed for free by relatives and friends who have not received official training in interpreting. However, as Pöchhacker argues, the insufficiency or lack of financial remuneration should not suggest that community interpreting cannot be performed professionally (1999, p. 125). In fact, the author of the present study would like to argue that community interpreting is usually performed in high-stakes situations such as medical, educational and social work settings. Because of that, community interpreters bear a relatively higher level of responsibility regarding the service they deliver than other interpreting types. Therefore, establishing ethics and professional codes is necessary for community interpreting.

Furthermore, the diversity of institutional settings and cultural backgrounds means that community interpreters may face various challenges and ethical dilemmas that are more complex in nature. In this regard, the author believes that political interpreting shares many similar characteristics to community interpreting. For example, in the context of conflict and war, those employed to perform political interpreting may not necessarily have qualifications and may have never been trained in interpreting. As the main focus of the present study is the political interpreters who worked during a historical event, a deeper

understanding of the challenges and risks faced in political interpreting could be achieved by exploring the ethics and code of conduct in community interpreting.

As mentioned above, the RID played a pioneering role when it comes to the professionalisation of community interpreting. Since its founding in 1965, the RID has established a comprehensive set of ethical guidelines, training programmes and testing and certification schemes. As sign language interpreters often work in institutional settings, ethics is an area of concern that is given significant consideration. As a result, some of the training programmes linked to the RID demonstrate an extremely high level of emphasis on ethics. The term "community interpreting" itself, according to Chesher (1997, p. 278), was first introduced in Australia around 1970 in conjunction with expressions such as "ethical communities" or "community health". The term gained recognition in Britain in the early 1980s and was replaced by "public service interpreting" (Longley, 1984; Shackman, 1984).

A definition of community interpreting can be found in Pöchhacker:

> In the most general sense, community interpreting refers to interpreting in institutional settings of a given society in which public service providers and individual clients do not speak the same language (1999, p. 126).

Compared to other types of interpreting, a key feature of community interpreting lies in the phrase "institutional setting". As Fletcher (1989, p. 129) notes, in community interpreting, "one of the parties involved is an individual acting on his or her own behalf", and the other party is usually a representative of an institution such as hospitals and courts. Therefore, the community interpreter "is responsible for enabling professional and client, with very

different backgrounds and perceptions and in an unequal relationship of power and knowledge, to communicate to their mutual satisfaction" (Shackman, 1984, p. 18).

Although some institutions have specific protocols for dealing with interpreters, the individual client may not be able to treat the interpreters in a strictly professional manner. In community interpreting, it is not uncommon for individual clients to become dependent on the interpreters as they are regarded as the client's only means of communicating with more powerful institutions. As Shackman argues (ibid.), the relationship between representatives of an institution and an individual is essentially "unequal" in terms of power and knowledge, unlike in a conference setting where the participants are more likely to be of similar status. On this topic, Pöchhacker (1999, p. 127) asserts that the word "community" in community interpreting has two layers of meaning. The first layer refers to the mainstream society within which the interpreting process occurs, and the second concerns sub-communities such as ethical and indigenous communities and the linguistic minority.

Although community interpreting in a narrower sense is mainly associated with more well-known domains such as legal, healthcare, and social services, it can take place in a diverse range of institutional settings such as education and religion. As a great variety of social and cultural elements are involved, community interpreting presents numerous challenges for practitioners in the field, which is why the issue of ethics is vital in establishing professional protocols. Pöchhacker (1999, p. 128) notes that community interpreting as a form of facilitating communication between individuals and organisations has existed since antiquity. Some notable examples include interpreters for Aramaic-speaking Jews in the Roman Empire and court interpreters in sixteenth-century New Spain. Nevertheless, in a

modern context, community interpreting gained more attention in the late twentieth century when easier access to public services in the welfare state was provided.

As mentioned above, one of the critical pioneering movements in this area came from the deaf community in the 1960s. In order to allow equal access to social services for all citizens regardless of whether they are disabled, U.S. government authorities passed legal acts to encourage the rehabilitation of the hard of hearing, which led to the establishment of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). Within the same year it was founded, the RID produced its own Code of Ethics and compiled the first standardising publication on sign language interpreting, including sections dedicated to the training of future practitioners. According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 168), the adoption of the RID Code of Ethics in early 1965 was very successful in that it was "fundamental to the professional identity of sign language interpreters in North America". In addition, it provided a basis for similar standards to be established in other countries and other areas of interpreting. In particular, concepts such as "impartiality" and "faithfulness" related to more complex social factors in the interpreter's job are mentioned in RID's code of ethics, which later proved to be highly influential for drafting similar protocols in interpreting spoken languages.

A critical domain within community interpreting is court interpreting. Similar to sign language interpreting, court interpreting is mainly conducted in an institutional setting. Ethics plays an essential role in the daily tasks of court interpreters as they work closely with legal professionals. Mikkelson (2000) notes that the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) 's official website contains valuable information regarding this topic. Apart from its own "Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility", the NAJIT's website provides an extensive collection of articles on ethics and the

interpreter's role. Furthermore, some discussions by practitioners on various ethical dilemmas they experienced daily as court interpreters are also shown on the website, covering issues related to confidentiality and impartiality. For example, situations such as being requested to testify about a confidential meeting and being put in a position where the interpreting may cause harm to another person are discussed and debated, providing valuable insight for readers and aspiring legal interpreters.

Regarding the efforts to establish codes of ethics in court interpreting, some scholars, such as Schweda Nicholson (1994), believe that interpreters should be as unobtrusive as possible in their work. Therefore, she advocates for a more conservative and cautious approach to the issue of ethics. On the other hand, researchers such as Niska (1995) and Mikkelson (1998) assert that the interpreter's role should not be limited to the simplicity of a language converter. Instead, they promote the concept of "emancipation". According to them, court interpreters should be encouraged to expand their scope of responsibility as linguistic and cultural specialists who can offer their expertise where it is needed. Whilst professional codes of ethics aim to provide better guidance for interpreters during their interactions with clients, as Wadensjö (1998) points out, many existing codes are still unable to cover many real-life ethical dilemmas faced by interpreters.

Interpreting in healthcare settings is another area where ethical issues may lead to potentially severe consequences. As Mikkelson (2000, p. 51) notes, hospitals and other healthcare institutions often have their own standards of conduct for employees. However, the ethical dilemmas interpreters face are different from those encountered by other healthcare professionals. Fortunately, medical institutions are increasingly aware of the situation. As a result, guidelines targeted explicitly at interpreters are being incorporated into their codes

of conduct. According to Mikkelson (ibid.), the notion of “advocacy” is one of the key controversies in ethical standards in medical interpreting. Should the interpreter act as a cultural broker and advocate on behalf of the patient, or should they remain “neutral” and simply limit their duties to facilitating the linguistic transfer? Online platforms such as DiversityRx.org and organisations such as Canada-based Critical Link provide interpreters with valuable information related to the concept of cultural brokerage. These organisations provide examples of ethical dilemmas interpreters might encounter in the healthcare setting and present practical guidance in solving those challenges.

As technological developments and innovations are being made in the healthcare industry, the mode and conditions in which medical interpreters work are also rapidly evolving. As Mikkelson (2000, p. 51) asserts, “it is clear that interpreter ethics is a mercurial concept that requires constant redefinition in an ongoing discussion, a two-way street rather than a fixed set of unilaterally imposed standards”. For example, in a post-COVID19 society, remote video conferencing technology is increasingly used, not only in the healthcare industry but as a regular mode of communication in general. Under such circumstances, standards of conduct must consider such technological advancement and be adjusted accordingly to adapt to new social norms. Meanwhile, scholars such as Kaufert & Putsch (1997) point out that concepts such as confidentiality, accuracy and completeness do not provide much practical reference in medical interpreting. Similar to court interpreting, such broad principles are challenging to be implemented in real-life working conditions.

Compared to community interpreting, it could be argued that interpreters in conference settings are somewhat less likely to be exposed to ethical dilemmas. However, ethics is still a crucial element in their professional conduct. As Mikkelson (2000, p. 52) observes, ethics

is not discussed as an isolated concept within the AIIC. Instead, it is often implied in discussions of other topics, such as quality and professional secrecy. Although professional codes are often drafted by higher authorities such as policymakers and larger institutions, the code of conduct of the AIIC was created by practitioners of conference interpreting. At first, the AIIC's professional code of ethics did not receive much academic attention. However, in the 1990s, several antitrust cases were brought against the AIIC in the US, Canada and Germany, challenging the fee arrangements and working conditions of conference interpreters. Although the AIIC was accused of violating antitrust laws by setting fixed pricing for its members, it demonstrates how much professional codes may affect the labour conditions and remuneration for the members of professional organisations.

2.3.3 The Interpreter's Role

Regarding the interpreter's status of power in relation to other parties involved in the dialogue, Anderson (1976, p. 218-221) argues that when a bilingual interpreter works between two parties that are monolingual, "the interpreter's position as the person in the middle has the advantage of power inherent in all positions that control scarce resources". Under such circumstances, the interpreter plays a dominant role in the communication process.

As mentioned in the previous sections, interpreting has been practised since ancient times in various forms. The interpreter would often act as a mediator between two cultural groups, and their role is closely linked to the intermediary functions they serve within the society. Pöchhacker (2016, p. 169) notes that the interpreter's role was not "codified" until the twentieth century when the interpreting industry underwent a rapid development of

professionalisation. In a narrower sense, the interpreter's role is sometimes reduced to a mechanical and non-human function.

For many institutions and professional organisations, it is a well-established assumption that the interpreter's role should be limited to the mechanical transfer of words. As Knapp-Potthoff & Knapp notes, “the interpreter's function in general is comparable to that of a machine, giving a more or less literal translation of what is said in language A in language B” (1986, p. 152). Expressions such as “faithful echo”, “channel”, “conduit”, “switching device”, “transmission belt”, “modem”, or “input-output robot” are used to describe the ideal “unobtrusive” and “invisible” role of interpreters (Roy, 1993/2002, quoted in Pöchhacker, 2016, p. 169).

Particularly, in legal interpreting, the non-interfering requirement of the interpreter's work is emphasised. In a role description, interpreters are often requested to provide “verbatim translation” and remain in an absolutely neutral position while they work (Morris, 1995). One of the reasons why interpreters working in a courtroom setting are faced with such restrictive and strict requirements could be related to legality issues. Laster & Taylor (1994, p. 112) suggest that, technically, the information provided by persons other than the witness can be considered hearsay and will thus render the evidence inadmissible. Therefore, it may be argued that if the interpreter is given the authority to make adjustments or interfere with the witness' statement even to the slightest degree, the entire testimony could be regarded as hearsay and therefore rejected.

As various social, cultural and political complexities are involved in interpreting, it is often not practical to provide an interpretation that is entirely “equal” or “verbatim” to the original

speech. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, when challenges and ethical dilemmas arise, vague principles such as “faithfulness”, “neutrality”, and “non-interfering” are not particularly useful in terms of providing practical guidance for the interpreter's course of action. In some situations, it is simply necessary for the interpreters to “step in” and perform the role of a cultural mediator or else the purpose of the communication cannot be achieved. Some scholars such as Laster & Taylor (1994), Morris (1995), and Mikkelson (1998) therefore advocate that interpreters should be allowed to take a more accountable role as “communication facilitators” in community settings.

In a broader sense, the interpreter's role is not limited to simply providing literal and verbatim interpretation. Instead, it involves a few other social factors. For instance, Roy (2002) proposes four aspects of the interpreter's role, namely “helper”, “mechanistic conduit”, “communication facilitator”, and “bilingual, bicultural specialist”. A summary of each of aspect can be found below:

> Helper: offer advice, translate messages, make decisions for one or both sides;
>
> Conduit: a translation machine refraining from taking over the decision-making responsibilities;
>
> Communication-facilitator: a channel inserted to facilitate the transfer of messages from a sender to a receiver;
>
> Bilingual, bicultural specialists: By the end of the 70s and 80s most descriptions of interpreters acknowledged the fact that interpreters must be sensitive to the fact that they are communicating across cultures as well as across languages (Roy, 2002, pp. 349-351).

In Roy's model, the interpreter's role is complex in nature and requires a variety of interpersonal skills as well as a good understanding of the cultural differences between the interlocutors. In order to understand how cultural differences may affect an interpreter's responsibilities and actions, the author would like to first discuss the concept of "culture" itself. Žegarac gives the following definition of "culture" from a social perspective:

> The culture of a given group can be seen as a complex web of cultural representations relating to different types of regularities, or themes, such as the following:
>
> Orientations to life and belief;
>
> Values and principles;
>
> Perceptions of role relationships, including rights and obligations associated with them;
>
> Various norms and conventions of communication;
>
> Institutions, which may be formal, such as the legal, political and educational system, or informal, such as a poetry reading group, a cocktail party or a knitting club (Žegarac, 2008, p. 52).

All the factors mentioned above could essentially shape how a message is understood and interpreted by a member of a specific culture. In other words, what may make perfect sense in one culture does not necessarily mean that it would be perceived similarly by another. Therefore, in certain circumstances, it may be argued that it would be beneficial or even necessary for interpreters to assume a more "cultural" role. For example, in the field of healthcare interpreting, scholars such as Kaufert & Koolage (1984) believe that interpreters should act as "cultural brokers" between patients and medical institutions. Furthermore, they argue that interpreters should be encouraged to become the patients' "advocates" (ibid.). This proposition is based on the assumption that, as individuals, the patients should not be

seen as equal to larger institutions. Therefore, by "advocating" for the patients, the interpreters may achieve the goal of establishing a more balanced power relationship between the two parties that both rely on the interpreting service.

Similarly, in the legal field, Laster & Taylor (1994) and Mikkelson (1998) also believe interpreters should provide necessary guidance and interference for the interest of individual clients to counter the power imbalance the clients might experience in an unfamiliar institutional context. Some empirical studies, such as Barsky's 1996 study on refugees in Canada, have shown that interpreters can play a significant role in the empowerment of minority groups who are at a disadvantage by acting as intercultural agents. Reeves (1994) is one of the first scholars to suggest that the function of interpreters should not be limited to a linguistic tool. Instead, he believes interpreters should also act as cultural mediators. Reeves argues that a new dimension must be added to Interpreting Studies:

> [the new dimension] may include effective cultural briefing on systems, ways of moving towards negotiating outcomes, explanations of how negotiation partners use signals, subtexts and non-verbal gestures. This militates against the view of the interpreter as the neutral language channel and adds to it the function of cultural adviser. Moreover, this should work in both directions (Reeves, 1994, p. 46).

It is revealed in Reeves' findings that languages are not the only concern for interpreters. In order to truly fulfil their roles, many cultural and non-verbal elements must be considered during their work. Kondo & Tebble also echo the necessity for interpreters to be able to act as cultural advisors. According to them (1997, p. 158), the "ideal role of the interpreter" involves the ability to "smooth over cultural differences" and "bridge a wide cultural gap".

One of the definitions of interpreters as “cultural mediators” was proposed by Bochner (1981, p. 3): “The mediating person is an individual who serves as a link between two or more cultures and social systems. The essence of the mediating function is to shape exchanges between the participating societies so that the contact will benefit those cultures, on terms that are consistent with their respective value systems”. As Wang (2017, p. 96) notes, one of the fundamental features distinguishing cultural mediators from other types of interpreters is that instead of passively conveying messages, cultural mediators actively seek to play a constructive role in the communication process. In other words, they exercise more power in “shaping” the course of the dialogue.

Some scholars believe that as a general principle, interpreters should always utilise their cultural awareness and knowledge while they work. For instance, Katan (2004, p. 17) argues that “the cultural interpreter's role is the same as that of the cultural mediator, and touches on the role of a mediator in any other field, from arbitrator to therapist”. On the other hand, Pöchhacker (2008) assert that the role of interpreters should not equate to that of cultural mediators. In order to analyse the act of interpreting as a form of mediation, he proposes three different perspectives through which mediation could be viewed. These are “linguistic/cultural mediation”, “contractual mediation”, and “cognitive mediation” (Pöchhacker, 2008, pp. 11-14). As mentioned above, due to cultural differences, a linguistic expression that may make sense in one culture cannot necessarily be communicated to another culture. In these cases, Pöchhacker's concept of linguistic/cultural mediation refers to the adjustments the interpreter has to make to convey the messages without causing confusion or misunderstanding. It could be regarded as mediation on a very surface level.

The second type of mediation, contractual mediation, highlights the interpreter's position between the two parties involved in the communication process instead of simply dealing with two languages. In this dimension, the role of a mediator is elevated to that of a “middleman,” “broker”, or “agent”. In such a process, an element of human interaction is inevitably involved. Interpreting, in this sense, goes one step further than making the bare minimum changes to overcome the obstacles of “cultural difference”. According to Pöchhacker, examples of this type of interpreting include actions such as “explanatory additions, selective omissions, persuasive elaboration or the mitigation of face-threatening acts” (2008, pp. 13-14). Pöchhacker further notes that all of these actions “give the interpreter's mediation a conciliatory orientation and thus bring it closer to the more active sense of 'mediation' quoted at the outset, that is, intervening to reduce differences and promote understanding” (ibid.).

This type of mediation in interpreting is more similar to the role of “the mediating person” proposed by Bochner and “the cultural interpreter” discussed by Katan. Therefore, compared to the first dimension, this type of mediation covers a vast spectrum of activities beyond enabling communication between speakers of two languages. Regarding this topic, Pöchhacker argues that the interpreter's role should not simply be construed as “a mediator”. According to him, “Every interpreter is a mediator (between languages and cultures), but not every mediator is an interpreter” (2008, p. 14).

The third dimension, cognitive mediation, refers to the fact that the interpreter's understanding of the original speech itself is cognitively mediated. As interpreters are humans and not machines, their comprehension of the meaning of the messages is inevitably affected by their own subjective perception. The process in which the interpreter decides to

make specific interferences to fulfil the purpose of the communication is also essentially a cognitive one. With various aspects to consider, as Bruce Anderson argues, “the interpreter's role is always partially undefined – that is, the role prescriptions are objectively inadequate” (1976/ 2002, p. 211).

According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 170), the risk of “role conflict” is demonstrated in several empirical studies of interpreting in community and institutional settings. Shlesinger's 1991 case study on court interpreters in Jerusalem shows that during the trials, some interpreters were responsible for making stylistic changes and certain omissions. Shlesinger notes that a considerable degree of “intrusiveness” from the interpreters is noticed among the participants of the trials. Meanwhile, the interpreters themselves also acknowledge a certain extent of latitude in their work. Likewise, Davidson's 2002 study and Bolden's 2000 research project on interpreters in healthcare settings also reveal that, instead of facilitating linguistic transfer, interpreters are also observed to take on roles of mediators and “agents” during their work. Anderson (1976/2002) notes that interpreters are often challenged with various tasks in specific settings, causing a “role overload”. This assumption is proved in Pöllabauer's 2004 study on interpreting occurring in asylum hearings. During the interpreting process, the interpreters undertook “side-taking” and “side-switching” in accordance with the judges' expectation. It is noted that interventions such as shortening and paraphrasing statements and providing explanations are used to resolve conflicts, and the interpreters align themselves verbally with the authorities. Similar results are found in Kolb & Pöchhacker's 2008 research on interpreting in appeal hearings, where interpreters actively modify or shape the written records to suit authorities' expectations.

The role conflict also manifests in the difference between what the interpreters believe is needed and the client's requirements and expectations. For example, Mesa's 2000 survey reveals that the responsibility to explain cultural differences is ranked as a low priority or "not important" for most of the community service providers in Canada. In contrast, most interpreters consider it crucial that cultural values be explained to the clients. Angelelli's surveys and interviews (2004a, 2004b) show that interpreters are motivated to play a more active and visible role in healthcare settings in the interaction between patients and medical institutions.

Similar findings are demonstrated in studies on interpreting in legal settings, although there appears to be contradictions between different research projects. For instance, in Kelly's 2000 survey, most court judges claimed that interpreters should not assume the role of cultural mediators. In contrast, Kadrić's study in 2001 shows that 85% of court judges surveyed in Vienna believed interpreters should provide explanations about cultural differences where needed. A conflict in role perception is also observed between interpreters and legal professionals in Lee's 2009 study conducted in Australia. Legal professionals such as lawyers and judges generally perceive interpreters as "translation machines". Nevertheless, interpreters described their own role as "facilitator of communication".

This gap in perception is also seen in a conference setting. For example, Kopczynski's 1994 survey in Poland shows that most users of conference interpreting services prefer interpreters to take a more passive and invisible role rather than the "intruder role". Meanwhile, Zwischenberger's 2011 survey of AIIC members indicates that most interpreters perceive themselves as facilitators of communication and mediators rather than mechanical conduits.

In terms of the expectations of clients who use interpreting services, various studies have shown that quality criteria are given different priorities depending on the client's specific needs as well as their professional backgrounds. For example, in Kurz's study (1993/2002) on simultaneous conference interpreting in the fields of medicine, engineering and education, the aspects that were ranked to be of high importance mainly concern the linguistic features of the interpretation. Specifically, these aspects are “sense consistency, logical cohesion, and correct terminology” (quoted in Pöchhacker 2016, p. 174). A subsequent study in 1995 shows that in a media setting, users focus more on the delivery of the interpreter's output instead of the accuracy of the content. For instance, criteria such as “pleasant voice, native accent, and fluency of delivery” were highly prioritised in the end user's preferences (Kurz & Pöchhacker, 1995). A survey at a much larger scale conducted by the AIIC on user expectations of interpreting services in a conference setting confirms that the client's preferences vary significantly depending on factors such as the field and scale of the conference and personal backgrounds. It is demonstrated, however, that faithfulness to the original speech is generally one of the users' most valued qualities, followed by “content, synchronicity, rhetorical skills and voice quality” (Pöchhacker, 2016, p. 174).

In community settings, a similar degree of variability is observed in user expectations. Nevertheless, Pöchhacker notes that compared to conference interpreting, less emphasis is placed on the product of interpreting (ibid.). Instead, the users focus on the interpreter's attitude and behaviour. For example, Edwards et al.'s 2005 study shows that “trust” is one of the most critical qualities valued by individual clients. Likewise, Mesa's 2000 survey reveals that apart from language proficiency, the ability to provide cultural explanations to clients where appropriate is considered to be of vital importance. In a legal setting, Kadrić's

research in 2001 suggests that compared to "basic legal knowledge" and "knowledge of court organisation and procedure", the interpreter's "interpreting skills" and "linguistic and cultural competence" are appreciated more by the users of their services.

Sometimes interpreters are not directly hired by the end users, but instead, interpreting agencies, community service providers and conference organisers. It is essential to clarify the concept of "the client" as there might be some confusion. For example, when the client is defined as the "employer" instead of the end user of the interpreting service, they may have different preferences for the interpreter's skills. Moser-Mercer (1996) points out that from the perspective of the employer instead of the end user, the interpreter's ability to work as a team, availability and flexibility may affect how the interpreter's work is perceived and assessed.

2.3.4 The Notion of "Agency" in Interpreting

In social sciences, the concept of "agency" refers to the ability and capacity of an individual, or a "social agent", to act on one's will in a social environment. According to Barker (2008, p. 232), agency is "a discursive construction exemplifying the productive character of power". According to Guo (2015, p. 2), an interpreter's agency, especially in court interpreting, became a topic of debate as early as the 1990s. Some scholars believe that court interpreters should limit their task to strictly performing their duties as a "language specialist" and pay attention not to be involved in their job on a personal level (González et al., 1991, p. 502). Indeed, legal authorities generally tend to insist that interpreting services provided in court should be nothing but a means to ensure that people with limited language

proficiency can have equal access to legal services. Therefore, the role of the interpreters should be entirely “non-interfering”.

However, to this, some other researchers expressed their concerns. For instance, scholars such as Moeketsi (1999), Berk-Seligson (1990) and O'Barr (1982) assert that in some cases, the interpreter is the only means of communicating for some of the participants in court. In these cases, the interpreter's intervention is often needed, specifically when the participant's speech is influenced by cultural and linguistic factors that would otherwise be unbeknownst to the court. For instance, Berk-Seligson's research on Spanish court interpreters shows that due to the unique nature of verb forms and the tendency of blame avoidance in the Spanish language, the interpreter's rendering of participants' speech can indeed have an impact on some of the court proceedings (1990, p. 25). In such cases, seasoned interpreters would often intervene to achieve a particular pragmatic effect to minimise misunderstandings due to cultural and linguistic factors.

Although the concepts of agency and subjectivity seem very similar, there are several differences. Yuan (2017, p. 7) asserts that both the notions of agency and subjectivity emphasise the autonomous power of the interpreter and focus on the interpreter's role as a unique and independent party involved in the communication process. The difference between the two concepts, however, lies in the result of the interpreter's actions. Subjectivity is more oriented towards the interpreter's psychological activities, such as their intention, instincts and emotions, regardless of what consequences may come from their decisions and actions. Agency, on the other hand, focuses on the interpreter's function as a social agent that interacts with other agents in a social space and may change the event's outcome. In other words, the agency focuses on the result or consequence of the interpreter's actions.

In certain high-stakes settings such as political, diplomatic and military interpreting, some international organisations have exercised more control and scrutinisation regarding recruiting and managing interpreters. For example, Takeda's 2007 project examines the recruitment of Japanese interpreters by the U.S. government during the Second World War. These interpreters were often selected from second-generation Japanese American citizens known as "*nisei*" linguists. They were trained in Japanese language schools run by the U.S. army and navy forces. Even though these so-called "*nisei*" interpreters were American citizens trained to become military intelligence interpreters, after Japan attacked Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941, all of these *nisei* Japanese Americans were reclassified in the military as category "4-F". This label meant they were deemed "physically, mentally or morally unfit for military service". Soon after that, they were further categorised as "4-C", denoting that they were "Enemy Aliens, not acceptable for military service because of nationality or ancestry" (Takeda, 2007, p. 94). Furthermore, these *nisei* interpreters who served in the U.S. army and navy often experienced much prejudice and suspicion from their colleagues of other ethnicities due to nothing but their ancestry and Japanese roots.

It would seem that sometimes no matter how much the interpreters are required to remain in an objective and mutual position, social and cultural aspects such as their personal experiences, ethnicity, and identity cannot be separated from their practice of interpreting. These aspects apply to the interpreters, their clients, and the other party involved in the communication. Due to various social aspects, political interpreters may find themselves in a position where a conflict between their identity and ethnicity may lead to risks regarding their reputation, career development and sometimes even their personal safety. On the other hand, the unique position of political interpreters may also provide them with access to more

military intelligence, an extensive personal network with members of the opposing camp, and even exposure to more career opportunities. In such cases, these benefits can be considered as the interpreter's “capital”.

To better understand the concept of agency in interpreting, the notion of “capital” needs to be examined in detail. The term “capital” was first introduced by Bourdieu (1986) and is used to refer to material and non-material resources adopted by social agents to appropriate “social energy” or specific profits by participating in a particular social event. The concept of capital is widely known for its extensive use in Marxist social economics in the ideology of capitalism. However, according to Bourdieu, there are multiple types of capital (ibid.). Economic capital refers to tangible assets such as salary, savings and other forms of monetary gain. Nonetheless, apart from that, “symbolic capital” can refer to all types of capital that are abstract in nature. For instance, a social agent can utilise their specialised cultural knowledge in the form of educational qualifications and professional accreditations, which is known as cultural capital. Additionally, social capital can be represented by the agent's social networks and personal connections. These forms of capital do not have to be objective. Instead, the capital exists “when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception which cause them to know it and to recognise it, to give it value” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 47).

Within the field of Translation Studies, Bourdieu's theory of capital has been discussed by scholars such as Gouanvic (2005) and Wolf (2007). Specifically, Gouanvic (2005, pp. 161-162) points out that translators typically have more knowledge of the target language and culture than the original writer. However, even though they can increase the capital of their work by adapting to the target culture, they still mainly benefit from the “symbolic capital

invested in the original work, published in the source society”. This imbalance is also echoed by Wolf (2007, p. 21), who observes that translators often receive less social recognition than the original writer and thus have access to less symbolic capital. The concept of agency in Translation Studies is also mentioned by Scott & Marshal (2009), Buchanan (2010), Milton & Bandia (2009), Buzelin (2011), Kaptelinin & Nardi (2006), Kinnunen & Koskinen (2010) and Khalifa (2014). According to Milton & Bandia (2009, p. 1), the social agents in a translation activity are closely related to the translator's subjectivity and individuality. Ultimately, the translator's decisions and actions can impact cultural innovation and even affect the result of an event.

Pym's theory of risk management in Translation Studies (2015) explores the “author-translator-reader” relationship. He maintains that the translator typically has more knowledge of the source and target cultures and languages than both the author and the reader. Even though the notion of capital is rarely discussed in the field of Interpreting Studies, the author would like to argue that as interpreting is also a form of translational activity, the same principles and findings related to agency in written translation should also apply to interpreting. For example, similar to what Gouanvic notes about translators, interpreters often have more cultural and linguistic knowledge than the other parties that rely on their service. Likewise, the symbolic capital of the original work mentioned by Wolf also applies to interpreting. When a famous person's speech is interpreted, the interpreter also benefits from the same symbolic capital invested in the original speech.

Furthermore, in the translators' work cycle, they often have more freedom to change, revise and improve their work over time until a satisfactory product is completed, often without the need to interact with the author or the readers directly. The interpreter, however, often

having to be physically present in the same place and time frame as the other participants, tends to be subjected to a higher level of social interaction. According to Inghelleri (2005, p. 72), in the context of an interpreter-mediated event, multiple social factors and elements often have a dynamic effect on each other, and the interpreter's own positioning in the social space is often affected by other more powerful agents involved in the event. Therefore, Inghelleri believes that researchers in Translation and Interpreting Studies should pay more attention to the critical analysis of the active roles played by the translators and the interpreters and investigate the effect of their acting as social and cultural agents.

In order to understand how the interpreter's actions are affected by the other social agents, it would be helpful to study what types of capital are accessible by the interpreter and whether the immediacy of the practice influences the interpreter's agency. According to Guo (2015, p. 5), when measuring and assessing an interpreter's capital, a minimum of three aspects need to be considered: "linguistic and cultural competence, interpreting skills and social status". Among these, Guo considers the interpreter's linguistic and cultural competencies the "basic capital" that defines the interpreter's role (ibid.). Essentially, the interpreter would not be selected for the job without at least some knowledge of the languages involved in the communication process. Guo notes that the basic or primary capital relates to the interpreter's personal background, experiences, and educational qualifications (ibid.).

The interpreter's interpreting skills can be seen as a "cultural capital" acquired through training and practice. The cultural capital is the one that separates the interpreter from other agents with a similar level of understanding of the language and culture. The third element, i.e., the interpreter's social status, is closely connected to the other two factors but has

distinctive social and political characteristics. Depending on the institutions the interpreters are affiliated with, for example, courts, hospitals and international organisations, their social status and reputation may be perceived differently. Furthermore, the interpreter's personal connections and social network should also be considered when assessing their social capital. As Bourdieu (1986, p. 51) observes, “the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilise” and “the volume of the capital by each of those to whom he is connected” can have a direct impact on the social capital available to the agent. Particularly, Guo (2015, p. 6) notes that in cultures where the social network is highly valued, for example, some of the East Asian cultures like China, Japan and Korea, the effect of social capital is amplified, giving the interpreters exposure to more opportunities.

Cultural differences may also change the way the public views interpreters. For instance, Guo (2015) mentions that in a country like China where there is a high demand for interpreting service providers, particularly at high-end conferences, the public tends to view interpreters favourably. As a result, interpreters in similar cultures usually receive more remuneration than other language specialists who work as translators. On the other hand, interpreters working for American troops in Iraq may have a very different public profile as local residents sometimes see them as associating with “the enemy”. These examples demonstrate how the interpreter's social and symbolic capital are “always based on mutual recognition in the social world” (Guo 2015, p. 6).

The mutual recognition the interpreter shares with other members of the society also plays a crucial role in determining the volume of his or her social capital. In the context of war and conflict, it is difficult for the interpreter to maintain an objective and neutral position. First of all, by nature, interpreters can speak the languages of both parties involved in the

conflict, and they are in a unique position where they are required to interact with both sides. For this reason, when it is possible, organisations are more inclined to recruit interpreters whose interests align with their own.

Nevertheless, Depending on the interpreter's nationality, ethnicity, personal experiences and motivations, being recruited by one of the parties does not automatically guarantee their "loyalty" or institutional alignment with said party. According to Guo (2015, p. 6), as the interpreter strengthens their connection with one side, it could potentially result in less symbolic capital being recognised by the other side. In Guo's research (2015) into interpreters during the second Sino-Japanese war, she observes that in the context of conflict, some interpreters frequently change their political stance and position between the two parties involved in a conflict. Even though the interpreter's capital consists of different types of assets, such as their linguistic, cultural and social values, the total volume of his/her capital is not a simple addition of these factors. Instead, it is a dynamic element that adapts to the interpreter's changing social position and level of power control.

Regarding the interpreter's psychological and ideological alignment, in many professional codes of ethics, it appears that "impartiality" and "neutrality" are emphasised. However, as Guo notes (2015, p. 6), in a military or conflict context, "loyalty" is often considered one of the essential attributes instead of neutrality. Guo maintains that the interpreter's choice of advocating either impartiality or loyalty ultimately denotes "a certain positioning that can maximise the reactive value of their capital in specific situations" (ibid.). As observed in Guo's study on wartime interpreters, it is not uncommon for these interpreters to adjust their political positioning to suit their own interests. Their "flexibility", in this regard, may be

seen as unprofessional by interpreters working in other settings such as conferences and medical institutions.

However, the actions of side-switching and playing “double agent” are not uncommon in interpreters working in unstable social and political environments. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of their motivations can shed some light on understanding the relationship between capital and agency in these scenarios. The effectiveness of the interpreter's agency depends not only on the linguistic and cultural capital they possess but also their social and political capital. While the interpreter's linguistic skills are not likely to change much during an interpreting mission, their personal connections with the other social agents and the external political power relationship are much more dynamic and may be subject to change. For instance, Guo (2015, p. 12) argues that “the amount of interpreters' capital can change for various reasons including the increase of cultural knowledge, interpreting experience and expanded social networks”. Furthermore, the interpreter's choice in terms of the position they put themselves in and how society perceives them can significantly influence the value of their capital.

3 Methodology

According to Pöchhacker (2016, p. 65), most of the data used in Interpreting Studies and Translation Studies are generally qualitative rather than quantitative. In some situations, the qualitative data collected in research projects is presented in a numerical form. Nevertheless, the analysis of such data is often still conducted through personal interpretations and subjective opinions. Therefore, Pöchhacker believes that Interpreting Studies should be considered a form of human science closely related to social sciences. In the disciplines of human sciences and arts and humanities, researchers often rely on various interpretive processes to gain insight into the topics. It is unavoidable that such interpretive methods are shaped by individual perception within a particular social, cultural and historical context. As Pöchhacker argues, in a social-constructivist approach to Interpreting Studies, "there is no such thing as 'natural data'" (ibid.). Furthermore, Chesterman and Arrojo note that data cannot be completely objective as they are always collected and "taken" by the researchers with a specific goal and purpose in mind (2000, p. 152). Because of this, scholars must state their theoretical objective explicitly when collecting data.

The present study has two primary goals. The first one is to discover the lives and tasks of the interpreters during the First Opium War, which has rarely been mentioned in historical studies. The second goal is to explore and analyse how risk may affect an interpreter's behaviour in a political setting. In order to address these two objectives, a mixed-approach method is adopted in carrying out this study. A combination of three approaches is applied: historical and archival study, case study, and text analysis. In this chapter, the author explains the rationale for each selected method and provides an overview of the materials used to collect research data.

3.1 Historical and Archival Study

When devising research design in Interpreting Studies, Gile (1998) notes that there are primarily two distinctive approaches, namely observational and experimental. The main goal of observational studies is to examine a phenomenon as it happens within a real-life context. In contrast, in the experimental approach, the phenomenon is re-created first in a laboratory setting and then examined in a more controlled manner. Robson (1993) proposes three specific research methods that could be used in Interpreting Studies. The first one is "fieldwork", which is similar to what Gile defines as "observational approaches". The key feature of this method is that data are often collected from events that occurred in real life, often in the form of case studies. The second type is survey research, a popular method for issues related to the sociocultural aspects of interpreting, such as role perceptions and user expectations (Pöchhacker, 2016, p. 67).

The third type of method often adopted in Interpreting Studies is experimental research. Some advantages of this approach include the ability to conduct research in a controlled environment where the effects of particular variables can be examined individually. Nevertheless, Gerver (1976, p. 167) points out that defining and isolating variables is not an easy task. In addition, finding a research design that is "capable of handling the multiplicity of factors involved" is particularly challenging. Furthermore, Gerver notes that as the number of "sufficiently skilled interpreters available at any one time in any one place with a particular combination of languages" is minimal, it could affect the validity of experimental research (ibid.). For these reasons, Gile (1990, p. 37) recommends that students of Interpreting Studies should prioritise adopting observational research methods

over experimental ones. Pöchhacker notes that observational methods could be categorised into three categories: “watch, ask and record” (2016, p. 67). Due to the nature of the present study, as the main interpreted event in question took place nearly two hundred years ago, it is impossible for the author to observe or interview the interpreters who worked during the First Opium War. Therefore, historical records and documents are the only materials that could be used for the analysis. Furthermore, as the study aims to focus on the social and cultural aspects of interpreting during the First Opium War, the interpreters' personal backgrounds and experiences are one of the most important factors to be studied. As a result, historical and archival records of the interpreters' early life and educational background are also used to create a more comprehensive illustration of their characters.

The First Opium War is one of the most significant events in China's early modern history. To many Chinese people, the signing of the *Treaty of Nanking* is seen as the beginning of China's “Century of Humiliation”. Although many historians have studied this event from different perspectives, the translation and interpreting process is largely neglected, and the vast cultural divide between the two countries is rarely researched in detail. As mentioned in the previous chapter, when it comes to the historical approach to Interpreting Studies, one of the problems that many scholars have mentioned is that interpreters do not tend to leave traces in historical records. Granted, finding materials related to certain interpreters in history may be highly challenging. However, seeking and collecting even the most obscure evidence from historical documents is essential for researchers to grasp a glimpse into the interpreters' life and their work.

During the data collection stage of the present study, several difficulties must be overcome. First of all, official historical records of the First Opium War need to be collected from both

the Chinese and the British sides, which poses some challenges in acquiring access to the primary sources of the research. Furthermore, as the documents were written nearly two hundred years ago and feature old-fashioned use of the English and Chinese languages, it requires additional research to verify the exact meaning of specific words and phrases. As Pöchhacker argues (2016, p. 153), an essential prerequisite for conducting historical research on interpreting is “a thorough knowledge of language(s) and cultural traditions”. Secondly, although there is a large volume of historical data related to the First Opium War, only an insignificant fraction of it is dedicated to descriptions of the interpreters. Skimming through a vast number of documents to identify and locate scant information related to the interpreters may be time-consuming and frustrating. Finally, as the author's judgement is affected by her subjective perception and the historical context, it may be challenging to contextualise certain aspects of the interpreting practice in the nineteenth century.

In existing research projects dedicated to the history of interpreting, government chronicles and official records are among some of the most common sources of data. A notable example of this is Lung's 2011 research on Sillan interpreters mentioned in the previous chapter. Other than official historical records, individual recollections of the historical event, for instance, memoirs, letters, diary entries, and essays, can also provide valuable information from a personal perspective. As Pöchhcaker (2016) observes, visual records, such as images and audio-visual recordings, are also used to study interpreting in the twentieth century. For the present study, the primary historical materials come from a combination of official government records, documentation from public institutions, individual diaries, and memoirs written by the people involved in the First Opium War.

In terms of materials written in Chinese, some of the most important original documents about the First Opium War can be found in the book *History of Diplomatic Affairs in Late Qing Dynasty, Reign of Daoguang* [筹办夷务始末·道光朝] (Wen, 1964). It includes a relatively comprehensive collection of memorials submitted to the Qing government regarding issues prior to and during the First Opium War. It should be noted that these documents were scrutinised and approved by the Qing government before they were released and published. Therefore, although they represent a high degree of authority, some sensitive information may have been censored. In addition, one of the most comprehensive collections of historical materials related to the Opium Wars in the Chinese language can be found in *Archival Historical Materials on the Opium War* (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992). This series of archival historical materials on the Opium War is published in seven volumes. It includes imperial edicts and memorials collected from the Grand Council in the Forbidden City in Beijing and other organisations within the Qing government in charge of producing official publications. It should be noted that the Grand Council was a critical policy-making body during China's Qing dynasty, so the materials presented in this book series are also highly authentic.

Furthermore, in 2010, the China National Microfilming Center for Library Resources [全国图书馆文献缩微复制中心] published the book series *Rare Confidential Memorials in the Sino-Anglo Opium War* [稀见中英鸦片战争密奏] in two volumes. As the book series' title suggests, the volumes provide a selection of rare materials between the years 1838 and 1841, including confidential memorials submitted to the Qing government. As the China National Microfilming Center for Library Resources is a division within the National Library of

China, these book volumes can be considered credible sources of materials. In addition, it is worth mentioning that instead of being reformatted into word-processed texts, photographic copies of the original memorials are presented in these book volumes, offering an added layer of authenticity.

Apart from memorials and imperial edicts published by the Qing government, the author of the present study also collects materials from publications that come from less official and more private sources. For instance, the *Collection of Documents on the Modern History of China: the Opium War* [中国近代史资料丛刊：鸦片战争], includes private accounts of the First Opium War collected from people who were involved in the war one way or another. Among this collection of documents, one of the most notable materials is the *Diary of Diplomatic Missions* [抚夷日记], written by Xi Zhang (2018). Xi Zhang describes his interactions with the British at length in his diary, including many detailed dialogues with British interpreters John Morrison and Robert Thom. Although such dialogues are entirely written in Chinese, and it is unclear whether some information may have been lost in translation, it provides valuable insight into the behaviours of the British commanders and interpreters.

The memorials and imperial edicts included in the materials mentioned above represent a crucial aspect of how officials within the Qing government discussed and decided on issues relating to the Opium War. However, according to Wong (2011), another critical perspective worth investigating is the diplomatic communication the Qing government shared with the British government. For the British government, the only way of receiving official information and responses from the Qing government was through written exchanges.

Wong notes that during the Opium Wars, the primary language of communication used by the Chinese and British governments was Chinese (ibid.). In the book *Collection of Documents on the Modern History of China: the Opium War* mentioned earlier, a small selection of 71 written exchanges between the two governments is published, but more materials can be found in the British National Archives.

Regarding the materials written in English, some documents regarding the military operations can be found in *British Parliamentary Papers* (O' Meara, 1971) and British documents on Foreign Affairs published by the British government. Another critical source of information is *The Chinese Repository*. It was a periodical journal published in Canton (Guangdong) between 1832 and 1851. The journal was created by Elijah Coleman Bridgman, the first American Protestant missionary appointed to China. All articles were written in English to provide foreign missionaries in China with information about China's history and culture. It contains descriptions of important events during the Opium War and documents such as Zexu Lin's Letter to the Queen of England and the *Treaty of Nanking*.

Similar to the documents in Chinese, apart from government documents and materials published by private institutions, the other materials are mainly individual recollections in the form of memoirs and diaries. Books written by William C. Hunter, an American merchant in Canton, such as *An American in Canton (1825-44)*, *The "Fan Kwae" at Canton Before the Treaty Days, 1825-1944* (1938) and *Bits of Old China* (1885) contain valuable information about the opium trade. For example, they include detailed descriptions of some of the interpreters. The *Narrative of the Expedition to China, From the Commencement of the War to Its Termination in 1842,* authored by British Royal Navy Officer John Elliot Bingham (1843), also offers insight into the war from the perspective of the British military.

3.2 Case Study

The second method used in the present study can be seen as a form of a case study. In order to understand the interpreters as individuals, thus enabling the author to explore the social and cultural aspects of interpreting during the First Opium War, the author selects a few of the most prominent interpreters from both the British and Chinese sides as cases for the present study. First, the interpreters' personal background is analysed for the author to understand and appreciate their motivations and goals, which may affect how they viewed and managed risks encountered during the interpreting and mediating processes. Then, a few representative incidents where risk management played a vital role in the interpreters' actions are analysed in detail.

In the case study part of this thesis, the author begins by discussing some of the very first encounters between Britain and China as it provides more background information on how some of the interpreters acquired language skills in the first place. According to Hu & Jia (2010), the British envoy, the Macartney Embassy, was sent to China in 1793. Before that, China and Britain knew very little about each other in terms of language, culture, customs and political system. However, this state of mutual ignorance was broken by Robert Morrison. He was a British missionary determined to spread the gospel in China. To achieve his goals, Morrison travelled to China, learned the language and eventually helped establish the Anglo-Chinese Academy in Malacca. Robert Morrison's pioneering efforts provided Britain with a means of training its own language specialists to serve diplomatic roles in its relationship with China.

The Qing government, on the other hand, remained uninterested in Britain and did not initiate any measures to train its staff in the English language. This imbalance in the number of language specialists between the two countries later disadvantaged China during the First Opium War. When the British East India Company (hereinafter referred to as the EIC) started smuggling opium into China, Emperor Daoguang of the Qing authorities sent an official named Zexu Lin to solve the problem. However, when Lin arrived in Canton, where the opium was sold, he struggled to find translators and interpreters to assist him in various administrative tasks. When Lin eventually assembled a team of language specialists, he became highly suspicious of their work and sought to verify their translations in multiple ways. On the contrary, the British plenipotentiaries in China gave their interpreters complete trust and fully respected the interpreters as linguistic and cultural experts.

The first part of the case study focuses on the three prominent interpreters serving the British government throughout the First Opium War: John Morrison, Karl Gutzlaff and Robert Thom. John Morrison was the son of Robert Morrison, the first British missionary to visit China. John Morrison was born in Macau and started learning Chinese at a young age as his father intended to raise him to be “a Chinese scholar” (Morrison, 2018). Even though John Morrison was the youngest among the three British interpreters, he was undoubtedly the team leader. John Morrison succeeded his father's role as the Chinese Secretary of the British forces and acted as the Chief Interpreter in all negotiations between Chinese and British representatives.

In the case study, the author begins by analysing his family background and early years experiences in order to examine his personality and motivations, which could have impacted his behaviour and decisions as a political interpreter. During the First Opium War, Morrison

did not only serve the role of an interpreter but was also trusted by the British plenipotentiaries as a military advisor. He occasionally acted as a diplomat with high control and power. Even though it is impossible for the author of the present study to obtain any visual or audio recordings of John Morrison's work, information related to some of his actions and decisions could be found in historical archives and memoirs. An in-depth study of John Morrison's behaviour as a political interpreter is performed from a risk perspective by analysing such information. The case studies on Karl Gutzlaff and Robert Thom are conducted similarly.

Regarding interpreters from the Chinese side, as the Qing government eventually decided to relinquish the right to employ its own interpreters, less information could be found compared to the British interpreters. First, an overview of the Canton trade and the comprador system is provided so that readers can understand the background of the First Opium War. In terms of the representatives of the Chinese political interpreters, the author of the present study selects Zexu Lin's team of language specialists and former comprador Peng Bao as the main subjects of the second part of the case study. The Chinese interpreters were generally of a much lower status within the government task force than the British interpreters. Therefore, risk analyses of the actions and decisions of the Chinese interpreters were mainly oriented towards their relationship with the Qing government officials. Throughout the case studies, the author endeavours to first understand these interpreters as individuals, and then as social actors in a political environment filled with potential risks and rewards. Each interpreter has their own personal history, values and identities, and these factors inevitably influence how they perceive and manage social, cultural and political risks during the interpreting process.

3.3. Text Analysis

Throughout the case studies, some in-depth text analyses are also carried out. In the historical approach to interpreting, one of the most notable difficulties is acquiring accurate primary data. As the interpreter-mediated event may have taken place in history hundreds of years ago, it is impossible for scholars to observe the interpreting process in person or obtain audio or video recordings of how the interpretation was performed. As a result, for modern-day researchers, many of the visual and non-verbal aspects of the interpreted event may have been lost forever. In other fields within Interpreting Studies, advanced technology could be used to measure various types of data such as the interpreter's heart rate, the ear-voice span which refers to the delay of the interpretation with respect to the original speech, and even the brain activity that is related to the distribution of attention in real-time. Not only are these findings able to contribute to a better understanding of interpreting as a complex human activity, but they also present opportunities for researchers to observe interpreting from different perspectives.

However, there is no such luxury in the historical approach to interpreting. As mentioned above, the scarcity of available information directly related to the interpreters in official historical records may lead to significant challenges for researchers. In the case of the present study, as mentioned previously, the author is able to find several official and private sources of information that are helpful in the analysis of the interpreters' personal background and actions throughout the First Opium War. When it comes to the actual interpretation that was performed, nevertheless, only a few sentences and phrases can be found in the memoirs and diaries of people who interacted directly with the interpreters at

the time. Unfortunately, such brief mentions of the interpretation are insufficient to be used as evidence to analyse the linguistic and cultural aspects of the interpreters' task.

In order to delve into the risks the interpreters faced in the context of conflict, the author of the present study believes that it is necessary to conduct an in-depth textual analysis of the *Treaty of Nanking*. The *Treaty of Nanking* was initially drafted by British officials and translated by British interpreters John Morrison and Robert Thom into Chinese. Even though it could be argued that the production of the Chinese version of the *Treaty of Nanking* falls under the category of written translation, the author does not believe it should be left out in the present study.

First, in the mid-nineteenth century, there was no clear distinction between translators who only worked with written materials and interpreters who only performed oral interpretation. The need for language services was not exclusive to in-person talks and negotiations in political relations. Language specialists' assistance was also needed for exchanging legal documents and official letters and drafting and translating bilateral treaties. In today's high-level diplomatic relations between major powers, the foreign affairs office of each nation usually has specialist teams of interpreters, translators, revisors and précis-writers dedicated to different areas of language services that are required. However, back in the nineteenth century, when language specialists were a rarity, each interpreter may have had to work on multiple types of assignments. First, all language-related tasks cannot be performed without their participation, including written translations.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the literature review chapter, in some cases, political interpreters served the roles of trading brokers, logistics managers, liaison officers, and even

spies. Therefore, compared to the more narrowly defined role of interpreters today, the tasks of bilateral interpreters in history were more dynamic, required various skills, and involved different risks. The *Treaty of Nanking* signified the end of the First Opium War and was the first-ever international treaty the Qing government of China signed with a European nation. As a result, the particular wording of the treaty involves risks related not only to linguistic and cultural factors but also to political and legal issues. By conducting a text analysis on the bilingual versions of the *Treaty of Nanking*, it is believed that the findings will reveal some of the more specific challenges and risks the interpreters faced from linguistic, cultural, political and legal perspectives.

4 Interpreters affiliated with the British government during the First Opium War

During the early eighteenth century, the East India Company (EIC) started selling opium to China through unofficial channels to counter the massive trade imbalance between Britain and China. The detrimental effect of opium on the people of China led to the Emperor of the Qing government banning the sale and smoking of the substance. However, banning opium did not stop it from being traded. As a result, by the mid-nineteenth century, the scale of addiction to opium was such that the Qing Emperor took steps to enforce the law, including seizing and destroying stocks held in British warehouses. This action led to the military conflict that we know today as the First Opium War. At that time, the British military forces were very powerful. They used their might to subdue China and enforce upon them a treaty, the *Treaty of Nanking*, to legalise trade and end military hostility. In this chapter, the author reviews the political relations between China and Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries so that readers can have an overview of the background of the First Opium War. Next, the chapter is divided into three parts, each covering one of the three prominent interpreters who served Britain during the war.

Captain John Weddell attempted the first encounter between Britain and China in August 1637. A detailed account of the event is described in Jackson's 2022 book *The First British Trade Expedition to China: Captain Weddell and the Courteen Fleet in Asia and Late Ming Canton.* It is mentioned in this book that a merchant fluent in Portuguese was on board as an interpreter. It is clear that from the first visit to China, Britain was aware of the importance of language and translation. According to Morse (1910, Vol. 1, p. 176), prior to

Robert Morrison, the first person in the East India Company to acquire Chinese language skills was James Flint. In 1736, he visited China and learned how to speak Chinese. Flint promised the East India Company that he could offer his services if the Company provided him with the necessary funds to continue his Chinese studies.

Flint started working as an interpreter for the EIC in 1746, and his work was highly valued as he successfully contributed to a few large-scale trades the EIC made in the city of Ningbo (Morse, 1910, Vol. 5, p. 28). However, when foreign ships were banned from entering the port of Ningbo in 1757, Flint broke protocol by travelling to Tianjin to make an official complaint about the corrupt Canton System. In the complaint, Flint mentioned the names of a few corrupt government officials and suggested that Ningbo should be fully open as a free trading port.

Even though the Qing government immediately started an investigation and eventually punished those officials, Flint was also arrested for breaking the rules. He was deported and banned from returning to China (Farmer, 1963). Even though Flint worked as an interpreter for a commercial company and therefore could not be considered a political interpreter, he became actively involved in a political event by making a complaint about the government officials in China. Therefore, his actions and decisions were subjected to various social, cultural and political risks. It is uncertain whether Flint was aware of the consequences of his actions. Nevertheless, by choosing to break protocol and travelling to Tianjin to submit his complaint, Flint risked his personal safety and his career as an interpreter. As a result, even though he achieved his goal and the corrupt officials were punished, Flint also suffered from being arrested and deported, and his career as an interpreter working for the EIC in

China also ended. After Flint was deported, the EIC lost their only British staff working in Canton who could speak Chinese.

In 1793, the Macartney Embassy was the first British envoy to be received by the Emperor of China. Before they set off, the mission's organisers, George Macartney and his deputy George Leonard Staunton were determined to find trustworthy interpreters who could speak Chinese. At that time in history, finding capable interpreters fluent in Chinese and English was highly challenging. For many foreign visitors to China, it was a common practice for them to hire compradors in Canton as interpreters and assistants. It should be noted that the word "compradors" here refers to a group of self-taught English speakers residing in the Canton area of China. According to Platt (2018, p. 35), the compradors in Canton had a bad reputation for being greedy and unscrupulous. As a result, Macartney was determined to avoid relying on the compradors. Instead, Macartney recruited four Chinese Catholic priests as interpreters and brought them along with the Embassy. Curiously, although these Chinese Catholic priests were fluent in Latin and Chinese, they did not speak any English. Therefore, the interpretation between English and Chinese was conducted through Latin as a medium language. The interpreting process during the entire Macartney Embassy is described in detail in Harrison's 2021 book titled *The Perils of Interpreting: The Extraordinary Lives of Two Translators between Qing China and the British Empire*. George Leonard Staunton's son, George Thomas Staunton, was also on board and studied Chinese with the interpreters during the journey. George Thomas Staunton made significant progress in his studies and was soon able to speak Chinese to a satisfactory level. According to his memoir (Staunton, 1798, p. 234), George Thomas Staunton was able to speak to Emperor Qianlong of China in English and even received a personal gift from the Emperor himself.

In 1800, George Thomas Staunton returned to China and was appointed junior clerk at the EIC in Guangzhou of the Canton area. As a result, after more than 40 years since James Flint was deported, the EIC finally had another British employee who could speak Chinese. According to Morse (1910, Vol. 3, p.7), before Staunton was recruited, the EIC had to rely on local compradors for translation and interpreting needs. However, the difficulty one had to encounter to get a faithful translation through the EIC was paramount as the compradors only had minimal knowledge of written English, and their behaviours were far from professional and reverent. In 1809, Robert Morrison joined the East India Company. According to Stifler (1938, p. 67), soon after he joined, Morrison started teaching employees at the EIC how to speak Chinese. Until the end of the EIC's monopoly in China in 1834, a total of 19 clerks within the company learned how to speak Chinese. As a result, Robert Morrison significantly improved the number of Chinese language specialists the British forces possessed. However, after the EIC's monopoly in China ended, many of its employees did not choose to join the army. Instead, they returned to the U.K. Therefore, Wong (2012, p. 7) points out that most British interpreters that worked during the First Opium War did not come from the EIC.

After Robert Morrison passed away in 1834, his son John Robert Morrison succeeded in his role and became the Chinese Secretary of the British forces in China. Apart from John Morrison, two other prominent interpreters served the British government during the First Opium War. The first one is Prussian missionary Karl Gutzlaff (also known as Charles Gutzlaff), and the second is an English merchant named Robert Thom. Thom first worked in the piece goods department of Jardine, Matheson & Co. and learned how to speak Chinese due to work-related reasons. These three people provided invaluable services to the British government during the First Opium War. Apart from them, some other people also briefly

assumed the role of an interpreter. For example, Guan wrote a few articles discussing the case of Samuel Turner Fearon, who grew up in Macau and was fluent in Chinese, English and Portuguese (2012). Wong (2012, p. 7) also mentions that George Tradescant Lay and Walter Henry Medhurst sometimes acted as interpreters for the British government. However, for the scope of this present study, only the three leading interpreters (i.e. John Morrison, Karl Gutzlaff and Robert Thom) are analysed and discussed in detail.

4.1 John Morrison

John Robert Morrison may not be a household name, but his actions impacted the lives of millions of people in the nineteenth century, with some of the knock-on effects still being felt today. This statement becomes truly surprising when it is revealed that John Robert Morrison was not a high-ranking official but an interpreter during the First Opium War between Great Britain and China. The *Treaty of Nanking* and its subsequent supplement, the Treaty of Bogue, are contractual documents between Great Britain and China. They were both translated into Chinese by a team of language experts led by Morrison.

Whilst the role of an interpreter is generally considered to be that of faithfully rendering the content and the sentiments of speeches to another language, the role played by Morrison during the war far exceeds that. Not only did Morrison serve as a military and cultural advisor to the admirals, but he was also often put in charge of leading the negotiations with the Chinese officials. Morrison's linguistic and cultural knowledge was used not only in performing interpreting tasks but also as a tool for himself to deceive, manipulate, and gain an advantage personally and internationally. This case study explores the various roles played by Morrison during the First Opium War between Britain and Qing China,

highlighting the possible risks associated with being an interpreter in the context of war and conflict. The case study begins with providing an overview of Morrison's family background and early years experiences, followed by an analysis of the roles he played during the war, namely as a military and cultural advisor, a diplomat, and an autonomous interpreter and translator during the drafting and signing of the *Treaty of Nanking*.

4.1.1 Early Years

In existing papers about the interpreters during the Opium Wars (Yuan, 2017; Hu & Jia, 2010), when it comes to the family background of John Morrison, he is almost always simply described as the son of Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to visit China. However, the author of the present study believes that in order to truly understand and appreciate the rationale and motivation behind Morrison's actions and decisions as an interpreter during the First Opium War, it is necessary to delve deeper into his personal life and early years experiences.

Roland (1999, p. 83) notes that ever since the beginning of Confucian-style examinations in 165 BC in China, translators and interpreters were among the first civil service appointees to work within the government. However, these language specialists mainly dealt with the dialects of different regions within China and languages spoken in countries that shared borders with China, and these countries were mainly located in Asia. According to Hu & Jia (2010, p. 1), before Britain became one of the strongest naval powers in the world and started its imperial expansion in the nineteenth century, English was not considered a language of particular importance by the ruling powers of China. In fact, very little was

known about the Western world as a whole. As a result, the only European languages dealt with by the government's translation and interpreting office were Latin and Russian.

Meanwhile, as there was little contact between Britain and China, training its staff in the Chinese language was not a priority for the British government either. As briefly mentioned above, when Britain sent its first diplomatic mission, the Macartney Embassy, to China in 1793, the organisers could not find interpreters proficient in both Chinese and English. With much frustration, Macartney, the leader of the mission, had to recruit two Chinese missionaries from Italy who could speak Latin and Chinese to travel with them as their interpreters. As these missionaries did not speak English, Latin was used as an intermediary language to achieve communication between Chinese and English.

It could be said that, at this point in history, neither the authorities in China nor Britain had sufficient knowledge or understanding of each other's culture, people or language. However, this situation was soon changed by the arrival of a British missionary in China in 1808, and he was John Morrison's father, Robert Morrison. As an active member of the London Missionary Society, Robert Morrison had a calling to preach the gospel in China. Robert Morrison spent much time and effort learning the Chinese language and had to overcome a few difficulties to achieve his goal. First of all, it was impossible for him to travel to China directly from Britain as the only available ships bound for China were owned by the East India Company (the EIC). At the time, the EIC was generally opposed to religious activity. As a result, it was a part of their policy not to carry missionaries on board (Carson, 2012, p. 99). Therefore, Robert Morrison had to stop first in New York City to gain the promise of protection from the U.S. consul. However, when he finally managed to get to Macau, he was told that he could not remain in China as a missionary because no foreigner was allowed

to be there for purposes other than commercial activities. Furthermore, according to the laws and regulations in China, associations between civilians and foreigners for purposes other than trading were strictly forbidden. As a result, Robert Morrison could not learn Chinese from the locals as it was a crime punishable by death.

Under these grave obstacles, the only way for Robert Morrison to gain legal residence and to provide for himself and his family was to join the EIC factory in Canton (modern-day Guangdong province in China) as a language specialist. This position offered him security, income, and the opportunity to master the Chinese language and understand the culture. In 1809, on the same day he accepted the position at the EIC, Robert Morrison married Mary Morton, the daughter of an Irish expatriate living in Macau, and they had three children. As Mary had struggled with her health, their first son died at birth in 1810. They had a daughter in 1812 and John Morrison was their third child, born in April 1814. Due to her illness, Mary followed her doctor's advice and returned to England in 1815 with the children while Robert Morrison stayed in China. Robert Morrison mentioned that because his work was "of so important and urgent a nature, as that the suspension of them even for a few months, would have been a great loss" (Hancock, 2008, p. 109). His wife and children did not move back to Macau until 1820, when Mary Morrison's health condition was greatly improved. It could be deduced, therefore, that between the ages of one and six, John Morrison spent most of his childhood living in England, while his father was completely absent. Although John Morrison's mother was also a devoted Protestant Christian, it is unclear whether John Morrison ever developed resentment toward his father's work that prevented him from being with his family.

When the Morrisons reunited in 1820, they spent a few happy weeks together in a comfortable house by the sea in Macau. Robert Morrison recounts that "we and the children walked happily together almost every evening" (Hancock, 2008, 147-8). However, as Robert Morrison's position was based in Canton and foreign women were not allowed to reside there, his wife and the children had to stay in Macau, only being able to see Robert Morrison for short periods. In less than two years, Mary passed away during her pregnancy in 1821. John Morrison and his elder sister stayed with their father for a few months, and it was during this time Robert Morrison decided to teach his son John Chinese. In a letter he wrote to the Secretary of the Missionary Society, Robert Morrison mentioned that: "My son John, if God spares us both, I mean to bring up as a Chinese scholar; and pray and hope that his heart may be influenced by 'the God of all spirits and all flesh', to become a preacher of Christ's gospel to the Chinese". (Morrison, 2018, p. 103-104).

John Morrison was then sent back to England to receive an education at the beginning of 1822. During this time, Robert Morrison visited the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca and Singapore and returned to Britain in 1823. Robert Morrison stayed in Britain during 1824 and 1825 and was well received by the society, in fact, he even presented the Chinese bible to King George IV. In 1826 Robert Morrison came back to China with his new wife and children and continued to work with the EIC while carrying on with his missionary work. During 1827 and 1830, his son John Morrison was sent to the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca to study Chinese. As interpreters were urgently needed at the EIC, John Morrison went to Canton in 1830 and started working as an interpreter for Western merchants at an mere age of 16. Soon, John Morrison became a personal secretary and interpreter to American diplomat Edmund Roberts and travelled with him around southeast Asia. During this time, John Morrison was able to improve his Chinese language skills and better

understand China's culture and commercial environment. In 1833, he even wrote a book titled *Chinese Commercial Guide* (Morrison, 1839), providing information for foreigners wishing to start businesses in China. In 1834, the EIC lost its monopoly on trade with China and Robert Morrison's position there was terminated. As a result, Robert Morrison was then recruited by the British government to work as a translator and interpreter under Lord Napier, the Chief Superintendent of British Trade in China, but shortly passed away due to illness. After Robert Morrison's death, his son John Morrison succeeded in the role of Chinese Secretary of the British government.

It is worth noting that although John Morrison supported his father's legacy and continued Robert Morrison's missionary work after his death, there is a fundamental difference between the father and the son regarding where they align themselves institutionally. According to the *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the Late Robert Morrison*, written by his second wife Eliza, it can be seen that Robert Morrison's position at the EIC was only reluctantly accepted as a means of acquiring legal residence and income. At the time, he would have had to leave China if he did not accept the position. Robert Morrison devoted almost all his free time to his missionary work which he considered his true calling. In fact, he did not get along well with his colleagues at the EIC. Robert Morrison criticised the British traders' conduct and was firmly opposed to the opium trade. In other words, he would always see himself first as a missionary, then as an interpreter working for the EIC.

His son John Morrison, however, did not share the same sentiments. According to Hu & Jia (2010), John Morrison never openly disagreed with any British merchants or officials. Instead of a missionary, it may be assumed that John Morrison considered himself more a political civil servant of the British government and was willing to devote himself to his

country. He may have also had more financial and career aspirations than his father. Whilst Robert Morrison detested the opium trade, it did not seem to concern John Morrison. For instance, before John Morrison became the Chinese Secretary, the Jardine Matheson Company was looking for an interpreter to travel north and help them sell opium in China. In a letter written by British merchant William Jardine, he mentioned that John Morrison was interested in the position and was rather disappointed when he learned the news that instead of him, Karl Gutzlaff was the one selected for the job (Wong, 2012, p. 7).

4.1.2 Military advisor and Diplomat

In 1836, Admiral Sir Charles Elliot became the Chief Superintendent of Hong Kong. He trusted John Morrison and highly respected his opinions and understanding of the Chinese language and culture. According to Hu & Jia (2010), in February of 1840, Elliot wrote to the British Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, stating that John Morrison was his "dear friend". In the letter, Elliot also mentioned that as the Chinese Secretary, Morrison had always been a reliable advisor regarding issues related to China. According to Elliot, no one else in his team had the same level of knowledge about China as Morrison did. Therefore, it could be seen that John Morrison was considered more than just an interpreter to the Admiral. John Morrison was referred to as a friend, the Chinese Secretary, and an officer whose knowledge could provide significant value to the British government. Furthermore, Elliot believed no one else knew as much about China as Morrison did. This suggests that John Morrison played an irreplaceable role in the British government in China.

Indeed, from John Morrison's personal experience mentioned above, it is clear that there was no better person for the job after his father's death than himself. John Morrison was born in Macau, then received his education in England, studied at the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca and travelled with an American diplomat around Southeast Asia. It may be argued that after spending decades in China and having translated the Bible into Chinese, his father, Robert Morrison, may have had an even better mastery of the Chinese language. However, Robert Morrison's main priority and true calling in life had always been religiously motivated. Strictly speaking, Robert Morrison did not necessarily agree with what the British merchants and army were doing in China. Instead, he was sympathetic to the local Chinese people and always sought peace rather than violence.

In this regard, his son John Morrison was evidently more faithful and devoted to the British government. While maintaining a good relationship with the church and continuing some of his father's missionary work, John Morrison's actions are more politically motivated than religiously driven. While John Morrison worked as a personal interpreter to American diplomat Edmund Roberts, he had some exposure to foreign affairs and diplomacy. Capitalising on this experience, John Morrison was not afraid to openly express his opinion regarding issues related to Britain's military operations in China. Furthermore, unlike his father, he did not sympathise with the Chinese people. According to Bingham (1843, p. 391-392), Morrison believed that “The Chinese are specious, but insincere, jealous, envious, and distrustful to a high degree. They are generally selfish, cold-blooded, and inhuman”.

One could argue that having spent much time in China, John Morrison learned how things were meant to be done in the “Chinese way”. According to Hu & Jia (2010), in 1834, when Liang Fa, the second Chinese Protestant convert, was arrested and detained for distributing

religious materials, John Morrison effectively bailed him out by using bribery. As Morrison had utterly mastered the Chinese language, business environment and political culture, there was even a rumour among the Chinese that "John Morrison is actually a Chinese person working for the foreigners" (Hu & Jia, 2010).

The British government made good use of Morrison's skills. Ever since the Battle of Chuenpi, when the British army marched north, John Morrison always served as the principal interpreter and took the initiative regarding negotiations between the British and the Chinese. For example, when the Emperor of China sent government official Zexu Lin to investigate the opium trade in Canton, Morrison translated most of the documents sent from the British side. According to Su (2005, p. 184), in 1840, after the British force occupied the city of Dinghai, one of the interpreters, Karl Gutzlaff, was left in the city to deal with administrative translation tasks. John Morrison, on the other hand, was selected to accompany Charles Elliot and George Elliot to travel north to Tianjin and negotiate with the Chinese government. When they reached Tianjin in August, Morrison first sent a boat to deliver the official documents to the Chinese official Qishan [琦善] and was then in charge of translating and interpreting during all negotiations. After the negotiations concluded, the British force stopped in Dengzhou for supplies. Again, it was Morrison who communicated with the local officials and secured supplies. Finally, in October, when they reached the Zhejiang province, Morrison helped Elliot negotiate with the local government regarding the release of prisoners of war and matters related to returning to Dinghai.

It is suggested that Morrison may have even acted as a military advisor to the British army in China. According to Hu & Jia (2010), when the British reached the city of Nanking (Nanjing), they planned their attacks based on a map acquired by John Morrison. Some even

believed that it was John Morrison's idea to attack Nanking. According to Liang (1937, pp. 81-82), after conquering Zhenjiang, Charles Elliot's successor, Henry Pottinger, was going to follow the Queen of England's orders to proceed to Tianjin and request for more trading ports to be open. However, John Morrison advised him against it. Morrison stressed the importance of Nanking as the essential transport hub of China. He suggested that gaining control over Nanking would mean that the Chinese would have to agree to their every demand. Although there is no official historical record to back up Liang's theory, his description of John Morrison is very similar to Xi Zhang's.

Xi Zhang was the servant of the Viceroy of Liangjiang Yilibu [伊里布], and was often put in charge of negotiating with the British. Zhang wrote two memoirs describing his encounter with the foreign nation and John Morrison's name was frequently mentioned. According to Zhang (1954/2018, p. 17), Morrison once said to him, “we must attack Nanking and keep marching North to conquer Anhui, Jiangxi, Huguang and Sichuan, meanwhile, another ship will be sent to Tianjin and Beijing, then we will be in a good position to talk”. It could be seen from Zhang's words that John Morrison was, indeed, an advocate for attacking Nanking. As an political interpreter, Morrison's role was more administrative, and he was not supposed to be in a position to make any critical decisions. However, regarding the plan to attack Nanking, Pottinger might have consulted Morrison's opinion and relied on his knowledge of Chinese geography, culture and language. A Chinese official once mentioned in his report to the Qing Emperor that Charles Elliot and Henry Pottinger's cunningness was “probably the result of John Morrison and Robert Thom's guidance” (Wong, 2012).

According to historical records (The Chinese History Society, 1957), when Yilibu sent Xi Zhang to negotiate with the British forces, John Morrison did not only interpret the

conversations between Zhang and George Elliot but often initiated private conversations with Zhang. For instance, when Zhang boarded the British battleship, he complimented the intricate design of the ship and the weapons on board. John Morrison then asks, “could people of your nation achieve the same design?” To Morrison's question, the tactful Zhang replies, “this technology is indeed clever, people of the Celestial Empire, however, do not devote themselves to such a thing”. Morrison asks, “then to what do they devote themselves?” Zhang, in turn, says, “Literature”. Morrison comments that “literature is important, but so is technology”. Morrison then shows Zhang the cannons and guns on the battleship with much pride and points out that “Chinese cannons are also good, but the firepower is weak” (ibid.).

Yuan (2017, p. 49) suggests that by changing the subject to a direct comparison between Chinese and British technology, Morrison was trying to make Zhang and, by extension, Yilibu, aware of the superiority of British technology and weaponry. In these conversations, Morrison demonstrated that not only did the British have better weapons, but they also had a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese military force. Yuan (ibid.) argues that Morrison's goal may have been to change the negative way the Chinese viewed Britain as a nation. Morrison wanted to make Zhang understand that Britain should not be looked down upon and that the Qing government in China should treat Britain as its equal. However, instead of being condescending and directly saying that British weaponry is superior, he acknowledged that “literature is important” and that “Chinese cannons are also good”, which suggests that Morrison was skilled in diplomatic negotiations. Furthermore, when Morrison saw it more beneficial to be modest, Morrison used his mastery of the language to demonstrate humility. For example, according to the First Historical Archives of China (1992), during some of Morrison's conversations with Zhang,

he referred to Britain's act of visiting China as “paying tribute” and the Emperor of China as “the Great Emperor”.

马礼逊（此处指马儒翰）云：“琦中堂何日到广东？”禧云：“以五十日为期。”彼云：“英国前来朝贡，曾以九十余日。”禧云：“前系大皇帝柔恤远人之意，惟恐尔等不惯陆路，缓程行走，以节其劳。琦中堂赴粤查办事件，系驰驿前往，故缓急不同。” (The Chinese History Society, 1957, Vol. 5, p. 341)

[My translation:
John Morrison asks: “When will Grand Secretary Qi arrive in Canton?” Xi Zhang responds: “In fifty days”. Morrison says: “When Britain came to pay tribute, it took more than ninety days”. Xi Zhang says: “That was because the Great Emperor was sympathetic towards visitors travelling from a land that is far away, he was worried that you are not used to travelling on land and allowed you ample time to travel in order to minimise the toil. Great Secretary Qi, on the other hand, was assigned to go to Canton to investigate a case urgently, therefore, he will travel fast on horseback, that's why he will arrive much sooner”.]

（禧）又问国王即位，行大礼否？彼（马礼逊）云：“国王即位，进帽头，帽头朝冠也。即时定位。”（禧）又问：“起居如何？”彼（马礼逊）云：“朝王祗屈一膝，即是大礼。”（禧）又问坐何座？彼（马礼逊）云：“若大皇帝

就座，英国狮子座。”（此处的马礼逊指马儒翰）(The Chinese History Society, 1957, Vol. 5, p. 342)

[My translation:

(Xi Zhang) further enquires whether the Kowtow ritual (when a person kneels and bows so that his head touches the floor) is performed when the King ascends to the throne. Morrison answers: “When the King ascends to the throne, the coronation ceremony will be performed. A coronation is the placement of a crown, and this act immediately signifies the beginning of the monarch's reign”. Xi Zhang asks, “what gesture must one make when greeting the King?” Morrison says: “Bending a knee to the ground (genuflecting) in front of the King is the appropriate way to greet a monarch”. Xi Zhang asks what seat one should take. Morrison answers: “If it is for the Great Emperor, it will be the coronation chair with lion adornments”.]

According to Yuan (2017, p. 50), Morrison's usage of words and expressions such as “paying tribute” and “the Great Emperor” shows that he was deliberately trying to please Zhang by putting the Qing Empire and Emperor Daoguang in a superior position. Morrison's primary goal as a government representative was to build a benign commercial relationship with Qing as equal partners and open up equal trade. Nevertheless, during the conversation with Zhang, Morrison talked as if Britain is a tributary state to China and addressed Emperor Daoguang of the Qing government as the “Great Emperor”. It should be noted that “the Great Emperor” in the Chinese context has some special connotations. When a Chinese government official needs to address the Emperor, “Great Emperor” is the exact term used. The tributary states of China also use this term to address the Emperor of China. According to Guo (2005), acknowledging the Emperor of China as “the Great Emperor” is one of the essential conditions for China's tributary states. Therefore, instead of referring to Emperor

Daoguang as “the Emperor of China” or “the Emperor of your country”, Morrison's act of addressing him as “the Great Emperor” would undoubtedly please Zhang and, by extension, the Chinese government.

In contrast, it could be assumed that Morrison's use of words such as “paying tribute” and the “Great Emperor” must have been against the will of the British government, and it meant that Morrison was taking a certain level of risk with this action. It may even be argued that if Charles Elliot or Pottinger knew about the connotations of these expressions, they would forbid Morrison from speaking in that manner. However, to please Xi Zhang and gain a more favourable view of the British, Morrison took the liberty of complimenting the Qing Empire and befriending Zhang. If they ever found out, Morrison's commanding officers may indeed be disappointed by his choice of words. However, based on Zhang's description, this conversation was held privately between him and Morrison. Furthermore, apart from Morrison himself, the only person on board who could understand Chinese was another political interpreter, Robert Thom, Morrison's subordinate. Therefore, the possibility of the higher officials knowing what Morrison said was low. In terms of the benefit of his actions, it can be deduced that Morrison wished to earn Zhang’s trust so that he could keep the conversations going. At the same time, by showing Zhang advanced British weapons and technology, Morrison's goal was for the Qing officials to believe that an open commercial relationship with Britain would benefit China. After weighing the benefits against the likelihood and severity of the consequences, it can be assumed that Morrison decided the risk was worth taking.

Xi Zhang wrote about his experience dealing with the British on behalf of Chinese governor Yilibu in the form of memoirs. In one of the memoirs, an intriguing dialogue between himself and John Morrison was recounted below:

> 禧劝懿律至镇海与中堂相见，马礼逊（马儒翰）代答云：“我们大人若去，要率领兵将船只进入内河，然后登岸。”禧云：“两国和好，何必兵将相随？”彼云：“我来朝贡之时，贵国设兵将。”禧云：“此系天朝制度。”彼云：“我国亦有制度。”禧云：“此一时，彼一时，前此承平，人心不疑，此时干戈未息，非昔之比。况内河既有木椿，又沉船，是内河万不能进。”彼云：“既然如此，不便前往。”(The Chinese History Society, 1957, Vol. 5, p. 342)
>
> [My translation:
> Xi Zhang advises George Elliot to meet the Grand Secretary (Yilibu) in the city of Zhenhai. Morrison answers on behalf of Eliot: “If our Sir Elliot were to go, we would lead our army and ships into the inland river and then get on land”. Xi says: “Our two countries are in a friendly relationship. Is there a need to bring the army around?” Morrison says: “When my country came to pay tribute, your country had an army on guard”. Xi says: “This is a rule of the Celestial Empire”. Morrison says: “My country also has rules”. Xi says: “The circumstances are different now. Previously we were in a peaceful relationship, and there were no suspicions. Currently, there is an ongoing dispute, and the situation is not like before. Furthermore, there are timber piles and sunken ships in the inland river. Therefore, the inland river must not be entered”. Morrison says: “If that is the case, it is not convenient for us to go”.]

The fact that Morrison directly answered a question posed to George Elliot clearly shows that he had an extremely high level of autonomy as a political interpreter. First of all, Morrison knew that he was allowed to answer the question on George Elliot's behalf without asking for his permission. Secondly, George Elliot must trust Morrison enough to discuss their strategies with him. Morrison did not have to consult Elliot's opinion before saying they would need to bring their men to the inland river. When Zhang tried to persuade him not to bring the armed forces with him, instead of saying "no" abruptly, Morrison made a reasonable comment. His response was: "When my country came to pay tribute, your country had an army on guard". The author believes that two tactics Morrison used here are worth noting. The first one is the phrase "to pay tribute". This phrase puts Britain in the same position as China's tributary states and therefore shows an extremely high level of respect for China.

At the same time, Morrison wished to show Zhang that Britain deserved to be treated as a country of equal status to China. If China had an army on guard when Britain came to visit, then it would have been perfectly reasonable for George Elliot to bring his men when meeting Yilibu. At this point, it was clear that Britain had a military force that was more powerful than China. However, Morrison was still able to take the moral high ground when he negotiated with Zhang. As will be mentioned in the following chapter, the political interpreters serving the British government were privileged in that they earned complete trust from their commanding officers. In the case of the Chinese interpreters, if they dared to intercept the dialogue and speak without permission, the interpreters would have faced suspicion that they were scheming against the Chinese officials. In Morrison's case, he seemed comfortable answering the question on behalf of Pottinger and did not receive any

punishment. During the First Opium War, the British and Chinese interpreters participated in the same political event. However, it can be revealed that the risks the interpreters faced differed depending on the sociocultural context and the relationship they shared with their employers.

In the dialogue between Zhang and Morrison, after Morrison expressed the intention to bring the army along with them to the meeting, Zhang explains that it is a rule in China that the military should be present when a country comes to pay tribute. Zhang, in his mind still representing a country of superior status, was perhaps expecting Morrison to back down and acknowledge that Chinese rules must be obeyed. However, this is where he underestimated Morrison. Morrison simply stated that "my country also has rules", implying that it should not be taken for granted that the British must obey Chinese rules at their own risk. It is arguable whether Britain had such a specific rule. However, Morrison's response clearly shows that he was fully aware of whether George Elliot would accept the condition proposed by the Chinese government. As mentioned earlier, Morrison was a firm advocate for attacking Nanking. As he said, if they planned their attacks strategically, the British force "will be in a good position to talk". Zhang made his last attempt to reason with him, with apparent excuses for why they "must not" bring the army and the ships to the inland river. To this, Morrison then said, "In that case, it is not convenient for us to go", without even consulting Elliot. This act demonstrates that Morrison was entirely in charge of the negotiations.

At the beginning of the conversation, it could be seen that the British expressed willingness to participate in negotiations with the Qing government. In fact, as we know today, British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston gave Pottinger a few clear goals to achieve in terms of the

requests and conditions for China. Therefore, engaging in peace negotiations also suited British interests. However, going to the negotiation table while unarmed would mean that there is a risk that they might be arrested or even assassinated. Britain could not afford to lose a senior official, and it could be assumed that Morrison did not want to risk his own life. From a risk analysis point of view, the safest option for Morrison and other British officials would be to go to the meeting location with armed forces so that their security would be guaranteed no matter the result of the negotiations. From Zhang's words, Morrison understood that the Chinese did not want them to bring their military force with them to the meeting. Nevertheless, with the safety of Nanking on the line, it was equally essential for the Chinese to arrange peace talks with the British.

Considering that Morrison lived in China for a long time and was acutely aware of the political situation, it is highly likely Morrison was aware that Zhang's major goal was also to promote the opportunity to negotiate with Elliot. Unlike Elliot, Morrison probably had a better grasp of the importance of Nanking to the Qing government of China, and he knew that Yiilibu would be in no position to negotiate but to accept every request the British force may have. By insisting that they bring the soldiers with them to the inland river of Zhenjiang, Morrison was undoubtedly taking a significant risk. If Yilibu did not agree to this condition and the British army was left having to attack Nanking, then there would have been many uncertainties, and Morrison may end up being the one to blame. First of all, they would undoubtedly suffer some damage if war broke out. As Morrison did not discuss with George Elliot before rejecting the conditions proposed by Zhang, he might have to take responsibility for the damage caused by the attack. The punishment might have been losing his job, imprisonment or even worse. Therefore, the consequences were grave.

As discussed in the literature review chapter, two elements must be considered when one considers risk. The first one is the severity of the consequence, and the second one is the probability. China's refusal to negotiate with Britain could potentially lead to severe consequences, such as a large-scale war breaking out in Nanking between the two countries. Nevertheless, how likely was it? This judgment is where Morrison's familiarity with Chinese culture came into play. Morrison wagered on the fact that the Chinese government wanted the opportunity to negotiate just as much as the British forces and thus would be willing to make certain compromises to make that happen. In this case, Morrison was correct, and negotiation talks were arranged in the end in a fashion that favoured the British. In this regard, the final result Morrison achieved was worth the risk he took with the Chinese government.

Another historical evidence of John Morrison playing an active role in the negotiations between Britain and China can be found below:

> 迟之良久，马礼逊（马儒翰）始过喜等船上，喜即向其言明来意，徐牧亦将许给赎城银三百万之话言明，马夷（马礼逊）曰："三百万是小事，如能了结大事，则三百万就不要了。"徐牧屡挽马礼逊从中委婉。马礼逊曰："璞大人与尔提督原要赎城银五百万，是我委婉，已经减去二百万。"又曰："如能和好，我们仍在中国贸易，我焉敢得罪中国之人。此事岂有不尽心之理。"
>
> (Zhang, 2018, p. 25)
>
> [My Translation:
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> After a long while, John Morrison then welcomed Zhang to get on board the ship. Zhang then expressed his intentions, and Mu Xu (another Chinese official to

accompany Zhang) also clearly stated that he would pay the ransom of three million taels of silver. Morrison said: “The three million taels of silver is but a small concern, if we could fix the most significant issue, then we may well not need the money”. Xu begged Morrison for help in this matter. Morrison said: “Master Pottinger originally requested a ransom of five million from your governor, I already helped you by reducing the amount by two million”. Morrison then said: “If the two countries can bury the hatchet, we will still be trading in China, I do not dare to offend the people of China. I will make a supreme effort in this matter”.]

This passage shows that, according to Morrison himself, when Henry Pottinger requested five million taels of silver as a ransom for the city of Nanking, Morrison managed to persuade him to reduce the amount to three million. There is no way of knowing whether this statement is true. If it is, that means that John Morrison's advice was valued and respected when Henry Pottinger made decisions regarding China. If what Morrison said is not true, and he simply lied to Xi Zhang and Mu Xu, it then shows that Morrison was confident that there was no risk involved in making up the story. When Xu asked Morrison to further negotiate the terms, by showing some willingness, Morrison might have been able to earn the trust and respect of the officials of China, which, in turn, may have increased the likelihood of successful negotiations.

According to Zhang's diary (2018, p. 27), there was another instance where Morrison demonstrated a certain level of influence over determining the amount of indemnity the Chinese government was required to pay. It is noted that, initially, the British government requested a total sum of 30 million dollars in compensation for debts owed to the British opium merchants. Zhang (ibid.) argued that the amount was unreasonably large. He asserted

that more investigation might need to be conducted to determine the exact sum of money owed to the British merchant. It is described in Zhang's diary (2018, p. 27) that Morrison and General Malcolm discussed for a long while and then said to Zhang, "if your intentions to seek peace is sincere, then it may also be acceptable for us to reduce the amount slightly". From the fact that Morrison and General Malcolm had a long discussion, it could be seen that Morrison did not simply serve the role of an interpreter and conveyed Zhang's words. Instead, Morrison's opinion was highly valued by the British general. Based on Zhang's descriptions, after another discussion made by interpreters John Morrison, Robert Thom and General Malcolm, it was decided that 9 million dollars would be waived and the total payable amount would be reduced from 30 million to 21 million. This incident also demonstrates that the team of political interpreters led by Morrison possessed a relatively high level of authority in issues related to China.

In this section, the personal history of John Morrison is first reviewed, followed by an analysis of the risk management behaviours he demonstrated as a political interpreter for the British side during the First Opium War. It could be seen that in low-risk scenarios, when there is a potential reward, Morrison was more inclined to take the risk. For example, he was willing to put himself in a modest position and refer to the Emperor of China as the "Great Emperor" to gain the trust of Xi Zhang, even if it could displease his commanding officers. As Morrison was engaged in a private conversation with Zhang in Chinese, he judged that the likelihood of an adverse consequence was low enough to neglect. On the contrary, when it was likely that the consequence of risky behaviour would be severe, Morrison employed techniques to avoid, mitigate or transfer such risks. An example is when the Chinese representative Zhang tried to arrange a negotiation talk between the two countries. Zhang implied that the British party should not be allowed to bring the military

with them. Attending the meeting while unarmed, to John Morrison and the other British officials, meant a high level of risk that could potentially be life-threatening. As a result, Morrison decided to avoid this risk entirely. By saying that they would not attend the negotiation without the presence of the military force, Morrison created a new risk: the two countries could fail to negotiate, and a large-scale war between Britain and China could have broken out in Nanking. While the consequence of this event is severe, the likelihood of it occurring is much lower as Morrison was aware that the Chinese officials wished to start the negotiations as much as the British did. As a result, Morrison's actions reduced the risk he would personally be taking and achieved the outcome he desired. In the next section, the author will discuss the case of Karl Gutzlaff, a Prussian missionary who ended up working as a political interpreter for Britain during the First Opium War.

4.2 Karl Gutzlaff

In this section, the author discusses the case of Karl Gutzlaff, the second political interpreter that served the British government during the First Opium War. According to Ride & Ride (1996, p. 236), after Robert Morrison passed away, Lord Napier, the first Chief Superintendent of British Trade in China, immediately appointed Robert Morrison's son John Morrison to succeed in the role of the Chinese Secretary. However, Fay (1975, p. 71) argues that it might not necessarily be the case. According to Fay, some evidence suggests that John Morrison was not Lord Napier's first choice regarding Robert Morrison's successor (ibid.). In 1995, Priscilla Napier published a book titled B*arbarian Eye: Lord Napier in China, 1834: Prelude to Hong Kong*. In this book, Napier (1995, p. 134) notes that Lord Napier initially wanted to appoint interpreter Karl Gutzlaff as the new Chinese Secretary to replace Robert Morrison. Nevertheless, at that time, Karl Gutzlaff was not available as he

was engaged in missionary work along the coast of China. Left with no better alternative, Lord Napier eventually selected John Morrison to replace his father.

A detailed description of Karl Gutzlaff (anglicised as Charles Gutzlaff) could be found in an article in *The Chinese Repository* (Anonymous, 1851, p. 511) that was published after his death. According to the article's author, Gutzlaff was, in fact, a regular contributor to *The Chinese Repository* itself. During the First Opium War, Gutzlaff served the British government as a political interpreter. Therefore, it would perhaps be to the readers' surprise that Gutzlaff was not a British citizen in the first place. He was born in 1803 in a small town in Prussian Pomerania. In his early life, he was determined to travel around the world and visit foreign countries. Gutzlaff started studying the languages of Arabic and Turkish at a young age in order to join the Prussian Legation in Constantinople. However, Gutzlaff's aspirations soon changed, and he decided to pursue the study of theology in the Netherlands instead. After Gutzlaff was ordained to the priesthood, he was sent to visit Java in 1826. The article in *The Chinese Repository* suggests that Gutzlaff spent some time in England on his way to Java and "made some valuable acquaintances" (ibid.). According to Gutzlaff's personal journal of his voyages (Gutzlaff, 1834, p. 33), the person he met in London was, in fact, Robert Morrison himself.

In 1829, Gutzlaff left the service of the Netherlands' Missionary Society, who had previously sponsored all his journeys and travelled to Singapore and Siam. It is suggested in the article (1851, p. 511) that he was received kindly by the Portuguese consul in Bangkok as one of the first Protestant missionaries to visit Siam. Gutzlaff's first wife was an English lady living in Malacca. After she passed away along with their infant child in Bangkok in 1831, Gutzlaff travelled to China on board an EIC cargo ship. He first stopped in the city of

Tianjin and then travelled back south to Macau. After this first trip, Gutzlaff frequently travelled with the EIC around the coast of China for purposes related to the opium trade until 1835. During these voyages, Gutzlaff learned how to speak standard mandarin and the Hokein dialect widely spoken in south China. His language skills were considered highly valuable by the EIC. According to Beeching (1975, p. 61), Gutzlaff was considered “a rare bird” for his outstanding skills in various languages, including English and Chinese. Apart from his linguistic capacity, Gutzlaff was also experienced in seafare along the coast of China. His skills made him a famous interpreter among British opium dealers in China. According to Greenberg (1951, p. 139-140) an opium trader named James Innes was willing to pay Gutzlaff as much as one thousand Spanish dollars for three days of interpreting work. At the time, it would be considered quite a substantial sum of money.

It can be deduced that Lord Napier appointed John Morrison as the Chinese Secretary during Gutzlaff's voyages with the EIC. According to *The Chinese Repository* (Anonymous, 1851, p. 512), after the death of Lord Napier, a vacancy occurred in the English Commission. As a result, Gutzlaff was appointed in February of 1835 as “joint Chinese Secretary” on a salary of £800 per year. It is noted that during the war, Gutzlaff “was employed in a great variety of ways, his knowledge of the language rendering his services everywhere useful” (ibid.). In 1842-43, Gutzlaff was appointed the magistrate of the city of Chusan. After John Morrison passed away in 1843, Gutzlaff succeeded him as the Chinese Secretary to the Government of Hong Kong and held this position until his death.

Gutzlaff was a very prolific writer. He wrote extensively about his first three journeys on the coast of China. This book titled *Journal of Three Voyages Along the Coast of China, in 1831, 1832 and 1833 With Notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands* (1834), was

published in England and America. Apart from that, he also published two volumes of *A Sketch of Chinese History, Ancient and Modern* (2015), as well as a series of papers published by the name of *China Opened* (2017). According to The Chinese Repository (1851, p. 512), Gutzlaff's literary works were written at the order of Sir George Robinson, covering various topics relating to China, such as history, arts, customs and religions. Gutzlaff also published a few books written in Chinese, including “a translation of the whole Bible, a System of Theology, a History of England, a History of the Jews, a Digest of the World's history, and the Chinese Magazine” (ibid.). It is mentioned in the article that Gutzlaff had memorised and studied a great number of Chinese characters, but his understanding of idiomatic expressions was to a lesser extent. However, throughout his writing career, he collected many materials for compiling a Chinese dictionary, which served as a valuable reference for students of the Chinese language.

Gutzlaff played an essential role during the First Opium War as a political interpreter for the British government. According to Gu (1995, p. 30), Gutzlaff had been collecting military intelligence for the British government in preparation for the war even before being recruited as an official interpreter. After Gutzlaff's first voyage in China, he landed in Macau and was recruited by the EIC in two months. He started working as an interpreter on the ship “The Lord Amherst” and travelled along the coast of China. Gu (ibid.) suggests that one of the primary goals of this particular voyage was for the EIC to “spy on the information about the military defence and economic states of each port in China”. Gutzlaff's assistance as an interpreter was vital to the mission's success. In this journey, Gutzlaff and other EIC representatives started from Macau, travelled along Shanghai, Shandong, and Weihaiwei, and the journey even extended to the Korean peninsula and the Ryukyu islands (Gutzlaff, 1834, pp. 163-369). Some scholars suspect that Gutzlaff had collected military intelligence

for the British during this voyage because he detailed some of the forts they inspected, including their weaknesses, in his journals. The excerpt below is an example:

> We visited the fort on the left side, and saw the internal economy of the defences of the country. It was a very massive structure, and they had done their best to arrange the batteries; yet the most despicable force could take it, for they have no skill in fortification, but place their whole reliance on the thickness of the ramparts and walls. [...] Though the river is here more than two miles broad, these forts might command it if the cannon carried to any considerable distance. But the powder is very bad, the guns are ill served and worse directed, their touch-holes are often very wide, they are made without proportion, and I am fully persuaded that some of them would more endanger the gunner's life than his at whom they were aimed. From the long peace which China has enjoyed, all their military works have fallen into decay. [...] We visited also the barracks, those abodes of misery for the ill clad and worse fed soldiers. [...] We saw the arrows hanging round upon the wall, but could espy no bows, which, they said, were on the opposite shore. There is little uniformity in their armour; some having swords, others match-locks, a few pikes, &c. The division to which they belong is written in large characters upon the front of their jackets. [...] Their salary is very small, their resources slender, and their situation not at all enviable. Many of the general officers are Tartars, who enjoy great salaries, besides often some lucrative civil offices. As long as the peaceful state of China continues, their office is but a sinecure. The army is no ways distinct from the navy; an officer or private quitting the one and entering the other without any difficulty, for they both rank alike (Gutzlaff, 1834, pp. 293-297).

From the passage shown above, it can be seen that many details regarding China's military system are revealed. For example, the defences, the quality of the weapons, the barracks and the soldiers. However, Wong (2012, p. 10) argues that these words are not enough to serve as evidence to prove that Gutzlaff acted as a military spy for the British government. First, Wong (ibid.) asserts that the observations mentioned in Gutzlaff's journal technically do not contain confidential information. In fact, during the Macartney Embassy mission, Lord Macartney also kept a journal, and even more details regarding the Chinese army and navy forces could be found (Crammer-Byng, 1961, p. 203). Regarding this topic, Wong (2012) argues that Qing government officials usually organised the itineraries of foreign ambassadors visiting China. Therefore, it is highly likely that Chinese officials always accompanied foreign ambassadors during these visits. As a result, the information observed by Lord Macartney and Gutzlaff could hardly be regarded as confidential military intelligence. Similarly, as Wong (ibid.) notes, articles regarding the military power of China can also be found in *The Chinese Repository.* For example, in the magazine, there are articles titled “Military Skills and Power of the Chinese”, “Forts and Arms; Descriptions of the Forts on the River of Canton”, “Army and Navy of China”, “Modes of Warfare”, “Offensive and Defensive Arms”, etc. Compared to Gutzlaff's brief description, these articles in *The Chinese Repository* reveal much more about China's military. Furthermore, as Gutzlaff's journals were published and were available for public access, they can hardly be considered evidence for Gutzlaff's alleged spy activities.

Wong (2012, p. 11) further notes that this voyage took place in 1832 and was arranged and sponsored by the EIC. As the EIC's trade monopoly with China ended in 1833-34, there seemed to be no need for them to organise a military mission just before the end of their businesses in China. According to Davis (1840, p. 51), the EIC's Chairman proposed and

arranged the entire voyage without government approval from London. Therefore, Wong (2012, p. 11) concludes that Gutzlaff did not immediately become Britain's spy when he arrived in China. Wong believes that the true motivation behind the voyage sponsored by the EIC was an economic one (ibid.). The EIC's ultimate goal was to explore new markets and trading opportunities within China, and the likelihood of this being a military mission is thus very slim. The author of the present study believes that Wong's argument is compelling. Furthermore, from a risk perspective, as Gutzlaff was a Prussian missionary visiting China for the first time, there would have been a relatively high level of risk for him to become a spy for the British government immediately.

Before becoming an EIC interpreter, Gutzlaff was aware that the ships he would be travelling on were involved in the opium trade. It appears that it was not without much hesitation that he eventually decided to embark on these journeys. For instance, he mentions in his journal, “After much consultation with others, and a conflict in my own mind, I embarked in the Sylph, Capt. W. commander, and A.R. Esq. supercargo, Oct. 20th, 1832” (Gutzlaff, 1834, p. 413). As a missionary, Gutzlaff's personal motivation for embarking on these journeys was to seize the opportunity to preach along the coast of China. His rare and valuable language skills are undoubtedly appreciated by the opium dealers, who were willing to sponsor Gutzlaff's missionary work. According to Greenberg (1951, pp. 139-140), in 1832, when Gutzlaff became the guide and interpreter for the EIC, the mission's leader William Jardine allowed him to send out religious books and brochures to the local people of China. Moreover, Jardine specifically said to Gutzlaff that the more profit the EIC gains from opium smuggling throughout the voyage, the more they would be able to sponsor Gutzlaff and help him achieve his religious visions.

The author believes that there is currently no concrete evidence suggesting Gutzlaff spied for the British government during his voyages along the coast of China before he was recruited as an official interpreter. However, whether he was spying for the preparation of war or not, throughout Gutzlaff's experiences travelling around China, there is no doubt that he acquired invaluable knowledge and social connections. Such knowledge and social network later became some of the most important "capital" that Gutzlaff relied on as a political interpreter. For example, after the British government recruited Gutzlaff, he capitalised on his language skills and past travelling experiences and collected many materials related to China. Later, when Sir George B. Robinson replaced John Davis and became Chief Superintendent of British Trade in China, Gutzlaff asked Robinson to submit his findings about China to the British government in London.

Along with the materials collected by Gutzlaff, Robinson sent a letter in July 1835 to British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston and spoke highly of Gutzlaff's work.

> I requested Mr. Gutzlaff would furnish me with any information likely to prove of moment or interest, being convinced no person could be so well qualified as this gentleman who, your Lordship must be aware, has had more remarkable and favourable opportunities of making observations and thereby forming opinions, than perhaps any other European, at least in modern times. [...] [Gutzlaff] has not only visited the coast in European vessels, but adopting the dress, habits, and, what is more surprising, the language of these people, has associated with them on a familiar footing in various places, known form formerly to no Europeans, and now only to a few. [...] Throughout his writings, your Lordship will perceive an anxious wish to call our attention to the incalculable advantages that would accrue from the establishment of a trade at other ports in China, and the facility with which he

> anticipates so important an object might be accomplished (British Parliament, 1840, pp. 86-87).

According to Wong (2012, p. 15), In 1835, Gutzlaff was secretly consulted by the British government regarding the relations between Britain and China. Gutzlaff's “Present State of our Relations with China” report can be found in Milancon (2003, p. 42). In this report, Gutzlaff specifically advises that Britain attacks an island in Chusan, which would allow the British army to lock down several cities along the coast of China, giving Britain an advantage when negotiating terms and conditions related to trade. He even mentions that Britain would only need to deploy a small military force to achieve this goal (ibid.). After the outbreak of the war, Gutzlaff travelled north with the British navy and interpreted for famous figures such as Admiral Charles Elliot, Sir Henry Pottinger, James Bremer and Colonel George Burrel. However, apart from being an interpreter, Gutzlaff also served the roles of advisor and guide throughout the war. His previous voyages along the coast had given Gutzlaff adequate knowledge about the local culture, geography and defence powers. According to Endacott, Gutzlaff played a crucial role in Britain's attack on Chusan (1958, p. 107). Loch (1843, pp. 41-42) also suggests that Gutzlaff proposed the idea of attacking the city of Shanghai and also actively participated in Britain's conquest of the Zhenjiang province. Gutzlaff had previously visited this area of China multiple times with the EIC.

Thus, it can be assumed that, regardless of whether Gutzlaff was spying during the previous voyages, his experiences and knowledge became Gutzlaff's capital as a political interpreter. The strategic decisions made by the British force at the advice of Gutzlaff undoubtedly affected the unfolding of the First Opium War. As previously mentioned in Robinson's letter to Lord Palmerston, Gutzlaff's unique background and experiences made him an asset to the

British forces. As few European people at the time could speak Chinese, interpreters were considered rare talents and were sometimes given high power and privilege. For example, in the book *The Last Year in China, To the Peace of Nanking: As Sketched in Letters to His Friends, by a Field Officer, Actively Employed in that Country*, an anonymous field officer commented that the lack of linguistic talents resulted in the overpowering of the status of the interpreters (Anonymous, 1843, p. 103). In fact, it is suggested that the interpreters were given the right to arrange various affairs and assume a leading role in military operations.

For example, during 1841 and 1842, Gutzlaff was appointed as “magistrate” in cities under British occupation, including Chusan, Ningbo, and Qianjiang. The field officer mentions the following about Gutzlaff's work:

> Mr. Gutzlaff is at present attached to the personal staff of the General as interpreter; but is, in fact (under Sir Hugh), magistrate, head of the police, &c. He is very clever, and a pleasant companion. He is truly an example that knowledge is power. No other English-man in Ningpo knows Chinese. The want of interpreters is very much felt. The scattered state of the force limits one to each station of the north, and gives them great authority; and they are men quite unused to command. For aught we can tell, many of their proceedings may be highly impolitic as regards the speedy success of the expedition (ibid.).

Even though this anonymous writer does not seem to approve Gutzlaff's role as the magistrate, in some of his descriptions, it can be observed that Gutzlaff did try to fulfil his responsibilities. For instance, when he received intelligence about some robberies “three miles the other side of the suburbs” (Anonymous, 1843, p. 107), Gutzlaff ordered the police to deal with them. However, on another occasion, the anonymous officer also mentions that

“the police are a sad set of rogues” (Anonymous, 1843, p. 113). Wong (2012, p. 18) notes that some literature and poetry published during the Opium Wars suggest that Gutzlaff was not unpopular among the local people of the towns under British rule. To an extent, his work was appreciated by the public.

Another person who doubted Gutzlaff's work as a magistrate was Robert Thom, another British political interpreter stationed in the city of Dinghai with Gutzlaff. In a personal letter, Thom mentions the following about Gutzlaff:

> I have often thought - could one of the Hong merchants have seen Gutzlaff seated on the Chehë en's chair and waited upon by his blackguard Nankingmen, they would certainly have muttered something about hu-chia hu-wei, the Fox borrowing the dignity of the Tiger - or as might quote from scripture - “my house - ye have made it a den of thieves”. Civil government I look upon *in the meantime* a perfect farce. (quoted from Chang, 1964, p. 210)

As there is a contradiction in the description of Gutzlaff's work as a magistrate, it is difficult to assess the actual situation regarding this matter. However, Wong (2012, p. 18) asserts that a document written in Chinese gives a relatively unbiased comment on Gutzlaff's career as a magistrate. This comment and its English translation can be found below:

> 伪提督郭士立善用兵，不妄戮，盗亦有道也。然御下未严，任其破坏神像，秽亵字纸，奸淫妇女而不知禁，罪胡可逭。(quoted from Wong, 2012, p. 18)
>
> [My translation:
>
> The fake provincial commander-in-chief Gutzlaff was skilled in his management of the soldiers. He did not kill anyone unjustly. While being an invader, he had

> principles. Nonetheless, he did not discipline his subordinates. He let them destroy statues of deity, disrespect sacred writings, and rape women, yet did not forbid them from doing so. How could he escape from the responsibilities of such crimes.]

From a risk perspective, as a political interpreter who worked in the context of war, Gutzlaff faced a few situations where his life was threatened. For example, in the book *The Last Year in China* mentioned previously, it is mentioned that in April 1842, an attempt at Gutzlaff's life was made in the city of Ningpo:

> The attempt on Mr. Gutzlaff was a signal failure in spite of the infernal machine which was lighted as he passed (Anonymous, 1843, pp. 142-143).

This incident suggests that although Gutzlaff's experiences and skills allowed him to take part in some of the most important events in history and to assume a high status within the British forces in China, it also brought him various types of risks and life threats.

Although Gutzlaff worked as an interpreter for the British government, he was not from Britain but Prussia. When it comes to his personal alignment and identification, it is difficult to determine his assessment of his own character. Wong (2012) noted that Gutzlaff spoke fluent Chinese and was frequently mistaken for a local Chinese person. According to a report by Lindsay (1834), when they were travelling on the ship named "The Lord Amherst", Gutzlaff was mistaken for a Chinese person on multiple occasions. During the journey, they met a Chinese official who had previous experience dealing with foreigners, and he was convinced that Gutzlaff was from the southern city of Xiamen in China.

Furthermore, a while after the outbreak of the war, Yijing [奕经], the nephew of Emperor Daoguang, wrote a memorial to the Emperor saying that he could not be sure whether

Gutzlaff was from Caton or of foreign origin. Some more evidence found in *Archival Historical Materials on the Opium War* (1992) also suggests that some Chinese people were not convinced that Gutzlaff was a foreigner. It is also noted that there was a rumour among the residents of Canton that Gutzlaff was the son of a Chinese man and a foreign woman who grew up in Macau (The First Historical Archives of China, Vol. 4, p. 134). In one of the imperial edicts of Emperor Daoguang, Gutzlaff was once referred to as a "traitor", suggesting that the Emperor of China thought Gutzlaff was one of his subjects. American merchant William Hunter studied Chinese along with Gutzlaff in Malacca, and he also mentions that by outward appearance, Gutzlaff does look rather like Chinese people (Hunter, 1938, p. 70).

As mentioned previously, Gutzlaff was a Prussian missionary who worked for the British in China. After examining some historical materials, the author believes that Gutzlaff may have struggled with his own identity. Although he eventually became a political interpreter for Britain, he once wrote in his journal that he became a naturalised subject of China:

> Long before leaving Siam I became a naturalized subject of the Celestial Empire, by adoption into the clan or family of Kwo, from the Tung-an district in Fuhkeen. I took, also, the name Shih-lee, - wore, occasionally, the Chinese dress, -and was recognized (by those among whom I lived) as a member of the great nation (Gutzlaff, 1834, p. 71).

Perhaps it was because of Gutzlaff's willingness to fit in with the local people of China that he acquired such a high level of language proficiency. Unlike other interpreters such as John Morrison and Robert Thom, Gutzlaff was particularly adept at dealing with high-ranking Chinese officials and ordinary Chinese citizens alike. Hugh Hamilton Lindsay was a

supercargo for the EIC who travelled with Gutzlaff on *The Lord Amherst.* In a report, Lindsay wrote the following about Gutzlaff:

> On many occasions, when Mr. Gutzlaff has been surrounded by hundreds of eager listeners, he has been interrupted by loud expressions of the pleasure with which they listened to his pithy and indeed eloquent language. From having lived so long among the lower classes of the Fokien people, Mr. Gutzlaff has obtained a knowledge of their peculiarities, both of thought and language, which no study of books can convey; and this is coupled to a thorough acquaintance with the Chinese classics, which the Chinese are ever delighted to hear quoted, and a copiousness of language which few foreigners ever acquire in any tongue besides their own. The power which this gives any person over the minds of the Chinese, who are peculiarly susceptible to reasonable argument, is extraordinary, [...] (Lindsay, 1834, p. 49).

Yuqian [裕谦], the Viceroy of Liangjiang in China, reported to Emperor Daoguang that when Gutzlaff worked as the “fake magistrate”, he recruited many local citizens to collect information for him (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, p. 339). Wong (2012, p. 21) further notes that the tasks of Gutzlaff's local recruits included spying on the Chinese army and collecting information about the number of soldiers, dates of military operations and details about the officials in charge. According to Wong (ibid.), these spies reported to Gutzlaff directly daily, and there were usually “a few dozen” reports each day. Apart from the one or two Spanish dollars that would be given as a reward for each piece of information, Gutzlaff's Chinese spies also received a base salary of either 500 wen (Qing currency) per day or 20 Spanish dollars per month. Furthermore, these spies were given authorisation certificates and tokens for protection to better work for Gutzlaff. For those who could read and write, Gutzlaff recruited them to draft official papers and notices.

Wong (2012, p. 22) notes that, apart from materials written in Chinese, evidence of Gutzlaff's intelligence network in China can also be found in materials from the British side. For example, according to Wong (ibid.), some documents found in the collection of Field Marshal Hugh Gough include a letter written by a Chinese spy named Chou Te-jung to Gutzlaff on the 15th of November, 1841. At this time, the British army had already conquered Ningpo. The letter mentions that, at Gutzlaff's request, Chou found information about the Qing government's military plans. Chou advised that Gutzlaff take 2000 soldiers with him to attack a city to the north of Ningpo called Cixi, which is of strategic importance. Another letter from Chou to Gutzlaff included a hand-drawn map of the geographical area starting from Ningpo to Zhenhai. For this map, Chou requested compensation of 400 liang (Qing currency). In some other materials such as Loch's *The Closing Events of the Campaign in China*, it is also mentioned that Gutzlaff relied on his Chinese informants when it came to assessments of the political situation and critical decision-making:

> On our return we met Mr. Gutzlaff the interpreter, who told the General he had received undoubted intelligence that the people of Chan-hai were actively employed removing their valuables, and that we should, he feared, be a day too late to secure a ransom (Loch, 1843, p. 41-42).

As Wong (2012, p. 22) argues, however, the people Gutzlaff recruited were local Chinese people who had no reason or motivation to work for Gutzlaff other than monetary reward. It is also very likely that these Chinese informants were not truly “loyal” to Britain, and the authenticity of the information they collected is therefore questionable. Indeed, according to *The First Historical Archives of China* (1992, Vol. 5, p. 137), after being arrested by

Chinese authorities, some of those working for Gutzlaff confessed that, on occasion, they made up false information to receive extra compensation from Gutzlaff.

According to the memoir of a naval officer who was stationed in Ningpo along with Gutzlaff, even Gutzlaff himself did not fully trust the intelligence he received (Ouchterlony, 1844, pp. 228-229):

> On the 8th, Mr. Gutzlaff received a report from some of his informers that an attack on the city might be expected in the course of the following day; but as the cry of "wolf" had been more than once raised, the warning was disregarded. [...] he did not express himself to the military authorities in a manner sufficiently marked to lead them to suppose that he himself attached credence to the report.

From the passage shown above, it could be seen that Gutzlaff was aware that there was a possibility that the intelligence he collected would not be correct. Gutzlaff's judgment of whether to react to the collected information also involved some risk management.

It was an unusual case that the British government recruited Gutzlaff, a citizen of Prussia, to be its political interpreter. Furthermore, the British forces entrusted Gutzlaff with the magistrate position in several occupied towns. According to Wong (2012, pp. 23-24), the most significant contribution that Gutzlaff made to Britain during the First Opium War was, in fact, his collection of military intelligence in a way that no other European person could have done. Gutzlaff's ability to acquire critical information was noted in Davis (1840, p. 227). Estate & Waley (2013, pp. 223-229) also refer to Gutzlaff as the "director of intelligence". Similarly, Gutzlaff's extensive spy network is also mentioned in *The Last Year in China* (Anonymous, 1843, pp. 104-105). Although it is not specifically mentioned

where or from whom Gutzlaff received the information, it appears that he was even able to obtain private letters sent from Yijing to Emperor Daoguang:

> At breakfast I had heard the translation by Mr. Gutzlaff of a letter to the Emperor, from Yih-King, governor-general of this province. This gentleman promises to send the Emperor the heads of Pottinger, Gough, and Parker, [...]

Whilst Gutzlaff's intelligence network made him particularly valuable to the British forces, his act of hiring Chinese informers caused much outrage among officials of the Qing government. According to The First Historical Archives of China (1992, Vol. 3, p. 32), some Chinese officials mentioned in memorials to the Emperor that Gutzlaff was responsible for associating with traitors and acquiring information about China and described him as “extraordinarily sly”. This statement could explain why some attempts on Gutzlaff's life were made when he was in Ningbo. Therefore, it can be assumed that Gutzlaff utilised his social and cultural capital as a political interpreter to gain a higher status within the British forces. However, at the same time, Gutzlaff's actions also increased the risk of being personally attacked by the Chinese government.

As multiple pieces of evidence suggest that Gutzlaff's knowledge of Chinese was of an extremely high level, it is hardly surprising that his work as an interpreter is well acknowledged. For example, according to *The Last Year in China*, Gutzlaff's interpreting skills made him highly sought after:

> [...] how is it possible to do much with but one interpreter? All that one man can do, more than any other, perhaps, could do, Gutzlaff does; but he is not an Irish bird, and cannot be in even two places at once, far less in four or five as is desirable (Anonymous, 1832, p. 144).

In Loch (1843, p. 174), it is suggested that Gutzlaff's interpreting work was appreciated not only by the British but also the Chinese officials:

> Mr. Gutzlaff, a perfect master of the Chinese language, was the interpreter, and performed his part well. The commissioners and surrounding mandarins seemed greatly interested.

Nevertheless, according to Wong (2012, p. 24), even though Gutzlaff's skills were valued by the British, compared to the other political interpreters such as John Morrison and Robert Thom, Gutzlaff was still not completely trusted. One of the reasons was most likely because Gutzlaff was not a national of Britain but from Prussia. Another reason could be that Gutzlaff's personality and mannerisms did not, for the most part, align with the other officials. For example, according to Fay (1975, p. 96), some officials who worked with Gutzlaff commented that he was ambitious, highly presumptuous and did not fit in with the others. According to Lutz & Frykenburg (2008, p. 114), even though Gutzlaff assumed a high rank in the British government in Hong Kong after the war, "Gutzlaff was always an outsider, never a part of Hong Kong colonial society".

In this section, the author examined the second political interpreter who worked for Britain during the First Opium War, Karl Gutzlaff. As a missionary originally from Prussia, Gutzlaff initially worked for the EIC in the opium trade. During the time he travelled along the coast of China, Gutzlaff acquired a high level of language skills and accumulated much knowledge of the Chinese culture, then capitalised on this experience and became a political interpreter highly valued by the British government. When appointed as the magistrate of cities and towns occupied by Britain, he created an intelligence network and gained confidential information about the Chinese government's military plans. Because of this,

Gutzlaff was targeted by Chinese officials, and attempts at his life were made, suggesting that he faced high risks in his work as a political interpreter. Furthermore, compared to the other two British interpreters discussed in the present study, Gutzlaff faced an extra layer of risk - he was not fully trusted by the British government due to his nationality and dispositions. In the following section, the author will explore the life and experiences of Robert Thom, the third and final British interpreter discussed in the present study.

4.3 Robert Thom

Apart from John Morrison and Karl Gutzlaff, Robert Thom is another prominent interpreter who served Britain and played an essential role during the First Opium War. Regarding the British interpreters' personal motivation for their work as political interpreters residing in China, it may be said that John Morrison had a more political motive, whereas Karl Gutzlaff was more religiously motivated. Robert Thom's case was different to the other two interpreters. His background was in business and commerce. Nevertheless, based on his actions in China, Thom's personal motivation may have been related to cultural and economic factors. As is the case with Karl Gutzlaff, a summary of Thom's life could be found in an article published in *The Chinese Repository* after his death (1847).

Thom was born in St. Andrew Square, Glasgow, in 1807 and led a "mercantile life", as mentioned in the article (Anonymous, 1847, p. 243). After working in "a respectable office" in Glasgow, he took an apprenticeship of five years in Liverpool and expressed a fondness for literature. In fact, Thom frequently wrote literary articles for some local newspapers. He went to Caraccas in 1828 for three years, and learned how to speak Spanish. Next, after spending another year and a half in Mexico, Thom returned to England for a few months

and then left for France in July 1833. From France, he then travelled to China and stayed there until the end of his life.

According to *The Chinese Repository* (1847), the purpose of all of Thom's voyages was related to mercantile pursuits. More specifically, when he was in London in 1833, Thom was recommended by John Macvicar to work at the Jardine Matheson factory in Canton, China. In a letter written by Macvicar to Jardine and Matheson, Thom was described as a Scot who was somewhat socially “awkward” but still “industrious and obliging”. It was also mentioned that Thom had a good understanding of commerce-related affairs. After Thom arrived in China in February 1834, he was able to reach a high level of proficiency in the language of Chinese in just two years. According to the article in *The Chinese Repository*, it would appear that Thom “never allowed an opportunity of conversing with persons from all parts of the 'Celestial Empire' to escape him”. By 1837, Thom was fluent enough to “plead a cause in the mandarin or court dialect” (ibid.). As mentioned, Thom was recruited by the Jardine Matheson Company during his time in China. Although the factory was involved in the opium trade, Thom worked in a division dealing with textile products and refused to assist the opium trade in any way. According to Wong (2012, p. 36), a letter from Thom to Jardine is available at the Jardine Matheson Archive. According to that letter, when the company requested Thom to translate a letter into Chinese regarding the sale of opium, he wrote the following in response:

> I cannot reconcile the task either with my feelings or my conscience, though I make no pretensions to having an usually tender conscience, I cannot bear to serve so rascally a cause. I have no prospects before me of ever making a fortune and returning home. My simple object in being here - is to endeavor to promote a good

> feeling between this country and my own - by means of placing my native country before the Chinese in the most amiable and honourable light wherever I can find opportunity; - and whether be it be by means of translations from our words - or by acting under the guidance of Reason and Justice – to convey to them an idea of the high moral tone of Europe. To this object I intend dedicating my slender ability - my humble fortune - and my life.
>
> Now my dear Mr. Jardine with views of this kind before me- can you wonder at my refusal to put a document into Chinese - which I look upon as conveying down to future ages the dishonor of my country? Or how should I like in after life to be thus taunted…
>
> I confess my dear Mr. Jardine that a taunt of this kind would stab me to the heart- and the more keenly - as - were I to render the paper into Chinese - I shd too well deserve it. I have not closed my eyes all night revolving the subject in my mind - and I cannot if my life depended upon it - see it in any other point of view (quoted in Wong, 2012, p. 36).

The position at the Jardine Matheson Company was essentially the only reason why Thom was able to travel to China. Not only did the company provide him with the necessary resources to stay in China, but Thom also relied on the position to provide himself with security and protection. Therefore, as Wong (2012, p. 36) argues, in Thom's refusal to translate a document for Mr. Jardine, he risked losing his job and everything he had worked for in China. Nevertheless, Thom's response demonstrated unwavering conscience and moral standards. Furthermore, while he was in China, Thom also endeavoured to write and translate literary works in English and Chinese. According to *The Chinese Repository* (1847), not only did he contribute papers to newspapers published in Canton, he also

translated a Chinese tale into English under the pseudonym of “Sloth”. Moreover, Thom also translated *Æsop's Fables* into Chinese in 1840 and published his *Chinese and English Vocabulary* in 1843. As he mentioned in the letter quoted above, he used his translation skills to promote cultural exchange between Europe and China.

Thom was employed by the British government in June 1840 as an interpreter and played an essential role during the war. He accompanied Sir Hugh during the battles in Amoy and Chinhai. It is particularly noted that Thom saved the lives of 500 Chinese people in Chinhai. According to the biographical notice published in *The Chinese Repository* (1847), Thom's act of kindness “gave him more pleasure than if he had been appointed emperor of China”. These details could give the readers a basic understanding of Thom's personality. In fact, Thom received respect not only from his fellow citizens but also from Chinese officials.

A detailed story about one of Thom's most notable actions in China is described by Slade (1839), the editor of the *Canton Register*, an English newspaper published in Canton in the nineteenth century. According to Slade, not too long after the Chinese official Zexu Lin arrived in Canton to investigate the illegal sale of opium, he requested to meet an opium dealer named Dent in person (Slade, 1839, p. 51). After some discussion among the foreign community, it was decided that Slade, Thom and another interpreter named Fearon would meet Lin, representing the community of all foreign merchants. Slade notes that, during the meeting, Thom was asked “if their trade was not very dear to the foreigners?” Thom responded: “yes, but Mr. Dent's life is dearer”. After Thom said that, “the hong merchants clapped their hands, and exclaimed - Well said” (ibid.). The officers from the Qing government also seemed to be pleased with Thom's response. After the examination was

over, rewards from the government were sent to the foreigners. As described in Slade (1839), "the treasurer sent out a present of four pieces of red silk and two jars of wine, [...]".

The author notices that the same event was also mentioned in a memorial written by Lin to the Emperor of China, as shown in *Archival Historical Materials on the Opium War* (1992, Vol. 5, p. 509). In the memorial, Lin mentions that "the foreigner Thom and the others were rather respectful in their responses (my translation)" and reported that rewards were given to them so that Thom and the others could perhaps persuade the foreigners to hand the opium to the Chinese officials. According to Zhang's *Diary of Diplomatic Missions* (2018, p. 20), Zexu Lin had once said: "Thom is alright, but Morrison is the worst".

Other pieces of evidence also show that Thom was relatively well-received by Chinese officials. For example, in *The Chinese Repository* (1847, p. 244), it is noted that, in August 1842, Thom was introduced to a senior Chinese official in Nanking. The official named Yilibu said to Thom, "I thank you for your civil mandarinship at Chin-hai - it has gained for you a great name in China". Furthermore, another senior official of the Qing government, Qiying [耆英], once wrote a memorial to Emperor Daoguang. In this memorial, he comments that "Thom still has rather civil and respectful intentions, which is a little different to other foreigners like Morrison who are simply cunning and deceitful" [my translation] (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 7, p. 373).

According to Slade (1839, pp. 96-97), he acquired a document in Chinese regarding what the officials of the Qing government thought of the British interpreters:

> The foreign gentlemen who have studied the literature of Tang, and who understand the speech, and can write the characters of Tang, are three, namely: Young Morrison.

> This man is very dangerous. He is Secretary to Elliot. Thom. This is a surpassing good and useful man, and all the foreigners listen to his words. Fearon. This is a very good man, scarcely twenty years old. On account of his youth this foreigner is prevented from engaging in trade.

The authenticity of this document cannot be verified. However, if it is genuine, it could be seen from the words mentioned above that among the interpreters, Thom and Fearon generally received relatively positive comments from officials in China. However, according to a memorial written by a Chinese official who interacted with Thom during the opening of the port of Ningbo, Thom is not as friendly as his outward appearance suggests:

> […] this foreigner [Thom] has spent many years in Ningbo, and knew both the spoken and written languages of Chinese. Whenever there is a meeting, he tends to agree on the surface, but hides his thoughts and cunningness to himself. As he is often doubtful and uncertain, he could not make decisions on his own (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 7 p. 373).

Senior Chinese official Yijing also mentioned in a memorial that Thom was "the most cunning" among the British interpreters. Although, as Wong argues (2012, p. 41), Yijing's information and understanding of the British were often flawed.

Although it was Morrison who mainly translated the official exchanges between Britain and China, Thom was also in charge of translating some of those letters. Among the documents translated by Thom, Slade (1839, p. 73) mentions that there was "a most extraordinary memorial to the Emperor". In this study, the author would like to analyse the translation of a particular word in this document that involved a high level of risk from a linguistic point

of view. The document was a memorial submitted to Emperor Daoguang of China by Wangyan Zeng, an official from the Shuntian Prefecture (modern-day Beijing Municipality).

The complete English translation of this memorial is included in Slade (1839, p. 167). At the end of the translation, a disclaimer can be found below:

> THE above is a trust translation from the original, according to the best of my knowledge and belief. R. Thom.

It can therefore be assumed that Robert Thom was entirely responsible for the translation of this memorial. In his book, Slade highlighted a few sentences he believed to be of great significance, and some keywords are italicised as below:

> Now I would still further entice them to come in by means of our cruizers, and in the meantime I would call out and get ready several hundred of the people living on the sea-coast; of those who are the stoutest, the bravest, and the best swimmers and divers, I would cause them at night to divide into groups, to go diving straight on board the foreign ships, and taking the said foreigners at unawares *massacre every individual among them* (Slade, 1839p. 167).
>
> Only let a plan be laid *for a general massacre*, and these said foreigners cannot but fear, tremble, and come to implore us (ibid.).

To the statements above, Slade comments:

> It is not a single nation that is to suffer, but every foreigner, of whatever nation or pursuit, is hence forth to be an object of lawful plunder, and his life is periled wherever he approaches the celestial shores (ibid.).

Slade further suggests that:

> It is time the western governments should reflect; and rouse themselves to withstand the barbarous policy of the Chinese government: for let it never more be said that China quarrels with England alone; the Emperor, by his approval of this memorial, has declared war against, and is now waging strife with, all civilized nations. It there are still doubts as to the correctness of this view of the matter, the governor of Canton will soon demonstrate that the great Emperor has declared war against the west (1839, p. 169).

In Slade's comment, he repeated quoted the word "massacre" and used it as evidence that "the great Emperor has declared war against the west". However, how accurate is Thom's translation? Was the word "massacre" really used in the original Chinese version? The author examined some historical records and found the original memorial written in Chinese in *Archival Historical Materials on the Opium War* (The First Historical Archives of China, Vol. 1, pp. 767-769). The word used in the original letter translated by Thom as "massacre" is actually "剿杀" (pronounced "jiaosha") in Chinese. Literally, it does mean "to exterminate" or "to wipe out". However, some more subtleties are involved in its meaning.

The word "剿杀", or "jiaosha" is usually used to describe a military mission targeted at robbers and criminals. Even though the literal meaning does mean "to exterminate", a more appropriate translation for it should be "to suppress" or "to take control over". Slade mentions in his book that the advice for "a general massacre" means that the Emperor of China intends to kill all foreigners residing in China. Slade then asks his readers, "Now we

wonder any government that legalizes the butchery of every foreigner who approaches its territory is deserving of our sympathy?" (1839, pp. 169-170).

The author would like to argue that, considering the context, the translation "a general massacre" could be better replaced by "a general suppression, " which is significantly less aggressive and closer to the meaning intended in the original memorial. This assumption is based on other parts of the same memorial. For example, it is mentioned that "afterwards, if the foreigners may indeed sincerely regret their crimes, your majesty can grant them with heavenly kindness that commercial exchange may be resumed between the two countries […]". The author of the present study believes that this statement shows that the "general massacre of all foreigners" was not intended by the official who submitted the memorial. It is also suggested in the original memorial that the trade of tea and other legal commodities should still be permitted, whereas the opium trade must be entirely banned within China. It can therefore be deduced that the target of the military "suppression" proposed by the official was specifically opium dealers in China, rather than "every foreigner who approaches its territory".

Furthermore, Slade notes that when a Chinese official submits a memorial to the Emperor, it usually means the government has already approved the proposals mentioned in the memorial. Slade's original words are as follows:

> We may rest assured, therefore, that he would never have submitted such wild schemes to the emperor, if he had not previously obtained his approval; and we can even believe that this rodomontade was drawn up at the suggestion of the Peking cabinet, and it so, it is deserving of very serious attention (Slade, 1839, p. 169)

Nevertheless, no evidence could prove the credibility of Slade's assumption above. It could be argued that Slade was twisting the meaning of the words in a way that supported his goal - to mobilise all western nations to see China as a common enemy. To consolidate his argument, Slade only needed to use Thom's translation of the memorial as evidence. In truth, slightly different words used in the translation could completely change the intended meaning of the original letter. It could be seen from this incident that the power of translation and interpreting during times of war and conflict is not to be underestimated. Therefore, risk assessment and risk management are vital to political interpreters.

Another event that reveals a unique cultural risk faced by political interpreters is “the White Flag incident” during the battle in Amoy (the modern-day city of Xiamen in China). According to an essay included in Volume 9 of *The Chinese Repository*:

> With the usages of other nations, civilized or savage, at war or in times of peace, the Chinese have had little acquaintance or concern. [...]The “flag of truce”, of which hitherto they have known nothing, a few lessons, such as that received from the Blonde, will most likely induce them to treat with due respect (Anonymous, 1840, p. 221).

As the political interpreter, Robert Thom was involved in this incident. He wrote a detailed account of the event, which is included in the same article in *The Chinese Repository*. According to Thom's description, the British forces reached the city of Xiamen, then known as “Amoy”, on the 2nd of July in 1840. The British officials were instructed by their commanding officer to deliver a “letter” to the Chinese admiral stationed in Amoy. The act of delivering a “letter” is where the first cultural difference manifested itself. As explained in the article:

> It must be borne in mind that the officers of the celestial empire only permit foreigners to address them in the style of petition or as inferiors, whereas this dispatch was called a *letter*, and addressed on a footing of perfect equality (Anonymous, 1840, p. 222).

The author would like to argue that even though the "letter" was intended to be sent by a country of equal footing to China, it is questionable whether the Chinese officials appreciated this subtlety. In order to deliver the letter, the British ship approached the port of Amoy and was at anchor for nearly an hour before a naval vessel from the Chinese government in Amoy showed up. According to the article, local authorities in Amoy dispatched the vessel to investigate the identity and purpose of the foreigners. Thom notes that only five or six people were on that boat. He was able to, perhaps from their clothing and demeanour, identify them as "low followers or servants". The British explained that they had an important message for the highest local authority and that if the local chief could come aboard, he would be treated with kindness and courtesy. The people from the Chinese boat responded that the admiral was absent as he was in another city called Chinchew. The British then decided to deliver the letter to the sub-governor and the principal military commandant instead.

Thom notes that before the Chinese representatives left their ship called "the Melville", he was ordered by his commanding officer to write a document in Chinese to explain the meaning of the white flag as a flag of truce that should be "held sacred by all civilized nations". From Thom's account published in *The Chinese Repository*, it could be seen that the British forces had indeed taken all measures they believed were adequate to deliver the letter safely. First, at the British Admiral's command, Thom drafted a document in Chinese.

The wording he used was very respectful, starting with "The commanding chief of the Great English nation addresses this to the honorable officers presiding over this district, in order that peace and harmony may be kept, and war and calamity avoided" (Anonymous, 1840, pp. 222-223). This sentence was followed by a paragraph explaining that "all mankind are but one great family of brothers". The document continues by clarifying that:

> The object of this, then, is to say, that a misunderstanding having unfortunately arisen between the two great nations of England and China, in order to restore their brotherly harmony as of old, it will be necessary for quiet, peaceably-disposed people to be continually coming and going between both parties for the purpose of speaking kind words, or delivering letters or such like. These people go utterly unarmed, and carry a white flag, which, with the exception of savages, is looked upon by all nations as a sacred sign (ibid.).

In the document, Thom expressed clearly that they humbly beg that the officials in China treat them with respect as they will come unarmed only to deliver a letter. Nevertheless, at the end of the document, warning is also given. In other words, if the officials in China were to disrespect the white flag by attacking them, the British would respond with "a most fearful vengeance! Beware, therefore, beware!" (ibid.). In order to make sure that the message is safely delivered, Thom mentions that the document was delivered open, and read to the Chinese officials at the capstan. Furthermore, to ensure the meaning of the white flag is comprehended, the Chinese officials were "asked again and again if they understood its purport; they replied as often that they understood perfectly that the white flag was to be held sacred" (ibid.).

The Chinese representatives then took the document and returned within an hour with "a head servant" who tried to return the document to the British. Thom notes that:

> […]the district magistrates had taken a copy of it for their superior officers, but as they did not dare to hold communication with outside officers, they begged to return the original document whence it came" (ibid.).

Finally, after some discussion, the head servant accepted the document and advised the British to land at the fort.

To their amazement, when the British approached the beach close beside the fort while displaying a white flag, they were greeted not with the kind reception they expected, but "half a dozen officers, and from 200 to 300 soldiers drawn up in hostile array, and manifesting the most unfriendly disposition". Seeing that it was impossible to deliver the letter under such conditions, the British pulled off and later made another attempt where Thom and five other men were sent out in a small boat, while unarmed, to attempt to deliver the letter after all. Unfortunately, even though they had prepared a "notice" written in Chinese explaining the reason for their visit, Thom and the others again failed to complete their mission. Just at the time when an arrow was fired at him, Thom happened to have lost his balance and fell to the ground, narrowly escaping the fate of death. A crossfire between the Chinese and English then happened, resulting in calamity in both sides.

From the British perspective, they had taken multiple measures to ensure the safe delivery of the letter and made several attempts to show the Chinese government that they meant no harm. As the interpreter, Thom, in particular, risked his life by trying to deliver the letter in a small boat while entirely unarmed. In his writing, it could be seen that he was utterly appalled by the hostility he received.

However, according to the reports regarding the same incident submitted to the Emperor of China, many of the carefully prepared acts of kindness and politeness were “lost in translation”. A few reports regarding the white flag incident in Xiamen were submitted to Emperor Daoguang and recorded in Volume 2 of the *Archival Historical Materials on the Opium War*. After analysing the contents of these reports, the author concludes that the Chinese officials saw the entire incident differently.

First of all, it is mentioned that when the foreign ship first approached Xiamen, “military servants” were sent to find out where the ship came from and what business they had there (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, p. 156). Thom observed that these people were “low servants”. He was correct, as their names were not even mentioned in the memorial. In his article, Thom mentions that they wanted to ensure that the “official people” understood the meaning of the white flag by repeatedly confirming with them. However, it is very likely that the only thing these people learned or reported to their superiors was that the foreigners were there to “seek peace”. In the memorials, nothing was mentioned about the British's intention to deliver a letter at the request of their commanding chief. Thom and the others' effort to show good intentions time and time again was reduced to the simple sentence below:

> [...] the foreigners simply spoke about seeking peace and seemed respectful and submissive (ibid.).

At the time, it was forbidden for any Chinese person to associate with foreigners. Therefore, after the magistrates took a copy of the document drafted by Thom, they did not give the British a clear answer about whether they were allowed to land. All information related to

the meaning of the white flag was omitted. Furthermore, the senior officials were unaware that the British were there to deliver a letter. The only information that went through to the higher authorities was the fact that the British were there to "seek peace". According to a memorial addressed to the Emperor, it was regarded as "totally ridiculous" (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, p. 167). This memorial was submitted by the governor of the Fujian and Zhejiang regions of China. In his writing, the Chinese governor claims that as Fujian was not designated as an area where foreign trade was allowed in the first place, there would be no way the foreigners could have any businesses there. Therefore, there was no "peace" to be sought. He further mentions in the memorial that if the foreigners were there to negotiate matters related to the closure of the ports in Canton, then that would be against the will of the Emperor. In that case, the so-called "peace" shall not be granted.

From the perspective of the Chinese governor, foreign ships approached the port of Amoy because they wanted to distract the Chinese forces from focusing on the city of Dinghai, where the political atmosphere was tense. He claims in the memorial that "such an evil scheme is so clear to see, and there must have been cunning traitors who planned the strategy for them [the foreigners]" (ibid.). Thom's name is also mentioned in the memorial:

> The foreigner wore foreign clothing but spoke in Chinese, he stood on the bow of the boat, looking toward us, and spoke first in a soft and respectful manner, then with arrogance. If he was not a Chinese traitor who had long ago converted to the foreign cult, then he must be a foreign demon who had stayed in China for a long time and helped the foreigners come up with evil plans. In fact, he must be their leader (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 2, p. 167).

In this section, British political interpreter Robert Thom's life experiences and actions during the First Opium War are discussed in detail. Thom initially came from a mercantile background and became a political interpreter serving the British government during the war. Compared to the other two prominent British interpreters, namely John Morrison and Karl Gutzlaff, Thom was relatively well-received by officials in China. However, there were still situations where Thom's actions involved various risks. Among them, two particular incidents are analysed in this section. The first one is Thom's translation of the Chinese word "剿杀" as "a general massacre" in a memorial written by a Chinese official to Emperor Daoguang. As mentioned above, judging from the context, the meaning of the word is closer to "a general suppression of the opium dealers" rather than a "massacre of all foreigners". As a result, Thom's mistranslation of the word caused severe consequences. A Western journalist used Thom's translation as evidence that the Chinese government has declared war against all foreigners residing in China. The second significant event is the "white flag incident", where calamity was caused by the misunderstanding of the meaning of the white flag. These events suggest that in the work of a political interpreter, risk related to social, cultural and linguistic factors could potentially have a significant impact.

5 Interpreters affiliated with the Chinese government during the First Opium War

According to Wong (2011, pp. 84-85), political interpreting has existed in China since ancient times as some countries became tributary states of China and often sent yearly visits. He notes that as the tributary states often provided Chinese translations, political interpreting has not been a significant issue for the Chinese government. However, during the Qing dynasty, when diplomatic communication between China and Russia was established, translation and interpreting became challenging as the Russian officials did not understand either Manchurian or Chinese. Catholic missionaries based in China were therefore recruited to interpret from Chinese into Latin, which language specialists from Russian would then interpret into Russian. As a result, the official language of communication between China and Russia for a long time during the Qing dynasty was, in fact, Latin, and the Chinese government had to rely on Western missionaries to perform the tasks of translation and interpreting.

Although very few Chinese people in the Qing dynasty knew foreign languages, a specific group of people living in Macau acquired some language skills through Portuguese merchants. They then acted as the "middlemen" between foreign merchants and local businesses and were hired as "买办" (pronounced "maiban") in Chinese or "compradors" in English. According to Morse (1926, p. 66), when European merchants visited China, it was standard practice that a person with the knowledge of Portuguese was hired to travel with them. After the mid-eighteenth century, as foreign factories were being established in

Canton, the number of foreign merchants increased significantly, and so did the need for recruiting personnel to help them deal with issues such as purchasing food and other goods and finding accommodation. This growing need for local "middlemen" among foreign merchants in China essentially led to the birth of the comprador community in Canton.

According to Yuan (2017, p. 16), as the Qing government did not put much effort into training language specialists, very few people were properly trained to speak foreign languages in China. However, the area of Canton became a trading hub under the so-called "Canton system". A group of local people who have acquired a certain level of linguistic skills began to be known as language specialists, or "通事" (Tongshi) in Chinese, who served as interpreters and mediators between foreign merchants and local Chinese businesses. Peng Bao was one of these language specialists. He was born in 1792 in Xiangshan (modern-day Zhongshan in the Guangdong province of China). When he was young, Bao learned some basic pidgin English. In 1828, he started working as a comprador for some American merchants. In other words, Bao acted as their agent and was engaged in various activities related to foreign trade. In 1836, Bao began working for British opium merchant Dent and escaped to another province in 1839 in fear of being arrested by Zexu Lin for selling opium.

Bao sought protection from his friend Ziyong Zhao [招子庸] who was at the time the local magistrate of the county of Weixian, and was later recommended by his friend to work for Tuohunbu [托浑布], the provincial governor of Shandong, who then recommended him to work as senior Chinese official Qishan's personal interpreter in 1840. However, in 1841, Peng Bao was sentenced to lifetime hard labour and exiled to Xinjiang, a remote province

in the west of China. Although his career as a political interpreter for China did not last long, he played a very active role in dealing with the British. In some cases, he was not only an interpreter or a language specialist but served multiple roles.

As discussed in the literature review chapter, a trading broker is among the various roles political interpreters played in history. Lung's (2016) study into Sillan interpreters during the Tang dynasty in China is a notable example of this. Her study suggests that the interpreters' language ability was acquired through their trading experience. In the past, very few people had any means of learning a new language. Therefore, traders who had to deal with foreigners frequently and hence acquired some language skills may be among the only group of local people that could communicate with foreigners. Bao Peng's case is similar to the Sillan interpreters in Tang China. However, to understand him as a person, we must also learn about the community he belonged to, i.e. the compradors in Canton. In this chapter, the first section is dedicated to explaining the Canton Trade and the subsequent birth of the Comprador System. Before moving on to discuss the Chinese interpreter Bao, however, the author would like to analyse the cases of the language specialists hired by Chinese official Zexu Lin when he was sent to investigate the opium issue in Canton. As explained in the previous chapter, many senior Chinese officials did not trust Chinese interpreters and eventually relinquished the right to bring their own interpreters to the negotiation table. Therefore, in most negotiations during the war, Chinese officials also relied on the service of British interpreters. As a result, Bao was the only prominent Chinese interpreter throughout the First Opium War. Nonetheless, the author believes that in order for the readers to better grasp how the Qing government treated Chinese interpreters, it may be beneficial to examine Zexu Lin’s team of language specialists. In the final section of this

chapter, the life and experiences of Chinese political interpreter Peng Bao is analysed and discussed in detail, including some of the risks he faced during the First Opium War.

5.1 The Canton Trade and the Comprador System

The history of professional interpreters working for the government in China could be traced back to the Tang dynasty. They were initially called "舌人 (sheren)", which literally means "tongue person", and then changed to "通事 (tongshi)", referring to a government official in charge of the communication related to foreign countries. According to Yao (1981, p. 13), around the end of the Tang dynasty and the beginning of the Liao Song dynasty, the term "tongshi" replaced "sheren" to refer to interpreters. Lung (2011, p. 60) also suggests that the government rank of "tongshi" has existed since the end of the Tang dynasty, and it was a standard rank for people dealing with general administration. During the Tang dynasty, two types of language specialists worked for the government. The first type is translators, who were in charge of translating documents submitted by foreign ambassadors and diplomats. The second type is interpreters who provided interpreting services for visiting foreign ambassadors.

In the succeeding dynasties of Song, Liao, Jin and Yuan, "tongshi" or interpreters have always been a government rank in China. According to The First Historical Archives of China (1996, p. 130), from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, there was a growing number of interpreters who worked in Guangzhou and had frequent contact with Western merchants, they were referred to as Guangzhou Tongshi, or Guangzhou interpreters. According to Nanqiu Li (2002, p. 140-141), some locals living in Canton

assisted foreign merchants regarding various issues such as trade and tax. During this process, these local Chinese people started to acquire a basic level of foreign language skills. As a result, a small number of people could gradually translate simple documents such as tax forms. Unlike the interpreters that worked for the government, often, these people were local residents of Canton who had never received any form of language training. However, because of their (albeit limited) language skills, they were recruited by foreign factories and became their interpreters, translators and even compradors.

At the time, it could be said that this group of people were the only way foreign merchants could interact with local markets and conduct business within China, and they served a crucial role in foreign trade during the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Canton. Some scholars such as Ji & Chen (2007, p. 97) maintain that interpreters or "tongshi" were given a unique set of characteristics in the context of the Canton Trade system. Their existence did not simply serve a linguistic purpose but also a cultural and economic one. Many self-taught language specialists at this time started working for the foreign factories as interpreters, but their roles gradually expanded to involve a variety of other responsibilities, such as negotiating on behalf of the foreign merchants, purchasing items requested by their employers, and even deputies in trade-related activities. Once these more capable interpreters were trusted to perform various important duties, they became known as "compradors" instead of interpreters. At this point, the word "tongshi" resumed its original meaning: interpreters who only provided oral translation services.

According to Wong (2011, p. 86), from a Chinese perspective, the word "comprador" had negative connotations among the local people, mainly because their work was seen as canoodling with foreigners and profiting from trade. They were often perceived as greedy

and unscrupulous, sometimes even seen as traitors. Matteo Ricci was an Italian Jesuit priest who visited China in 1582 and became the first European person to enter the Forbidden City of Beijing at the invitation of the Emperor. He kept a detailed journal of his adventures in China. According to his journal (Ricci, 1983, pp. 156-157), when he travelled from Macau to Xiangshan, Ricci saw a post on the street denoting that certain compradors are involved in illegal activities through associating with foreigners.

Even though foreign merchants regarded recruiting compradors as an absolute necessity, their language proficiency was questionable. According to The Chinese History Society (1961, p. 139-141), most compradors only had limited knowledge of spoken English. In fact, few could read and write in English. For example, William Hunter was an American merchant living in Guangzhou prior to the Opium War. According to him (Hunter, 1855, p. 24), some of the compradors practically did not speak English at all. Hunter notes that, in one of the trials involving a foreigner, one of the famous compradors known as "Old Tom" at the time made up complete dialogues due to essentially non-existent language skills (ibid.).

The author of this study believes that the lack of trustworthy language specialists is why Zexu Lin was determined not to rely on local compradors when the Emperor sent him to deal with the opium issue in Canton. According to one of the memorials he submitted to the Emperor (Zhongshan University Department of History, 1965, p. 756), he was aware that in order to deal with foreigners, he must acquire a better understanding of their countries and cultures. Wong (2011, p. 88) notes that, after Lin arrived in Guangzhou, Lin immediately recruited a team of some of the best translators to work on the translation of Western literature and newspapers. Apart from that, he also recruited cooks that worked in

foreign factories and a Chinese person who used to work for American missionary Peter Parker's hospital to gain more understanding of English culture (ibid.).

5.2 Zexu Lin's team of Interpreters

As mentioned previously, this section covers a brief summary of the language specialists hired by the Chinese official Zexu Lin when Emperor Daoguang sent him to deal with the opium issue in Canton.

According to Qu (1995, p. 353), Lin selected an experienced translator working for the government in Beijing to accompany him to travel to Guangzhou. This translator is described as having received education in India and was fluent in English. However, Wong (2011, p. 87) notes that the name of this translator is unknown, and there is not enough concrete evidence to prove that this information is correct.

In an essay titled “Crisis in the Opium Traffic” published in *The Chinese Repository,* it is mentioned that Lin was keen to translate foreign literature into Chinese and recruited a team of competent language specialists (Anonymous, 1839, p. 77). However, only a brief description is included in this article, and not much detailed information is provided. In Smith's 1986 book *Chinese Christians: Elites, Middlemen, and the Church in Hong Kong*, Lin's team of translators are described in detail. There are four language specialists: Aman, Shaou Tih, Alum and Atih. According to Smith's description (1986, pp. 52-65), the first translator named Aman was the son of a Chinese father and a Bangladeshi mother. It is mentioned that he was educated in a church school in Serampore, India and taught by an English priest named Marshman.

The second member of Lin's team of language specialists is Shaou Tih. His Chinese name was 袁德辉 or “Dehui Yuan”. Tih was born in Canton but educated in a Roman Catholic school in Penang Island, Malaysia and then the Anglo-Chinese Academy in Malacca that Robert Morrison founded. American merchant William Hunter also attended the Anglo-Chinese Academy around the same time and wrote about Tih in his book *Bits of Old China.* According to Hunter (1855, pp. 260-261), Tih was a model student at the Academy and was proficient in Mandarin Chinese, Latin and English. However, Hunter recalls that Tih had to leave Malacca and move to Guangzhou in 1827 due to involvement with the local Triad (an organised crime syndicate).

Nevertheless, at Hunter's recommendation, Tih was able to find a job as a translator in Beijing at a government agency specialising in foreign affairs and was then recruited by Lin in 1839. According to Wong (2011, p. 90), Tih did not only translate foreign literature and newspapers into Chinese but also helped Lin translate some documents and diplomatic notes into English. One notable example is the translation of Lin's letter to the Queen of England. This letter was included in *The Chinese Repository* (Anonymous, 1839, p. 167) and the first paragraph is shown below:

> For the managing opium on the last spring being stopped trade for present time till the opium surrendered to the government than ordered be opened the trade the same as before

A somewhat whimsical note is added at the end of the letter, most likely by editors at The Chinese Repository:

> So far as we know, this is the first document which ever came from the Chinese in the English language. It is evidently the work of the commissioner's senior interpreter, who has for many years been in the employment of the government, at Peking. Its idioms are perfectly Chinese; and, like all the documents in their own language, it is without punctuation. If our readers should be able to understand what it means, they will here see the "great imperial commissary's" compassion manifested. And his earnest desire shown that the English ships should enter the Bogue as usual, promising that he "will never treat you foreigners by two manners of ways" It is a document worthy of being put on record (Anonymous, 1839, p. 168).

As suggested in the note, the entire letter was written without any punctuation and is incredibly difficult to understand. Many grammatical mistakes can be found, and Chinese idioms such as "不分黑白" or "unable to distinguish right from wrong" was translated in a very literal way, namely "to make no separate black and white". Nonetheless, as mentioned in the note, it was indeed very likely one of the first official documents from China in English. Based on the description mentioned above, it was "evidently" the work of Lin's interpreter, who worked in Beijing for many years. The author believes that it is highly probable that Shaou Tih was responsible for the translation.

Very little is known about the third language specialist in Lin's team named Alum. According to Smith (1986, pp. 56-57), he was a Chinese student who studied in the "Mission School of the American Board Commissioners for Foreign Mission at Cornwall, Connecticut" in America. He returned to China in 1825 and started working for Lin.

The fourth and final member of Lin's team was Jinde Liang or "Atih" in English. He was the son of Fa Liang, the first Chinese protestant missionary. According to Wong (2011, p. 91), he was baptised by Robert Morrison at the age of three. He also learned English and Hebrew from American missionary E.C. Bridgman, the creator of *The Chinese Repository*. In 1834, Jinde Liang's father, Fa Liang, was convicted for distributing religious materials. As a result, Jingde Liang escaped to Singapore with his father and received his education there until returning to Guangzhou in 1837. Wong (ibid.) notes that when Lin arrived in Guangzhou, Liang and other people working for foreign factories went to Macau. Once Lin learned about this, he sent a delegation to visit him and invited him to join his team of language specialists. Judging from the fact that when Lin was exiled, the only language specialist Lin recommended to his successor was Liang, it could be argued that among the translators, Liang received the most trust and respect from Lin.

According to Su (2005, p. 229), during the time Liang worked for Lin, he was responsible for translating almost half of the total number of books Lin requested. Notably, his translation of the *Cyclopaedia of Geography* written by Hugh Murray, originally published in London, was later included in the book *海国图志*, or "*Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms*" in English, which was considered one of the most influential publications in China at the time.

When foreign language education was nearly non-existent in China, it was difficult for Lin to assemble a team of capable language specialists to join his translation mission. Apart from compradors in Canton whom he did not trust, the only people with foreign language skills were those who lived and studied abroad, mainly in South Asian countries such as India, Malaysia and Singapore. From the example of Lin's letter to the Queen of England, it

could be deduced that their English language skills were not to the highest standard, but Lin had no other option.

Curiously, Wong (2011, p. 94) notes that as these people never received a complete education in China, their Chinese language abilities should also be questioned. In fact, some evidence suggests that Lin did not fully trust the translators. For example, according to Hunter (1938, pp. 262-263), Lin once asked Hunter to translate the English version of the letter to the Queen produced by his translators back into Chinese so that he could check whether the renditions were accurate and faithful.

When Lin was assigned to deal with the opium issue in Canton, it could be assumed that some of his missions required written translations and oral interpretation. For instance, in some of his memorials to Emperor Daoguang, he mentioned that he brought foreign merchants and "interpreters" to Macau when he confiscated opium (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 1, pp. 667-674). However, the names of the interpreters were not mentioned. Although a reasonable assumption could be that Lin would bring a member of his team of translators to perform the interpreting, Wong (2011, p. 95) mentions that no record shows that it was the case. Likely, the translation team was only in charge of translating foreign texts and did not participate in many other miscellaneous tasks.

An article in *The Chinese Repository* (1840) mentions the incident of a British ship ("the Sunda") sinking near the Island of Hainan in the south of China. Some of the crew members survived, and Lin arranged a meeting to see them. One of the survivors was a doctor named Hill, whose report of the event was included in *The Chinese Repository* under the title "Loss of the British Bark Sunda, Described by Communication by Supervisors from the Wreck,

Addressed to the Editor of the Canton Press" (Anonymous, 1840, pp. 478-486). According to Dr. Hill's description, an interpreter said the following to the crew to inform them that they should kneel when they met Lin:

> This not all same one other day. Today yumchae all same Emperor, all that mandarin have come, all that hong-merchant, must crook foot litty.

The grammatical mistakes and sentence formation are typical of what is known as the "Canton English" used by compradors at the time. Therefore, it may suggest that instead of the team of language specialists Lin hired, he used local compradors for oral interpretations required in his missions. It was also mentioned in an article titled "Crisis in the Opium Traffic" in *The Chinese Repository* that a document in English was once submitted to Lin but was rejected because his interpreter could not understand written English, only oral English (Anonymous, 1839, p. 77). Considering that his team of language specialists was in charge of translating Western literature, it may be assumed that Lin did not ask the four language specialists he hired to help with his daily missions. Instead, Lin hired local compradors who did not know how to read and write in English.

In the report mentioned above, Dr Hill notes that the interpreter's name was "Atung" (ibid.), and he was extremely nervous and did not speak English very well, which caused some confusion among the crew members. It was also mentioned in Dr Hill's report that among the interpreters Lin brought, a young person demonstrated excellent proficiency in English. According to him, this young person had lived in London for almost eight years and could speak English better than any Chinese person he had met before. Unfortunately, more information on this particular interpreter could not be found in existing documents.

Lin was keen to hire the best language specialists in the country because he wished to learn more about his “enemies”. In one of the memorials he submitted to the Emperor, Lin asserts that if he was to take control of the situation, he must learn about the foreign country frequently (Qu, 1965, p. 765). In order to understand the roles translators and interpreters played during the First Opium War, it is necessary to investigate what Lin learned about Britain as a country.

According to Lin's book *A Collection of Letter and Records* [信及录] (1982), Lin was convinced that as the British navy travelled from afar, their supplies and ammunition would not be able to last long. On the other hand, the Chinese military had ample resources and time. Hence he concluded that it would not be possible for Britain to start a war with China. Furthermore, in one of the memorials he submitted to Emperor Daoguang, Lin claims that due to the uniforms worn by the British soldiers, they have minimal combat skills on land (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 2, p. 245). This statement was an inaccurate assumption, and there may have been various reasons why it suited Lin's best interest to undermine the British military. For example, it could cause less panic among the public, and Emperor Daoguang would see that Lin was doing a great job in Canton.

However, this misconception essentially caused officials in China to not prepare for land combat, which is one of the reasons why the British forces took over the city of Xiamen. After the outbreak of the war, Lin was accused of failing his mission and eventually exiled. As a result, his previous efforts, such as translating Western literature, were disapproved of and abandoned entirely. Lin's successor, Qishan, wrote a memorial to criticise how Lin's failure led to the outbreak of the war. Qishan also commented that it was a disgrace for Lin, an honoured member of the Qing government, to “spy on the foreigners” (ibid.).

Qishan's opinion probably represented the typical attitude shared among government members regarding foreigners. As a result, even towards the end of the First Opium War in 1842, it is reported that Emperor Daoguang still knew very little about Britain. For example, Daoguang asked his advisors how a twenty-two-year-old woman could be the leader of the nation. In addition, he wanted to know precisely how large Britain was in terms of land area, and whether it shared borders with Russia (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 5, p. 264). These questions clearly show that the Chinese knew very little about their opponent. Their lack of knowledge about the British could result from not trusting the language specialists. Due to the lack of trust, the interpreters could not play a more active role in collecting information about the foreign culture. In fact, the person who edited and published the *Illustrated Treatise on the Maritime Kingdoms* [海国图志] (1998), Yuan Wei, criticised that not knowing enough about the enemy put China in a highly disadvantageous position during the First Opium War.

In this section, the author briefly mentions the roles played by Lin's team of language specialists that he recruited to help him understand British culture. However, he did not trust them completely and frequently doubted their abilities. When Lin was blamed for China's failure in battles against Britain, he was exiled to a remote part of China. As a result, Lin's successor dismissed all of the language specialists and mocked their efforts. Even though these language specialists mostly translated literary works and rarely interpreted, the author believes that their fate could reveal some risks faced by political interpreters serving the Chinese government. Compared to the British interpreters, these language specialists were of a much lower status. They were not trusted by Chinese officials and were not allowed to participate in political or military decisions. Moreover, as Lin was known to hire others to

cross-examine the language specialists' works, they faced the risk of being criticised and punished if they made mistakes. Finally, when their employer, Lin, was exiled, these language specialists also lost their jobs. This outcome suggests that being a political translator or interpreter in the first place meant a high level of risk for these language specialists.

In the following section, the author will analyse and discuss the case of Peng Bao, one of the only interpreters to serve China during the First Opium War.

5.3 Peng Bao’s Career as a Comprador and an Interpreter

Very little is known about Peng Bao's early life. One of the most detailed accounts of his personal background is found in a memorial to Emperor Daoguang after Peng Bao's trial (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992). It is noted in the report that Bao was arrested and sent to trial on 11th April 1841. The wording implied that “strict measures of torture” was inflicted several times to ensure that Bao confessed all of his crimes. Some details regarding some of Bao's activities during the war are disclosed in this memorial.

Peng Bao was born in Xiangshan county of Canton (modern-day Guangdong province of China). As Xiangshan is very close to Macau, he started learning “foreign languages” as a child. A relative of Bao's was a successful scholar, and Bao made acquaintance with one of the said relative's students named Ziyong Zhao [招子庸]. In 1829, he started working as a comprador for an American factory. When the American merchant left China, Bao lost his job. It is unclear what he did for a living for the next seven years. However, in 1836, another

one of his relatives worked for British merchant Dent's factory as a comprador and then fell ill, so Peng Bao took his place in the factory without any permission or licence.

According to the memorial (ibid.), when Bao was working as a comprador, his annual salary was 60 Spanish dollars. However, in addition to that, he was paid between 200 to 300 Spanish dollars to purchase food for the foreigners. In August 1837, Bao's friend, who was working as an interpreter at the time, asked Bao to buy opium, and he accepted the request. In 1838, Bao bought some more opium for a customer in Fujian. In the same year, another interpreter at a foreign factory asked to borrow 10,000 Spanish dollars from Bao. When Bao refused to lend him the money, the other interpreter threatened that Bao must give him at least 7,000 Spanish dollars or he would report to the officials that Bao was involved in the opium trade. During this time, Zexu Lin was in charge of a suppression campaign against the trading of opium in Canton and stringent measures were taken to eliminate the opium trade, and if Bao was convicted, he would most likely be arrested and punished.

Bao did not have enough money to lend to his friend and was scared of being sent to prison, so in 1839 he fled north to seek protection from his friend Ziyong Zhao who was at the time magistrate of the county Weixian in Shandong province. In the spring of 1840, Bao received a letter from his family telling him that he was not reported to Commissioner Lin. Apparently, Bao's uncle was once interrogated by Lin but was eventually released due to a lack of evidence. Knowing that he was safe from prosecution, Bao had planned to go back home to Canton. Around this time, British ships happened to reach the Shandong province of China, and the Governor needed someone who could speak English. Zhao recommended Bao to Governor Tuohunbu to work as an interpreter.

Meanwhile, Qishan was sent to Canton by Emperor Daoguang to investigate foreign affairs. Qishan sent Tuohunbu a letter requesting an interpreter to accompany him to Canton, which is how Peng Bao ended up working for Qishan as a political interpreter. In the memorial to the Emperor (ibid.), it is concluded that Peng Bao was convicted of conspiring with foreigners and racketeering. Bao was eventually sentenced to banishment to Xinjiang and lifetime hard labour.

From his experience mentioned above, one might better understand Bao's personality. Even when he had a stable job working for the American factory, Bao undertook tasks to purchase food for foreign merchants for additional monetary gain. Furthermore, he was aware of the consequences of selling opium and decided to be involved in the opium trade. Therefore, it could be seen that Bao was financially oriented. At the same time, he was scared of being reported and eventually fled the city. There is a dichotomy in Bao's personality. He was willing to take some risks for financial gain but terrified of the consequences. It could be argued that Bao perceived the risk of being caught as with “severe consequence but low probability”. As a result, he decided it was worth the compensation he was offered. The fact that Bao was willing to go against the regulations also shows that he did not have much respect for the law and the authorities and was not necessarily loyal to his government and his country. On the contrary, as Bao's entire livelihood has depended on foreigners and his foreign language skills, psychologically speaking, even though he identified himself as Chinese, his interests were more aligned with the foreigners.

Under rules and regulations during the 1830s and 1840s, government officials were not allowed to deal with foreigners directly, rather, they had to rely on interpreters to act as go-betweens to pass messages, documents and letters forth and back. When Bao was in

Shandong, a foreign ship was sighted by the sea, and the local Governor needed someone to talk to the foreigners. Bao was selected as the representative and was sent to the harbour. According to The Chinese History Society, Bao has described this encounter in his own words as follows (my translation):

> [I] saw the foreigners and greeted them in foreign etiquette, he then engaged in a conversation with me. I asked him “what is your business here?” he responded saying “I would like to purchase some food”. The next day, Governor Tuohunbu asked me to accompany police officer Dong to visit the foreign ship and see their leader. The foreigner gave me 2000 foreign coins and asked me to buy some items for him, I did not dare to accept it. I reported this to Governor Tuohunbu, and the Governor said: “If they remain quiet and peaceful, those items shall be gifted to them, there's no need to take their money”. And after that, items were bestowed on them as gifts. (The Chinese History Society, 1957, p. 253)

This account shows that Bao was indeed sent to talk to the British as a mediator. Some details should be noted. First of all, when Bao saw the foreigners, he greeted them in a foreign style. This act shows that Bao was very familiar with how to deal with foreigners. The fact that he chose to greet them that way instead of in a Chinese fashion could have two reasons. The first one may be that Bao wanted to show them that he understood their culture and language, and greeting them in a foreign style was Bao's way of introducing himself as the interpreter. This act could also be interpreted in another way. That is, Bao was aware that his interests were more aligned with the foreigners, and he perhaps identified himself more towards the British side. However, according to the memorial mentioned earlier (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 4, pp. 55-57), Bao vowed that he “did not dare to accept” the 2000 silver coins from the British person. The author maintains that it is

questionable Bao was lying regarding not accepting the payment, considering he used to work as a comprador for foreign factories in Canton and was very familiar with purchasing supplies for them. In fact, from the memorial mentioned above, it is clear that his primary source of income came from buying things for foreigners.

The reason why Bao refused to take the payment could be that, at this time, he was aware that he could potentially be a wanted criminal and that he was seeking refuge from his friend. Furthermore, when Bao was in Canton, he worked for foreign factories. On this occasion, however, Bao was sent by the government as a representative. Therefore, Bao might have identified himself as a government official. Finally, according to the information in the memorial, another person was also on board, i.e. "police officer Dong". Although it was not clearly stated who this political officer was or why the Governor sent him to visit the British ship with Bao, it could be assumed that supervising Bao's behaviour was a part of Dong's duty. Therefore, Bao was at least cautious of being seen taking money from foreigners by police officer Dong.

Would Bao have taken the money if Dong was not on board and Bao was sent to talk to the British alone? The author would like to argue that it would have been very likely. In that case, Bao would probably view the task as a low-risk activity as it is not likely for other people to know about it, and there is monetary profit for him. Dong's presence, however, presents uncertainty and a higher risk that Bao was not ready to take, given his state. However, Governor Tuohunbu also gave Bao a level of authority. Even though Bao was only sent to the British ship as an interpreter, the Governor said to him that "if they remain quiet and peaceful, those items shall be gifted to them". This statement shows that the Governor was willing to let Bao decide whether the foreigners were "peaceful" or not.

Therefore, it could be said that Bao had a certain level of autonomy in dealing with foreigners.

Very little was written about Bao's appearance or personality in the memorial to the Emperor. It is simply suggested that after enduring some form of torture, Bao had seemingly convinced the Chinese officials that he had confessed all of his crimes and wrong-doings. Bao's words of confession are mentioned in the memorial. Bao used very concise wording and demonstrated some caution and refrain. In his words, Bao implied that he never dared to do anything without the permission of the Governor and that he was an obedient employee of the government. Was it really the case?

British Royal Navy official John Elliot Bingham is well known for writing a book about his experience in China titled *Narrative of the Expedition to China.* Peng Bao's name is mentioned in the book in several instances.

> [...] the galley returned with Paoupang, the compradore we were in search of, and who was afterwards at Canton the means of communication between Keshen and the British plenipotentiary (Bingham, 1843, Vol. 1, p. 248).

It should be noted that in all of Bingham's descriptions, the name "Paoupang" refers to Peng Bao, and "Keshen" refers senior Chinese official Qishan. Bingham described Bao as a former comprador to Mr. Dent's establishment at Canton. Bingham also notes that on the arrival of Commissioner Lin, Bao "had thought it advisable to leave that neighbourhood" (ibid.). This statement corresponds to the facts in the Chinese official's memorial to Emperor Daoguang regarding Bao's trial. According to Bingham, at this point, Bao "had now been given, or more probably had purchased the rank of an inferior mandarin" (ibid.).

Surprisingly, after having just met Bao, Bingham immediately assumed that his rank was "purchased". The author believes that Bingham's judgment of Bao's character may be related to how Bao behaved in front of the British officials mentioned below:

> He professed much regard for the English: but, like all his countrymen, he was a most intolerable liar. He had many wonderful tales of his escapes since leaving Canton, and assured us that the mandarins had squeezed him to the tune of seventy thousand dollars. This I afterwards ascertained was the greatest "munchausen" of all his tales; for he could never have been possessed of one-tenth part of that sum (Bingham, 1843, p. 249)

It is clear that Bingham did not believe in Bao as Bao gave the impression that he exaggerated everything and should not be trusted. In terms of his language skills, there is also a detailed description:

> In alluding to the present dispute and Keshen's trip to the south, he remarked in his Canton-English, - "Can go makee talkee; -my thinkee no can settee this pigeon; -must makee that emperor cry" (ibid.).

The excerpt above shows that Bao was perhaps not as loyal to his government as he made the Chinese officials believe. It is unclear whether the British saw through Bao's selfish and money-oriented nature and wanted to recruit him as a spy. However, according to Bingham, there were several occasions when Captain Elliot wanted to talk to Bao privately.

> Captain Elliot, after a short stay, returned to the ship, accompanied by Paoupang; when the boat immediately went back for a mandarin and his servant, who were very anxious to accompany Captain Elliot, no doubt as spies on the compradore, of whom they evinced great jealousy; but as Captain Elliot wanted to have some private

> communication with this man, the smallness of the boat afforded a ready opportunity for declining their company (Bingham, 1843, p. 251).

It would seem that a member of the Chinese government was tasked to keep an eye on Bao's behaviour. However, as this official did not know English, there was no way for him to understand Bao and Elliot's conversation. According to Bingham, Bao tended to lie to his supervisor from the Qing government, who is described below as "White Button" because he wore a white crystal sexangular button on his uniform.

> White Button having been ushered into the captain's cabin, where cherry brandy was produced, a long conversation took place between Paoupang and Captain Elliot relative to the supplies, &c.; the mandarin frequently asked what they were saying. On one occasion, when Paoupang had been exposing and abusing the whole fraternity, he answered White Button's query by assuring him, that he was telling the captain what very good persons mandarins were, and that the people liked them very much. Paoupang, at all events, made such a good story out of the mandarin's refusing to receive any compensation for the *small quantity* of supplies furnished, and of their squeezing him ultimately for it, that it was arranged that he should be paid for all that should have been supplied when he came to Canton with Keshen, by which means he would prevent the mandarins at this place getting hold of the dollars. That the inhabitants generally were squeezed and made to give their cattle as a bribe for us to go away, I think very possible; but I do not think they would have ventured to squeeze an attaché of Keshen's: at all events, he succeeded in squeezing us (Bingham, 1843, p. 256).

This description details Bao's lies to his supervisor from the Chinese government. It is unclear how Bingham knew what Bao said to the government official. One possibility is that John Morrison, Robert Thom or Karl Gutzlaff was also present and noted this conversation and later told Bingham the story. Was Bao aware that someone else on board could speak both Chinese and English? If he was not, Bao was clearly abusing his language abilities and assuming that no one would ever find out that he had lied to the Chinese officials. Bao must have decided that he could ignore the risk because of the low probability. However, if he was aware that someone else could understand him, does this mean that Bao "trusts" that the British would not report his behaviour to the Chinese government? Could it be possible that Bao thought he and the British were on the same side? Or did Bao believe that even if someone had told the government about his lies, he would be able to get away with it?

According to Bingham, Bao had been "exposing and abusing the whole fraternity" (ibid.). In the quotation mentioned earlier, Bao also said: "must makee that emperor cry". These examples show that at least when Bao was talking to the British, he made it clear that he did not belong to the Chinese government. In Bao's own words of confession mentioned in the Chinese memorial, he demonstrated nothing but loyalty, caution and obedience. Bao said that "I did not dare to accept the money". However, as can be seen from Bingham's descriptions, Bao kept saying that the officials "squeezed him" for the compensation and that he would "prevent the mandarins at this place getting hold of the dollars". Undoubtedly, Bingham and perhaps the rest of the British crew all thought of Bao as a selfish and greedy liar. Possibly, Bao was not particularly loyal to either "side" of this conflict but only cared about gaining as much financial profit as he could. According to Bingham, Bao (Paoupang) was determined to persuade the British to offer some gifts to the Chinese officials:

> Paoupang had been keen on board the transport collecting different articles, which he intended as presents for the mandarins. From one of the transports he purchased a telescope. Captain Eyres gave him several tumblers and wine glasses, -all glass ware being highly prized by the Chinese. You cannot make them a present they more highly value. A uniform sword, which he was most anxious to obtain for the head mandarin, we could not spare him. He suggested to Captain Elliot, that the mandarins would be much pleased by our chin-chining them; and as they had really been very civil in all our intercourse with them, the ships were accordingly dressed with the flags […] (Bingham, 1843, p. 267).

If, in this case, Bao was really trying to obtain those items from the British navy as gifts for the Chinese officials, it shows that he clearly wanted the British to believe that he was on their side and that he only had their best interests at heart. Based on the political context, Bao could not have been doing this under any orders from the Chinese government. Still, he was very “keen” and put much effort into it. Such acts of “gift-giving” were never mentioned in any Chinese historical documents. It is possible that Bao pretended to be on the British side while he only wanted to obtain those goods for himself, perhaps to sell and make a profit later. For example, Bingham mentions that Bao had “purchased a telescope”. If indeed Bao wanted the British to offer gifts to the Chinese officials as goodwill gestures, there is no reason for him to purchase any item himself.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, Bao had “abused the whole fraternity” and said he would “prevent the mandarins at this place getting hold of the dollars”. What he said and what he did contradicts each other, and it might even be assumed that Bao was lying about offering gifts to the Chinese officials. Bao may have only wanted to obtain those items to make a

profit by selling them in secret. As Bingham mentions above, Bao took some tumblers and wine glasses. All glassware was highly prized in China during the nineteenth century, and there was much profit for Bao to gain. Bingham also mentions in his book that his telescope made him “a centre of attraction” and even “a universal favourite” (Bingham, 1843, p. 262). The popularity of the telescope is likely the reason why Bao was eager to purchase one from the British. In addition, Bao was described as “anxious to obtain” the uniform sword “for the head mandarin” and even suggested that “the mandarins would be much pleased” (Bingham, 1943, p. 267). Even if the British offered the sword to the head official, there would be no gain for Bao and no reason for him to be so anxious to obtain it. Therefore, it is highly likely that he was only eager to obtain these goods for his own financial gain.

Even though personal monetary gain could be part of the motivation for Bao's actions in this case, ultimately, he was aware of the cultural differences between China and Britain. Through his actions, Bao played the role of a cultural mediator. When he mentioned to the British that they may please the Chinese officials by “chin-chining” them, he could well be telling the truth.

According to Yunquan Li, since the Zhou dynasty and the Spring and Autumn period of China, the tribute states system had already been established (2002, p. 93). Some smaller countries near China became its tribute states. The tribute state system reflects a clear hierarchy centred around the Chinese civilisation. To the officials of Qing, it is not surprising that they regarded China as essentially the centre of the world, and all foreign countries were of an unimportant, peripheral status. However, in the 1840s, more and more Western merchants and diplomats made their way to China. These foreigners brought exotic products, different clothes, traditions, religions and essentially, different ways of thinking,

and the impact of the clash between the East and the West were starting to manifest itself within Chinese society.

Fairbank (1968, p. 258) argues that between 1840 and 1860, the tribute system in China's diplomacy was gradually challenged by political and economic relationships defined by treaties the Qing government signed with Western powers. Even though China's fundamental political system and its policy regarding foreign nations did not change much during this period, some officials of Qing have begun to recognise the impact of Western ideology and the new world order. Being in the very centre of the encounter between the East and the West, and in the context of conflict, Bao must have been acutely aware of the cultural and ideological clash between the two nations. Regardless of his motivations, Bao spontaneously took the role of a cultural mediator. Through his experience working as a comprador in a foreign factory in Canton, he acquired language skills and built an understanding of how Western people think, do things, and express themselves. Even though Bao had not been educated to a high level, through his social connections, he worked with senior officials in the Chinese government and accumulated knowledge of Qing's bureaucratic system, policy and administrative procedures. These skills constitute Bao's linguistic, cultural and social capital, and were essentially the reason Bao was eligible to become an essential interpreter during the First Opium War.

Initially, when Bao worked as a comprador in Canton, it could be argued that he did not have any political capital, however, when he was introduced to Qishan and recruited to be his personal interpreter, Bao started developing a form of political capital, and its value increased as Qishan trusted Bao more and more, eventually asking Bao to represent Qishan himself when negotiating with the British. When a conflict arose or there was a stalemate,

and no progress was made in the negotiations, Bao was eager to utilise his capital as a Chinese political interpreter to please both parties with the best strategy he had in mind. In the aforementioned example, that strategy was to collect items on the British ship to be sent as “gifts”. Suppose the British military showed respect and friendliness by offering gifts to China like the other tributary states. In that case, the Chinese officials would be more likely to believe that the British would not resort to armed attacks to solve the issue, making them less anxious and worried.

Meanwhile, from the British perspective, they may believe that the Qing officials were not as stubborn as they seemed based on Bao's words. Thus, the tension between the two countries may have been somewhat reduced. It could be assumed that the result Bao was hoping to achieve was to promote calmer and more peaceful negotiations, therefore maintaining a relatively steady state of affairs. According to Yuan (2017, p. 23), one of the reasons why Bao was trying so hard to stabilise the situation was that if war ever broke out between Britain and China, he could be severely punished. Chang (1970, p. 121) notes that at the time, the political system in China was largely dependent on the people who were put in charge instead of a comprehensive legal system. Under such circumstances, when issues related to foreign relations occurred, the higher-up officials would often shift responsibilities for the problem to their subordinates. In other words, as Qishan's personal interpreter, Bao might get blamed and punished for issues related to Britain. That in itself creates a unique type of risk that Bao had to deal with as a political interpreter in conflict. However, by effectively using his capital and demonstrating the interpreter's agency, Bao was able to make a certain level of impact on the overall stability of the situation.

From the fact that Bao escaped Canton during Lin's campaign, one can assume that Bao must have been scared of the penalties for selling opium. Indeed, Bao initially acted cautiously when he first became Qishan's interpreter. However, as he obtained a rank in the government as a political interpreter serving the Chinese government, it is also possible that he started thinking highly of himself. A story about this is mentioned in Bingham's book:

> During all the previous and subsequent intercourse with Keshen, the medium of communication was Paoupang, the compradore before alluded to. He was a shrewd, clever fellow, about forty-five years of age, and spoke the lingua franca fluently. On one of his trips to Macao, he had visited his old master, Mr. Dent, and then went to see his late fellow-servants, who very soon began to jeer him on his increased consequence, when jumping up with his right arm extended, and hand clenched, he thus broke forth:- "You thinkee my one smallo man? you thinkee my go buy one catty rice, one catty fowl? No! My largo man, my have catchee peace, my have catchee war my hand, suppose I opee he, makee peace, suppose I shutee he, must makee fight" (Bingham, 1943, Vol. 2, pp. 40-41).

It should be noted that the name "Keshen" mentioned in Bingham's book refers to the Chinese official Qishan. In the passage above, Bingham describes Bao as a "shrewd, clever fellow" who clearly thought highly of himself and was excessively greedy. From Bingham's description, Bao ran away from the city to avoid being punished for opium smuggling. The way Bao spoke to the foreigners also disrespected the Chinese government officials. One may even argue that Bao demonstrated disloyalty to his country. In the nineteenth century, to become a comprador in Canton, one must obtain a licence from the government. Therefore it may be assumed that the compradors tended to want to maintain a good relationship with the local officers. However, with the exception of Qishan, Bao was highly

unpopular among the Chinese government officials, and it might be related to Bao's personality and past experiences.

In 1840, very soon after Qishan arrived in Canton, and before any negotiations between Britain and China were officially conducted, a local investigating censor "监察御史" (officials who were in charge of investigations and impeachment) wrote a memorial to Emperor Daoguang. In the letter, the Chinese official suggested to the Emperor that, even though Bao was familiar with the foreign culture, "how could he be a sensible person who sees the full picture?" Furthermore, according to this official, Bao's previous records show that he was not a good citizen who knew his place and earned an honest income. The official expressed his concern in the memorial that if Qishan was to trust Bao, Bao may "forget about morality and principles at the sight of monetary profits" and cause additional issues, which he described as "particularly worrying" (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 2, p. 729).

A Chinese historian in the Qing dynasty named Tingnan Liang wrote a book titled *Notes Regarding Foreign Affairs* [夷氛闻记] about the opium trade and the Opium War. In his words, Peng Bao was a despicable traitor:

> 鲍鹏者，香山人，幼习夷言，投身为颠地幸童。义律已见而轻之，待如奴仆，而寄以耳目。烟禁既严，畏廷桢拘惩，则逃之京，依其同乡，因转依南海作令山东之招子庸。适琦善觅通夷语者，鹏由是被荐。琦善喜其与夷狎，较衙

官倍得力也，一切往来文牍口传，皆倚任焉。因而内地情形意见，悉为所泄。

(Liang, 1937, Vol. 2, p. 32)

[My translation:

Peng Bao, from Xiangshan, learned the foreign language when he was young, devoted himself to be Dent's servant. Elliot met him and did not think much of him, treated him as a servant and asked him to spy for him. The opium campaign was scrupulous, Bao feared imprisonment and punishment and fled to the capital to live with his acquaintance from the same city, then sought refuge from Ziyong Zhao in Shandong province. At this time Qishan was looking for someone who knows the foreign language, and Bao was therefore recommended. Qishan is pleased that Bao gets along well with the foreigners and finds him much more helpful compared to the other officials, relying on Bao to transmit all documents and oral messages. As a result, all advice and reports regarding the situation in the mainland were leaked.]

It is suggested in this book that Peng Bao was spying for the British and leaking crucial military intelligence to them. Was this truly the case? As mentioned in the memorial regarding Bao's trial, Bao was eventually convicted of associating with the foreigners and sentenced to banishment to Xinjiang. It should be noted that Bao was not charged with treason as there was no evidence of him spying for the enemy. Even after "several rounds of torture", Bao did not admit to any acts of treason on his part. The Emperor sent direct orders to investigate Bao's background and how Qishan got to know him and recruit him. According to The First Historical Archives of China (1992, Vol. 3, pp. 473-474), the

Emperor has once made a comment about Bao. The Emperor notes that, “汉奸本自不少，又有鲍鹏往来，何信息不可得也”, which can be translated to:

> Already there are a lot of traitors, and in addition to them, Bao is transmitting messages back and forth, what information is not obtainable [to the foreigners]? (ibid.).

It seems that Emperor Daoguang of China was once convinced that Bao was one of the traitors who leaked all the information. To these accusations, Qishan explains that he did not know Bao until the interpreter was recommended by Zhao (ibid.). According to Qishan, he only happened to hire Bao because he needed a language specialist to bring to Canton to deal with opium-related issues (ibid.). In Qishan's memorial, it is mentioned that Qishan suspects he would be deceived and cheated if he hired a comprador in Canton. Furthermore, in the memorial, Qishan describes Bao as a “thug” and says he was aware of Bao's past history. For these reasons, Qishan only asked Bao to write correspondences and pass on oral messages. Qishan claims that he had never allowed Bao to read any memorials or confidential documents.

Emperor Daoguang also asked Governor Tuohunbu to investigate Bao. According to Tuohunbu's report (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 3, p. 491), when he recommended Bao at Qishan's request, he warned Qishan to keep an eye on Bao as he does not know Bao well and cannot vouch for his integrity. In another memorial submitted to the Emperor, it was made clear that the officials who were present during Bao's meetings with Elliot testified that “they did not see any suspicious activities on Bao's part” (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 3, p. 530). Apparently, when the Chinese officials

met with Elliot, Bao would interpret Qishan's messages to Elliot in English, and John Morrison would interpret Elliot's response in Chinese. Although there was no means for these officials to know what Bao said in English, they decided that based on Morrison's interpretation of Elliot's response, “it appears that nothing was added or omitted [in Bao's interpretation]” (ibid.). Moreover, the team of investigators in Bao's trial were of very high ranks in the Qing government. Therefore, they probably had no reason to cover for somebody like Bao. Eventually, Bao was not charged with treason and was convicted only of associating with foreigners and illegally purchasing items for them. Bao's punishment was banishment to Xinjiang and lifetime hard labour.

However, according to Bingham, Bao had an entirely different fortune:

> This fact is clearly established by the case of Paoupang, the compradore, who was the bearer of the correspondence between Keshen and the plenipotentiary. He was sentenced to be cut into ten thousand pieces; his *relatives* were to be put to death; the village in which he had resided was to be utterly destroyed, and the country laid desolate for sixty le around it (Bingham, 1843, p. 411).

It is unclear who is right and who is wrong in terms of Bao's fate, and historians have found it difficult to determine whether Bao did indeed betray his country or not. However, even though Qishan mentioned in his explanation letter to the Emperor that he never trusted Bao and never gave him access to confidential information, several pieces of evidence can show that it was not the case.

For instance, in a confidential memorial to the Emperor written by a Chinese general who participated in Qishan's meeting with Elliot, he mentioned that Qishan brought a group of

people with him to the meeting location, including four interpreters. However, when the meeting started, Qishan said that there were too many people, and invited Elliot to have a private conversation inside the British ship. According to him, “at this time there was only Bao who was interpreting in the cabin” (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 2, p. 613). As a result, there was no way of knowing what was discussed by Qishan and Elliot. This Chinese official notes that even if Qishan gave Elliot any gifts, there was no way for any other person to know about it.

Furthermore, in the memorial, the official expressed his concern that if Qishan and Elliot were talking about Hong Kong-related matters and if they were exchanging any gifts, Bao would undoubtedly know about it. Therefore, he urged the Emperor to interrogate Bao to find out what happened. Even in Qishan's testimony (ibid.), he mentioned that “As Peng Bao can speak the foreign language, he talked in private with Elliot”. These details suggest that Qishan must have trusted Bao enough to allow him to act on his own and talk to Elliot in private. Even in a meeting where Qishan brought four interpreters, Bao was the only one he selected to interpret his secret conversation with Elliot.

Ji & Chen's research (2007, pp. 172-173) also suggests that as Qishan's trust in Bao grew stronger, he became increasingly dependent on Bao's services as an interpreter and an assistant. Eventually, Qishan stopped sending other officials to supervise Bao, and Bao was often seen dealing with the British alone.

Perhaps Bao's autonomy as an interpreter was fundamentally based on Qishan's trust. However, why did he trust Bao so much, of all people? When Bao was asked why Qishan chose him to take to Canton, he said that:

九月间，琦中堂忽谕我在庄平等候，要带赴广东，我辞说广东通晓夷言者多，中堂怕洋商等与夷相好舞弊，定要唤我随去，代递文书。 (The Chinese History Society, 1957, Vol. 3, p. 253).

[My translation:

In September, Master Qishan suddenly asked me to wait for him in Zhuangping, as he wished to take me to Canton. I said many people in Canton knew how to speak English. However, Master Qishan was concerned the compradors were closely connected to foreigners and may cheat him, and was determined to take me to Canton and send documents on his behalf.]

From the description above, Bao and Qishan were both aware that a group of people known as compradors in Canton could speak English. According to Bao's own words (ibid.), Qishan believed that the other compradors and interpreters in Canton had close ties to the foreigners, and he was essentially afraid that they would cheat him or betray him. In other words, Qishan naturally distrusted the Cantonese compradors – the very group of people Bao belonged to. The only difference that separated Bao from the other compradors was that Bao happened to be in Shandong when Qishan was about to leave for the south of China.

As Qishan clearly detested hiring compradors in Canton, he was eager to bring a language specialist he already trusts to accompany him. Bao was recommended to him by Governor Tuohunbu. Tuohunbu only knew about Bao through another official called Ziyong Zhao, who was Bao's close friend. Even though Bao was a comprador in Canton, his connection with high-up officials made him appear more trustworthy to Qishan than the rest of the compradors. In Qishan's memorial to the Emperor, he also mentioned that he was aware of

Bao's past and how he ended up in Shandong. Therefore, the author would like to argue that there is a possibility that Qishan trusts Bao for another reason. It is possible that Qishan did not think Bao would ever betray him because he has evidence against Bao. If Bao was disloyal, Qishan could easily send him to prison for the opium smuggling business he was involved in before he escaped to Shandong.

Takeda's research (2007) shows that, in an interpreted event, there may be different parties, each representing a unique set of interests that are not shared by the others. Under such circumstances, a figure of authority would usually select a person whose interest aligns with the party to be the interpreter. They are inclined to make this decision because they tend to believe that an interpreter who shares the same interest is more likely to "take their side" and assume an ideal political stance that ensures their loyalty. In Qishan's case, even though he was aware that he could easily hire bilingual compradors in Canton to be his interpreter, he did not trust that their interests aligned with his. At the time, it was a common sentiment among Chinese government officials that all compradors worked for foreigners and were traitors who were not trustworthy. To illustrate this, a senior official named Liang notes that "I hear all foreigners hire Chinese people as compradors. These compradors are the worst traitors [...], and Peng Bao was the worst among the compradors" (Liang, 1937, p. 40).

However, at the time Qishan was seeking an interpreter, Bao happened to be working for the government and he was recommended by the Governor of Shandong. As mentioned earlier, Tuohunbu warned Qishan that Bao might not have the cleanest record, and Qishan acknowledged that he was aware of this. Furthermore, Qishan claimed in his memorial that he did not trust Bao at all. Nevertheless, multiple pieces of evidence suggest that Qishan highly depended on Bao's language skills. The author would like to propose that Qishan

may have felt that, by knowing about Bao's criminal record, he ensured that Bao's interests aligned with his own. Qishan may have assumed that Bao would not dare betray him as he could send Bao straight to prison for opium smuggling at any point. Regarding English language abilities, it can be assumed that all compradors were more or less on the same level. In some of the dialogues mentioned in Bingham's book, it could be seen that Bao's command of English was not of the highest standard. To Qishan, however, with limited options, selecting Bao as his personal interpreter might have been the most appropriate choice for him at the time.

As demonstrated in Takeda's research (2007), picking an interpreter who seemingly shares one party's interest does not guarantee loyalty. Understanding and speaking a foreign language sometimes automatically puts the interpreters in a position that is closer to the other party. As Anderson (1976, p. 218) argues, when a bilingual interpreter works in the middle of two monolingual groups, the interpreter has a certain level of power over controlling the communication process. Whether it was Qishan's intention or not, during the negotiations with the British, Bao could exercise a certain level of authority beyond his linguistic duties. According to some historians (Ji & Chen, 2007, p. 173), Bao played an active role in the negotiations regarding the sum of indemnity China had to pay to the British. Thanks to his negotiation skills, Bao managed to reduce the sum of payable indemnity from 20 million Spanish dollars to 6 million on one occasion, which is a significant decrease.

Another example of Bao's role in the negotiations can be found in the *Collection of Documents on the Modern History of China: the Opium War*. It is mentioned that Qishan once gave Bao two different documents to send to the British. In one of them, Qishan wrote that he was ill, and asked the British officials to wait regarding the negotiation of terms and

conditions. In the other document, Qishan promised to give Britain the island of Hong Kong but still asked the British to wait until he gets approval from the Emperor of China. Qishan sent Bao to the British ship and asked him to determine which one to give to the British officials based on their demeanour (The Chinese History Society, 1957, Vol. 3, pp. 250-251).

It can be seen from this example that Qishan gave Bao a high level of authority. Bao was authorised to decide whether the British seemed aggressive and threatening. In this incident, it can even be argued that Bao's personal judgement of the situation is the key to whether or not Qishan would agree with the terms and conditions proposed by Britain or not. Bao was not only an interpreter in this context but a diplomat, a mediator and a political negotiator. As Bao was the only person sent to talk to the British, Qishan's understanding of the situation solely depended on Bao's personal opinion. The stakes were high in this situation as Qishan was essentially deciding whether or not Hong Kong would be given to Britain. It is noted that Bao visited the British alone, without any form of supervision from the Chinese government. In this case, Qishan entirely trusted Bao's instincts regarding the best course of action. Even though it is not mentioned whether Qishan sought advice from Bao, he was undoubtedly allowing Bao to take charge of crucial decisions regarding the conflict.

Regarding this, Yuan (2017) argues that the high level of autonomy and independence in Bao's case is also the result of the vaguely defined duties and responsibilities of a political interpreter, and the author agrees with this theory. At the time, even though government interpreters and translators had a rank in the bureaucratic system, they were rarely involved in conflicts, not to mention one of this scale. Therefore, rules and regulations regarding their duties and how much power they should be allowed to have would not apply to the case of

the First Opium War. In an obscure and informal way, the interpreter Bao was given enormous power to make critical decisions, demonstrating the unique role political interpreters played in war and conflict.

With significant responsibilities comes greater risks. On a personal level, as Bao was tasked with visiting the foreigners on his own, there is a possibility that his personal safety could be threatened. On a state level, even though Qishan gave Bao some specific instructions, his attitude, actions assessment of the situation can also affect which document was to be handed over to the British. One can imagine that if Bao had a personal agenda, theoretically, he had the freedom to manipulate the situation to a relatively large extent and achieve his personal goals.

After Qishan was arrested for making promises to British officials without the permission of the Emperor, Bao was also arrested and put on trial. Qishan's successors, Qiying and Yilibu, never recruited any political interpreters until the end of the war. For tasks such as delivering letters and documents, they used “freelance” compradors who were never allowed to appear in any high-level meetings or negotiation talks. In fact, according to Loch (1843, pp. 107-108), an interpreter sent by Yilibu to deliver messages to the British military was nearly shot as he could not clearly explain his intentions. As both Qiying and Yilibu were very cautious and wanted to avoid directly showing up to the negotiation talks, Yilibu's servant Xi Zhang was sent as a deputy to engage in diplomatic talks with the British. Zhang was trusted with this task because when the British army took over the city of Dinghai, he was sent to negotiate with the British forces and was therefore seen as having experience dealing with foreigners.

Furthermore, according to a memorial written by Yilibu, some other reasons why Xi Zhang was selected to be the negotiator was because he was known to be very eloquent and well-spoken. Also, Yilibu asserts that:

> As Zhang is only a servant, his life does not need to be treasured, even if he was taken hostage by the foreigners, it does not cause much damage to the mission. Therefore, I gave him a handsome amount of remuneration, gave him important and confidential information, and asked him to tell the foreigners that he was an official from the government (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, Vol. 3, pp. 423-424).

Zhang had no knowledge of the English language and was not an interpreter. However, what Yilibu said about him above suggests that in the context of war, people who have to deal with the other country frequently may face life-threatening dangers such as being taken hostage and killed. According to Wong (2011, p. 109), Xi Zhang was one of China's main representatives during the negotiations regarding the *Treaty of Nanking*. More importantly, no Chinese interpreters were present during the entire negotiation process. Sometimes Zhang and a few other deputies were sent to attend meetings with the British officials. However, none of them could speak English, and the only people they could talk to directly were British political interpreters. According to Loch (1843, p. p169), British interpreters were almost always present in important negotiation talks in contrast to the lack of interpreters from the Chinese side.

In this chapter, the author first presents an overview of the comprador system in Canton in the nineteenth century, followed by a summary of the language specialists hired by Commissioner Zexu Lin when he arrived in Canton to investigate the opium issue. Even

though Lin's team of language specialists mainly worked on translations of foreign literature and were rarely involved in any interpreting tasks, their experiences offer a glimpse of how language talents were seen and treated by the Chinese government. In the third section, the author examines the behaviour of Peng Bao in detail. As one of the only political interpreters who served China during the First Opium War, Bao's tasks and experiences involved various risks. Compared to the British interpreters, Bao was less trusted by his government (except for Qishan) and faced the additional risk of being blamed for his superior officer's failure. Bao capitalised on his linguistic, cultural and social capital to achieve his personal goal of gaining financial reward. However, after his employer Qishan was arrested, Bao, too, could not escape the fate of being banished to a remote part of China. Bao's personality and behaviour did not earn him respect from either the Chinese or the British parties. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that Bao still played a vital role during the First Opium War as a Chinese political interpreter. In the following chapter, the author will review the risks involved in the translation of *the Treaty of Nanking*.

6 Risk in the Translation of the *Treaty of Nanking*

As mentioned in the literature review chapter, when it comes to political interpreting in bilateral relations, in modern days, it is common practice for both parties to have government-affiliated interpreters. However, during the First Opium War, both the British and the Chinese governments relied on the services of John Morrison, Karl Guzlaff and Robert Thom. Several reasons result in this unique position of the British interpreters during the conflict.

Before Robert Morrison arrived in China, it could be said that Britain and China had little knowledge of each other. However, thanks to Robert Morrison's pioneering efforts, the British government was able to recruit language and cultural experts such as John Morrison who were familiar with both Chinese and British cultures during the 1830s and 1840s. On the other hand, the Chinese government did not make a great effort to get to know the British on a similar level. Sun Tsu famously said in *The Art of War:*

> If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle (Tzu, 5th century B.C./2019).

As discussed in the previous chapter, when the Chinese official Zexu Lin arrived in Canton to deal with the opium issue, he wished to learn about Britain as a nation. Lin brought with him to Canton a language specialist trained in Beijing and recruited a few more translators once he arrived in Canton. However, unlike the British plenipotentiaries who highly valued

the opinions of the British interpreter, Lin did not fully trust the language specialists he recruited. Lin rarely asked them to translate any sensitive or confidential documents, and never consulted their opinions. The language specialists were mainly asked to translate western books and newspapers to help Lin gain a general understanding of Britain.

Furthermore, if an important document must be translated, Lin often hired external language experts to check the accuracy of the translations (Wong, 2010, pp. 87-94). As Lin had never dealt with the British directly, his knowledge of Britain was acquired only from translations of western books and newspapers. In terms of the language proficiency of the translators and interpreters in Lin's team, it is suggested that even though they had some knowledge of English, their linguistic skills were somewhat limited. For example, in an article in *The Chinese Repository,* it is pointed out that the English translations produced by Lin's translators and interpreters were extremely difficult to understand as no punctuation was used, and some Chinese idioms were translated literally (Anonymous, 1839, p. 167). Therefore, it could be assumed that the Chinese translations of English literature, which Lin relied upon as his sole method of learning about British culture, may also have included various mistakes. As a result, Lin's understanding of the West could not be comparable to his counterpart from Britain, who valued and fully trusted John Morrison, Karl Gutzlaff and Robert Thom.

When the British naval force sailed north and occupied the city of Dinghai, Lin was blamed for the failure of the Chinese army and became the scapegoat. He was eventually exiled to Xinjiang, a remote part of China. Lin's successor, Qishan, then dismissed Lin's team of language specialists and hired the comprador Peng Bao as his personal interpreter. However, after signing the *Chuenpi Convention* without gaining the permission of Emperor Daoguang,

Qishan was arrested, and Bao was also sent to trial for suspicions of treason. According to Hu & Jia (2010, p. 4), it is possible that Qishan's successors were afraid that they would be betrayed if they recruited language specialits. As a result, they relinquished the right to bring their own interpreters to the negotiation table and became solely dependent on the services of the British interpreters. According to Hu & Jia (ibid.), the Chinese officials explain that:

> John Morrison, Robert Thom and Karl Gutzlaff of the foreign nation are all proficient in written Chinese and they are learning spoken Chinese, there is no need for an interpreter to deliver messages as it only adds another layer of barrier.

Whilst it could be argued that the British were in a position to impose whatever terms they saw fit to apply, the absence of an official interpreter from the Chinese side put Qing China in an even more vulnerable position. As mentioned above, Chinese officials dismissed all interpreters due to suspicion of treachery, and as a result, the drafting and signing of the *Treaty of Nanking* were entirely mediated by a team of British interpreters led by John Morrison. During the negotiation process, both the British and Chinese authorities used the services of the British political interpreters, which, on the face of it, would seem unwise, given that the British interpreters may have a bias. One could liken it to a sports event in which the referee was from one of the nations involved in the event.

As mentioned previously, that situation arose due to the mistrust of Chinese interpreters by the Chinese authorities. It is almost ironic why they were more trusting of a foreign interpreter. The notion that interpreters and translators are not trustworthy is by no means specific to the Chinese context. The famous Italian proverb, “traduttore, traditor” or “translator, traitor” in English, shows that historically speaking, it was not uncommon for translators to be regarded as traitors. However, Chang (2020) suggests that this proverb itself

may have been misinterpreted, and “translator traitor” in Chinese is not necessarily derogatory in nature. Assuming that Chang's findings have merit, this re-opens the question of why the Chinese authorities would use the British interpreters' services over and above that of their own, presumably more loyal, interpreters. Assessing the First Opium War from a historical and political point of view, based on the massive military advantage Britain had over China, a commonly undisputed fact, in this case, is that China had little to no choice where the signing of the Treaty was concerned.

In other words, the British were in a position where they could include whatever clauses and terms they liked to all intent and purpose. To quote Winston Churchill in the film Darkest Hour, “You can't reason with a tiger when your head is in its mouth” (Wright, 2017). To the author's way of thinking, another possible reason why the Chinese authorities eventually abandoned their own interpreters and completely relied on the British interpreters is related to the concept of “saving face”. “面子”, or “Mianzi” in Chinese culture is a crucial social concept. It has a similar meaning to the English words “dignity” and “prestige”. Within Chinese culture, saving face is important as one's authority can depend upon it. The concept of saving face is discussed in detail in Ye & Pang's 2011 article “Examining the Chinese Approach to Crisis Management: Cover-Ups, Saving Face, and Taking the ‘Upper Level Line’”.

In the case of the Opium War, if we consider the possible aim of the Chinese authorities as being one of damage limitation where the Treaty was concerned, what course of action was open to them if the contents of the Treaty were out of their direct control? One option would have been to limit the spread of information as to the contents of the Treaty. Given that only British interpreters were involved in drafting and translating the Treaty, one could argue

that they would be less likely to spread derogatory information about the Chinese capitulation among the general public in China. In fact, even if they did, likely, the Chinese people would not choose to believe foreigners rather than their own national authorities. Suppose Chinese interpreters were allowed to have access to the document. In that case, the Chinese interpreters might be considered more credible sources of information by the Chinese and, as such, a potential source of risk to the current authorities. Furthermore, as the Chinese authorities had little control over the content of the Treaty, it is also possible that they did not see the lack of loyal interpreters as too grave of a disadvantage.

In modern-day diplomatic negotiations, it is common practice that both parties bring their own interpreters to ensure that the translation and interpretations are agreed upon. As for the *Treaty of Nanking*, however, not having their own interpreter present, it could be said that the Chinese government had no means of cross-examining the Chinese version against the English version of the Treaty, and the accuracy of the translation could not be verified. Whilst relying solely on the British interpreters for a document over which the Chinese had no control regarding content might seem a reasonable course of action, it could have exposed the Chinese authorities to clauses that might be both detrimental to China and possibly avoidable. Essentially, the British interpreters were free to adjust the Chinese version of the document.

According to Yuan (2017, p. 55), after the signing of the *Treaty of Nanking*, *The Chinese Repository* published both the Chinese and the English versions of the Treaty. Therefore, Yuan (ibid.) suggests that it might have been possible for the public to examine the accuracy of the translation. However, the author of the present study would like to argue that *The Chinese Repository* was a periodical written in English, primarily targeting Protestant

missionaries working in Asia. Therefore, it had a limited readership and was not easily accessible to ordinary Chinese citizens who did not understand English. Furthermore, considering the fact that being associated with foreigners or learning and reading foreign languages was against Chinese rules at the time, it is likely that the only people who had access to the publication were Western missionaries who had no reason to check the accuracy of the translation.

According to Mao (1998, p. 101), certain differences between the Chinese and English versions of the Treaty led to conflicts between Britain and China regarding the right of entry to the Canton area. These differences will be analysed later in this chapter. When the Qing officials tried to solve these conflicts by referring to the Chinese version of the Treaty, they faced fierce opposition from the British forces. Mao argues that it is highly likely that the Qing officials were completely unaware of the significant differences between the original Treaty and its official translation into Chinese (ibid.).

Compared to the general attitude of neglect from the Chinese government, British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston was aware of the language and translation issue and mentioned it two years prior to the signing of the *Treaty of Nanking*. In February of 1840, Lord Palmerston wrote a letter to George Elliot and Charles Elliot, who were appointed British plenipotentiaries in China. In this letter, Lord Palmerston specifically said that if the Qing government in China agreed to British demands and conditions, such an agreement would be established in the form of a written Convention (Qu, 2017). Furthermore, if any question or doubt should arise as to the content or translation of such a convention, it must be determined by the English version instead of the Chinese version. Lord Palmerston's original words are as below:

> I send you for your guidance the Draft of such a Convention; you are at liberty to modify and alter it according to your discretion and judgment, under the circumstances of the moment; but you will take care to adhere to English forms of expression; and in order to prevent any future doubts, all questions which may arise as to the correct interpretation of the Treaty, must be determined by the English version (Palmerston in Morse, 1917, p. 632).

After the *Treaty of Nanking* was exchanged and approved by authorities in China and Britain, the translation of the Treaty started attracting attention from historians. Qu (2017) mentions that a British historian, Walter Henry Medhurst, whose pen name was "Old Wheat", produced a back translation of the Chinese version of the Treaty. It was published in *The Chinese Repository*, with a note explicitly mentioning various translation problems. According to Medhurst ("Old Wheat", 1845, p. 26), the translation of the *Treaty of Nanking* was "more favorable to the British interests".

For example, the translation of Article 2 of the *Treaty of Nanking* is particularly problematic. In the Chinese version, it is stated as follows:

> 自今以后，大皇帝恩准英国国民带同所属家眷，寄居大清沿海之广州、福州、厦门、宁波、上海等五处港口，贸易通商无碍；且大英国君主派设领事、管事等官住该五处城邑，专理商贾事宜，与各该地方官公文往来。(Wang [王铁崖], 1957, p. 31).
>
> [My translation:

> From now on, the Great Emperor graciously allows that citizens of Britain, along with their family members, may temporarily reside by the five ports in the cities of Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen (Amoy), Ningbo and Shanghai along the coast of the Great Qing Empire, without any restrictions to trade activities; furthermore, the ruler of Great Britain shall appoint officials such as superintendents and consular officers to live within the city area of the above cities, dedicated specifically to affairs related to trade and the exchange of official documents with local authorities.]

However, in the English version, some concepts were changed slightly:

> His Majesty the Emperor of China agrees, that British subjects, with their families and establishments, shall be allowed to reside, for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or restraint, at the cities and towns of Canton, Amoy, Foochowfoo, Ningpo, and Shanghai; and Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, etc., will appoint Superintendents, or Consular Officers, to reside at each of the above-named cities or towns, to be the medium of communication between the Chinese authorities and the said merchant […] (British Parliamentary Papers, 1840-85, in O' Meara, 1971, p. 230)

In the Chinese version, it is clearly stated that British subjects and their families shall be allowed to live in the ports of Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo and Shanghai, and any consuls and government officials shall be allowed to live within the aforementioned cities. The concepts of "by ports/harbours" and "within cities" are clearly differentiated in the Chinese version.

Yuan (2017) notes that Morrison was primarily responsible for translating the *Treaty of Nanking*. It may be argued that as the interpreter, Morrison was not the person who changed the wording in the Chinese version. It is possible that the different versions were simply the result of un-agreed terms. However, Yuan (2017, p. 56) lists three reasons why Morrison likely made this particular change. The first reason is that as Morrison knew the Chinese language and culture very well, he should know the difference between "ports" and "cities". The author of the present study is inclined to agree with Yuan in this case. From Morrison's early years' experiences mentioned in chapter 4, it could be seen that he, his sister and his mother were forced to stay by the port area in Hong Kong. At the same time, his father worked in Canton, so Morrison should know the difference between "port" and "city" better than anyone else. The second reason proposed by Yuan (ibid.) is that three days after the signing of the *Treaty of Nanking*, the Viceroy of Liangguang, Qiying, specifically explained in the démarche that Britain was only allowed to build settlements near the harbours for British subjects and merchants to live. Qiying's act shows that the Chinese government is very particular about not allowing British subjects to live within the city areas. The third reason is that Morrison might have been sympathetic towards his father's painful experiences in the past when he could not enter any Chinese cities.

In addition to Yuan's argument mentioned above, the author would like to add another possible reason why the change in the wording was made by Morrison personally. In signing the *Treaty of Nanking* with China, the British government's primary goal was to be able to trade freely and access the massive Chinese market for profit. Therefore, if the Chinese government were particular about not wishing to allow all British subjects and families to have the right to live in Chinese cities, it would not have been a significant issue for the British government. According to the Chinese version of the Treaty, British officials could

live in the city area, and all British subjects were allowed to live in the port area. Therefore, the only group of people that might benefit from the change of words would be British merchants, missionaries and their families. By changing the words in the Chinese version, Morrison was able to get the Chinese government to sign the Treaty and, at the same time, provide legal evidence in the English version so that merchants and their families could reside in the five cities named in the Treaty.

To take such a risk, the interpreter has in some way to be motivated. As mentioned in the previous chapters, these motivations could range from financial incentives to personal desires. For example, Morrison's father was a missionary whose work was limited to the Canton area of China, so when a clause in the Treaty allowed missionaries to access the interior of China, one could wonder if this was a personal issue for Morrison.

From a risk analysis point of view, Morrison's behaviour could be better understood. The context is that the British were threatening to attack Nanking, a crucial transport hub of China. At that time, British military power was far more powerful than the Chinese army, so they had an advantage at the negotiating table. For both countries, however, it would be preferred that a large-scale war is avoided due to the potential damages it could cause.

The British force had a few clear terms and conditions they received from Lord Palmerston. The British would have achieved their goal as long as these main conditions were met. Meanwhile, China was in a position where they absolutely could not afford to lose Nanking. However, it should still be an utmost priority that both countries agree to the terms of the Treaty and that a war should be avoided. Whether or not British merchants should be allowed to live within the city areas should not be the first concern of the British government.

In contrast, it has a far more severe consequence for the Chinese government as allowing vast numbers of foreigners to reside within city areas could mean social unrest and many other administrative and legal issues. This also explains why Qiying specifically added the note in the démarche regarding this article.

For Morrison, the decision that involved the least amount of risk would have been to talk to British officials and persuade them to agree to the counteroffer proposed by the Chinese. However, this would mean that many more families from Britain would still be forced to be separated. They would still have to face the same hardship Morrison's family had to endure, the same hardship that essentially took Morrison's mother's life. Suppose Morrison's opinion meant anything to Pottinger, which we know from historical records that it did. In that case, Morrison could also suggest that every demand of the British government must be met and relay this to the Chinese officials to insist that all British subjects shall be allowed to live in the city. As this would lead to much more serious consequences for the Chinese, and the officials seemed to be aware of it, the situation could well escalate to a higher level of conflict.

As the lead interpreter during the negotiations, Morrison was in a position where he could produce two different versions of the Treaty. The British government, whether they knew about Morrison's manoeuvre or not, would certainly have no problem regarding the added benefit, and the Chinese, assuming that only high–ranking officials are allowed to reside within the city, must also be relieved. This way, the risk of a violent escalation of the conflict is significantly reduced. The risk for John Morrison personally is quite significant. If it was found out that he changed the terms, it could result in him losing his job or worse. However, the likelihood of this is low considering that very few people could speak both Chinese and

English at the time. Also, as mentioned previously, Morrison was regarded as an important member of the British force whom the British government could not afford to lose. Therefore, Morrison might have had the confidence that no matter what happened, the British army would offer him protection. For a relatively small risk, Morrison has achieved a significant gain for himself and many more families like his. This way, it is easier to understand why John Morrison decided to produce two different versions of the Treaty.

As mentioned previously, a British historian by the pen name of "Old Wheat" (1845) back-translated the Chinese versions of the *Treaty of Nanking* and its *Supplementary Treaty* into English. After these back translations were published in *The Chinese Repository*, the differences between the Chinese and the English versions were noted by the French magazine *Journal des débat*. According to Kwan (2012, p. 97), an article published by *Journal des débat* claims that the Chinese government bribed the British interpreters to produce an unfaithful translation of the Treaty. There are several speculations as to why the Chinese party may have wanted an unfaithful translation. Japanese scholar Sato (2011, p. 40) believes that the Chinese government did not want the wording and expressions in the Chinese version of the Treaty to suggest that China and Britain were on equal footing when they signed the Treaty. Prior to the First Opium War, the only way for a foreign representative to communicate with Chinese officials was through the form of a "petition" (ibid.). In other words, international communication with China was never established on terms of diplomatic equality.

As Gelber (2006, p. 6) argues, in 1834, the EIC gradually lost control over the supervision of British traders in Canton. Instead, officials appointed by the British Crown and government started taking charge. At this time, issues related to state equality and

sovereignty became more acute between China and Britain. Having recently defeated Napoleon, the British government took great pride in owning one of the strongest navy forces in the world and insisted that the British officials should speak to their Chinese counterparts on equal grounding. China, on the other hand, was a country where national dignity and prestige were greatly valued. Therefore, the Chinese officials were particular about the choice of certain words in the Chinese version of the Treaty.

In fact, in the excerpt of the Treaty mentioned above, another significant difference between the English and the Chinese versions is the word "恩准" in Chinese, which means "to graciously allow". The Chinese word "to graciously allow" shows that, as a privilege, Hong Kong was bestowed by the Emperor of China as an act of graceful kindness. In the English version, however, this term was simply written as "His Majesty the Emperor of China agrees that […]". It could be seen that the English expression "to agree" used in the original version is much more neutral than "to graciously allow". As the Treaty was initially drafted in English, it is clear that some extra consideration was put into the translation of this particular term. It is uncertain whether the interpreter, John Morrison, made the change spontaneously or was specifically asked to do so by the Chinese officials who reviewed the Treaty. However, some evidence can be found that compared to the content of the Treaty, the Chinese officials were particular about words and expressions related to national pride and reputation.

In Zhang's *Diary of Diplomatic Missions* (2018, p. 29), it is mentioned that on the 13th of August, 1842, when asked about their opinions on the articles of the Treaty presented by the British, Yilibu "closed his eyes and did not say a word". Meanwhile, the Governor of the Liangjiang region, Jian Niu, said the following: "the phrase 'war expenses' is not elegant.

This needs to be changed first and foremost, it is critical". As Qu asserts, although there are not sufficient records that can show whether the Qing government closely examined the accuracy and the quality of the translation, both the British and the Chinese were "relatively more concerned about words related to national prestige and reputation" (2017, p. 179).

Another example can be found in Article 3 of the Treaty. In the English version, it is stated that:

> His Majesty the Emperor of China cedes to Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain the Island of Hong-Kong […] (quoted in Qu, p. 175).

Nevertheless, the Chinese version reads:

> 今大皇帝准将香港一岛给予大英国君主 (ibid.).

This phrase can be back-translated into English as follows:

> Now, the Great Emperor has granted permission to bestow the island of Hong Kong to the ruler of the nation of Great Britain (my translation).

The English word "cedes" was translated as "has granted permission to bestow" in Chinese. The semantic differences between these expressions are too significant to be ignored. According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, the definition of "to cede" is "to give somebody control of something or give them power, a right, etc., especially unwillingly". Similarly, the Cambridge Dictionary defines "to cede" as "to allow someone else to have or own something, especially unwillingly or because you are forced to do so". It is clear that in both definitions, the factor of unwillingness or being forced to do something is apparent.

On the other hand, the definition of "bestow" has a completely different set of connotations. The verb "to bestow" means "to give something to somebody, especially to show how much they are respected" in the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, and "to give something as an honour or present" in the Cambridge Dictionary. The negative connotation of "being forced to yield" and perhaps even an extent of "surrender" was removed entirely in the Chinese version and replaced with "has granted permission to bestow". In the Chinese version, "granting permission" shows that the Emperor of China was essentially in a position of control in the negotiations with the British party. Furthermore, the word "to bestow" demonstrates Emperor Daoguang's kindness and respect for the ruler of Britain, which very much aligns with traditional Chinese virtues.

As mentioned previously, in 1840, British Prime Minister Palmerston wrote a letter to Charles Elliot and George Elliot specifying that the English version of the Treaty should determine all doubts and questions regarding the content. However, after Henry Pottinger succeeded in the role of Britain's Plenipotentiary to China, this requirement was not put into the Treaty. Qu (2017, p. 172) believes one possible explanation could be that the British interpreters Morrison, Thom and Gutzlaff were trusted to produce a Chinese translation where no such doubts should exist under their manipulation. Another possibility could be that the Chinese officials simply could not accept a clause in the Treaty that states the English version takes precedence over the Chinese version due to reasons related to national dignity and prestige. Regardless of the reason, after the First Opium War, China was not in a position to refuse any of the terms and conditions proposed by the British government. After a few incidents related to the difference between the Chinese and the English versions, the British government took notice of the translation problem. Before the *Treaty of Tientsin* was signed in 1857, the Foreign Secretary of Britain at the time, Lord Clarendon, sent an

urgent instruction to the plenipotentiary to China regarding the language issue. The following article was hence added to the *Treaty of Tientsin*.

> All official communications addressed by the Diplomatic and Consular Agents of Her Majesty the Queen to the Chinese authorities, shall, henceforth, be written in English. They will for the present be accompanied by a Chinese version, but it is understood that, in the event of there being any difference of meaning between the English and Chinese text, the English government will hold the sense as expressed in the English text to be the correct sense. This provision is to apply to the Treaty now negotiated, the Chinese text of which has been carefully corrected by the English original (quoted in Chen et al. 2004, p. 309).

Apart from the examples listed above, Qu's 2017 study also shows that some western legal concepts were masked in ambiguous and vague Chinese terms to benefit British interests. For instance, the concept of “persons and properties” was translated as “身家” in Chinese (Qu, 2017, p. 188). Whilst this word in Chinese can be used to refer to “family possessions”, it could also be interpreted as “oneself and family”, which does not explicitly include the element of “properties”. In summary, the discussions above show that the translation of diplomatic documents and treaties is not a simple process of linguistic transfer. Many social, cultural and political factors could be involved in the choice of a single word. As a result, mistranslation and misinterpretation could potentially lead to severe legal and political consequences.

7 Barbarians versus Barbarians: the Identity of the Political Interpreter

According to Mona Baker (2010, pp. 198-200), translators and interpreters who work in war zones perform their tasks against a unique backdrop shaped and defined by two essential elements of the public narratives: difference and homogeneity. Specifically, the issue of "difference" highlights the concept of "the other" as opposed to the notion of "us". Baker (ibid.) points out that for the violence of war to be justified, the concept of "the other" as the enemy is particularly underlined when society examines its own relationship to the outside world. "The other" as the enemy is often portrayed as different, evil, dangerous and even threatening. In every conflict that has happened in the past or present, the opposite side, or "they", is always described as a community against everything "we" stand for. "They" are barbaric, "we" are civilised; "they" are evil, "we" are kind; "they" attack, "we" protect; "they" intend to kill and enslave us all while "we" value peace, celebrate life and enjoy freedom.

According to Baker (ibid.), the second element of the public narrative is homogeneity. In this concept, both camps of "them" and "us" are stereotyped as a homogeneous group, leaving no place in the middle for peaceful coexistence with even a single member of the other side. For example, Baker (ibid.) mentions that, during the 1930s and 1940s, the word "German" became a synonym for "Nazi". Likewise, during the Balkan wars, Serbs were widely portrayed as murderous, while the Bosnians were seen as victims. As translators and interpreters working in war zones often bear the responsibility of directly interacting with

the other side of the conflict, they could be positioned as either “one of us” or sometimes “one of them”. This position makes them vulnerable to potentially life-threatening situations.

As mentioned in the literature review section, interpreters are ultimately individuals with their own personal histories, motivations and goals. In the context of conflict and war, Guo (2015) observes that the interpreters are prone to actions such as side-switching and playing the role of a double agent. Such actions may lead to a high level of risk in terms of personal safety, reputation, career development and financial status. However, at the same time, political interpreters in this unique position also have access to more intelligence, more opportunities, and an extensive personal network that covers both sides of the conflict, which they can use as their capital to achieve their goals and ambitions. Throughout this process, the interpreter's identity and loyalty may also be changing and shifting. Compared to the fluid and changeable situation of the interpreter's identity, the society that they come from tends to have a much clearer and more “black and white” judgement of their allegiance due to the elements of difference and homogeneity mentioned above. As Baker says, “you are either with us or against us” (2010, p. 201).

Baker's theory of how society views interpreters working in war zones is reflected in the case of the First Opium War. First of all, both the Chinese and the British sides have described the other party as “barbarians”. It is mentioned in a previous section that Slade (1839) used the word “barbarous” to describe the policy of the Chinese government. Likewise, in official and non-official documents from the Chinese side, the British and people from countries other than China are referred to as “yi”. There is no direct or equivalent translation of this term in English. It refers to all foreigners and has a certain level of negative connotation. In terms of how the general public of China perceives this

term, the author believes it has a similar connotation to that of “barbarian” in English. In fact, according to Zhang's diaries, John Morrison and Robert Thom had repeatedly challenged the use of the word “yi” by Chinese authorities. For example, according to Zhang's diary (2018, p. 20), he visited Pottinger's ship on the 8th of August in 1842. During his visit, Robert Thom asked Zhang the following question:

> 罗伯聃将一字贴上写”逆夷”、“夷匪”、“跳梁小丑”等字，问喜曰：“这些字样，都是你们这边说的，我们何匪何逆何丑？”(quoted in Zhang, 2018, p. 20).
>
> [My translation: Robert Thom wrote the words “ni yi” (rebellious yi), “yi fei” (yi thugs), “tiao liang xiao chou” (foolish and ugly clowns) on a slip of paper and asked Xi Zhang: “these words are used by you people, what about us makes you think we are rebellious, thuggish and ugly?”]

Another instance regarding the word “yi” is mentioned in Zhang's diary on the 26th of August, which was the day the Chinese and British representatives discussed the terms of the *Treaty of Nanking*:

> 该夷呈出所拟条款和约与各宪阅看。耆将军曰：“战费、赎城等字，俱属不雅，须另换字样。”该夷不允。该夷言：“夷字不美，嗣后望勿再用。”咸大人言：“孟子曰：舜东夷之人也，文王西夷之人也。夷字载之于圣经，有何不美？”彼此争论字义，良久未定。(Zhang, 2018, p. 44)
>
> [My translation: The yi presented the terms of the treaty for the officials to read. General Qi (Qiying) said: “the words 'war expenses' and 'ransom for the city' are not elegant, these words need to be replaced with other terms”. The yi did not agree to this. The yi said: “the word ‘yi’ is not beautiful, I want you to stop using it ever again from now on”. Master Xian said: “Mengzi said: ‘Shun is from the east yi, and Wenwang is from the west yi’. The word yi is used in the sacred classics, what is

> not beautiful about that?” They argued over the meaning of the word for a long while and still could not reach an agreement.]

From Zhang's account, it could be seen that the word “yi” does indeed have many negative connotations associated with it. It is mainly used in conjunction with other adjectives such as rebellious, thuggish, foolish and ugly. The British interpreters, being able to speak both Chinese and English, were clearly aware of this. When Zhang visited the British ship, Robert Thom specifically asked him why the Chinese used such derogatory terms to describe foreigners. Similarly, when representatives from both the Qing government and the British forces came together to negotiate the treaty terms, the British specifically requested that the word “yi” should not be used again because it is “not beautiful”. Although the person who made this request is not specified in Zhang's diary, it could be assumed that it was most likely John Morrison, Robert Thom or Karl Gutzlaff, who served as interpreters during the negotiations. As interpreters, they were the only people in the British force who understood the connotations that came with the word “yi”.

In Zhang's diary (2018), there are many instances of John Morrison directly answering Zhang's questions without seeking permission from his commanding officer. Apart from the interpreters, no other British person who participated in the negotiations spoke Chinese. Therefore, the author believes that the request for the Chinese to stop using the word “yi” was made spontaneously by one of the three British interpreters. The author would like to assert that the interpreters' focus on the word “yi” shows that the British interpreters cared about how they were perceived and portrayed by the other side of the conflict. In the context of war and conflict, not only do interpreters work close to physical violence, but their ability

to speak both languages also puts them in a position where they are usually the first to detect hostility from verbal expressions.

As mentioned previously, translators and interpreters are ultimately individuals whose institutional alignment and loyalty may be subjected to change. Nevertheless, Baker (2010, p. 200) observes that for the interpreters that experience war and conflict first-hand, their identity is almost entirely constructed by other social actors involved in the situation. Once this identity is formed in the social environment of war, it usually becomes unchangeable. Regardless of the interpreter's beliefs or actions, their socially constructed identity may simply be determined by their ethnicity. As previously mentioned, Takeda's 2007 study of nisei Japanese interpreters in the U.S. army is an example.

Under such circumstances, the British interpreters were constantly reminded by the word "yi" that the Chinese viewed them as barbarians. This was something other members of the British camp did not experience during the First Opium War, at least not to the same degree. The author of the present study believes this factor may have influenced the social construction of the British interpreters' identity. Among three principal political interpreters on the British side, namely John Morrison, Karl Gutzlaff and Robert Thom, Morrison was the only one who came from a political background. Morrison was appointed as a government interpreter at a very young age. Even though it was mainly the result of his father's legacy, before inheriting his father's role in the government, Morrison worked as the interpreter of an American diplomat and therefore had some exposure to political and diplomatic missions. On the other hand, Robert Thom was a successful merchant before he learned the Chinese language and became an interpreter. It could be argued that Thom did not have a high level of political motivation before he served the British government. In

Karl Gutzlaff's case, he was a Prussian missionary. Therefore, Gutzlaff was not even from Britain, so patriotism and national pride could not possibly apply. Gutzlaff had no reason to be loyal to the British government in the first place.

However, as far as the Chinese were concerned, all three of them were political interpreters representing the country of Britain. According to the government memorials and Zhang's diary (2018), the British interpreters were seen as rather influential figures with a high level of control over the strategic decisions made by the British government. Based on the author's examination of the existing documents and records from the Chinese side, no one in China knew or cared that Gutzlaff was not from Britain. To the Chinese, all foreigners were reduced to a single group of people who looked different, dressed differently, spoke a different language and could not be reasoned with. These people were non-Chinese. Therefore, they were seen as not one of "us" but one of "them". It was mentioned above that in Zhang's diary, Robert Thom asked Zhang, "what about us makes you think we are rebellious, thuggish and ugly?" To this question, Zhang responded with the following:

> 尔等生得不类人形，行得不类人事，何谓不丑？到处杀人掳物，行同无赖，深为可耻，何谓不匪？以外夷犯我中华，以小邦侵我天朝，何谓不逆？(Zhang, 2018, p. 20).
>
> [My translation:
>
> You people do not look like normal humans, and the things you do are not what normal humans do. What about that does not make you ugly? You go around killing people and pillaging their homes, acting like the most despicable wretches. What about that does not make you thugs? You foreigners show up here and ravage my country. As a small nation, you dare invade the Celestial Empire, and what about that does not make you rebellious?]

Zhang's words epitomise how the Chinese viewed the British and essentially all foreigners at the time. This perception reflects Baker's theory of difference and homogeneity mentioned above. In the context of war and conflict, the interpreter's identity and loyalty are shaped not only by their own personal background and preference but also by society as a whole. In the case of the First Opium War, the author believes that the broader social perception of their roles influenced the construction of the interpreters' identity. Based on Baker's theory of homogeneity, the foreigners were all seen by Chinese society as "yi" or "barbarians". Therefore, being loyal to their employer, the British government, was the only option for the interpreters if they wanted protection from the British army and the means to provide for themselves financially in China.

From a risk perspective, as a foreign national, simply being able to live in Qing China was highly challenging. As discussed in previous sections, foreigners were prohibited from residing in China (except Macau) unless they were engaged in trade-related activities. Furthermore, for Chinese citizens, teaching the Chinese language to foreigners was a capital crime. For example, John Morrison's father, Robert Morrison, started working for the EIC because there was no other way for him to stay in China. Karl Gutzlaff faced a similar situation when he travelled to China. As mentioned previously, to continue his missionary work, Gutzlaff served as an interpreter for the EIC and assisted them in the opium trade. He wrote in his journal that he made this decision "after much consultation with others, and a conflict in my own mind" (Gutzlaff, 1834, p. 413). Gutzlaff's words demonstrate that even though some of the tasks and assignments were against his own conscience, Gutzlaff's actions and choices were fundamentally the results of his assessment of potential risk and reward. Therefore, after war broke out between Britain and China, providing that the

interpreters wished to stay in China, where they were seen as “barbarians”, working for the British government was the option with the least amount of risk and the potential to gain significant reward.

The Chinese authorities almost viewed the foreigners as a different species and did not believe they could even be reasoned with. However, towards the end of the war, some Chinese officials finally realised that it might not be the case. Although this paper does not intend to exaggerate the role played by interpreters during the First Opium War, the vast divide between the two cultures was one of the contributing factors to how the war unfolded. According to Zhang's diaries (2018), a Chinese official wrote a letter to him and mentioned that to buy the Chinese forces more time, Yilibu wrote a letter to the British. In Yilibu's letter, he condemned the British's actions of killing numerous innocent people by starting a war in China. It was described as a last resort, and the Chinese officials did not expect much to result from it. However, after the foreigners received the letter, they replied that Britain was not to blame for starting the war. Instead, it resulted from some corrupt officials in China who did not show any mercy to them (ibid.). The letter further mentioned that they would be willing to negotiate peace talks. According to Zhang (2018), the response written by the British was not only reasonable but also rather respectful. He further mentioned that “The two Generals Yi and Qi saw the way the foreigners reacted, then knew for the first time to talk to the foreigners about faithfulness, honesty and sincerity in their actions” (Zhang, 2018. p. 5).

From this description, it can be seen that prior to seeing the response from the foreigners, the Chinese generals never saw the British as a civilised people. In the case study of the British interpreter Robert Thom, the White Flag incident was also a perfect example of

China's ignorance of foreign culture. When Thom tried to explain the meaning of the white flag and their intention simply to send a letter, the local authorities simply sent the lowest-ranked servants to see them. To avoid being accused of associating with the British, Chinese officials did not communicate with the British forces. The meaning of the White Flag was not considered important to them at all. Even when they understood that the foreigners were there to "seek peace", it was immediately described as "ridiculous" and "an evil scheme" (The First Historical Archives of China, 1992, p. 167). Only in 1842, towards the end of the Opium War, the Chinese generals "knew for the first time" that the foreigners could be reasoned with. Suppose the Chinese officials paid more attention to the technological and military power of the British ships when they first reached the shores of China. Alternatively, suppose the Qing government had trained more language specialists so that communication could be achieved directly between high-ranking officials in China and the British officers. In that case, history may have been changed.

It can be seen that during the First Opium War, the interpreters not only served as a linguistic bridge but were challenged with various tasks. In particular, the British interpreters were highly valued and respected as cultural experts and, at times, were allowed to be in charge of the peace negotiations. John Morrison, Robert Thom and Karl Gutzlaff provided the British government and military with invaluable insight and intelligence about the Chinese government and army. As a result, they played a vital role during the entire war, from organising official meetings and planning military attacks to signing the *Treaty of Nanking*. Meanwhile, the interpreters working for the Qing government were treated very differently. First of all, they were merely seen as support personnel, and the Chinese officials did not respect their opinions. Secondly, because of their language abilities, they risk being labelled as traitors and discriminated against. The difference between how the two governments

treated their interpreters shows that interpreters' social expectations and positions vary depending on the cultural and political context.

According to Guo (2015), an increasing number of empirical studies have been conducted on interpreting activities in recent international political controversies, such as at the United States detention centre at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba and military conflicts in Iraq and the former Yugoslavia. In these contexts, the interpreters hired to perform in high-stake scenarios are often not professionally trained, tested or accredited. Instead, they are primarily recruited from local residents, some of whom even have minimal language capacity. The primary motivations of these "field interpreters" vary, but financial considerations are often among the main reasons for them to work for international organisations and military forces. As they were often not trained and not members of professional bodies, codes of conduct often do not apply. These local residents who speak more than one language perform tasks far beyond their linguistic functions. For example, Palmer's research (2007, p. 18) shows that when Western journalists worked in Iraq, their interpreters often served the role of what was known as "fixers", and their duties included arranging the time and venue for interviews and selecting individual interviewees.

It can be seen that even today, interpreters involved in political settings are not always well-trained or well-educated. In a context where they are the only people who can speak the languages of the two parties involved in the conversation, they might face the same risks and opportunities as the interpreters did during the Opium War. In a modern context, regarding the interpreter's role, one critical notion that different professional bodies promote is that the interpreter should always remain objective and impartial. The interpreters should not be seen as "taking any sides", even in wars and conflicts.

For instance, The Red T (a non-profit organisation advocating for the protection of translators and interpreters in high-risk settings), the AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters) and the FIT (International Federation of Translators) published a document titled “Conflict Zone Field Guide for Civilian Translators/Interpreters and Users of Their Services” in 2012. In this guide, the principle of “impartiality” is the first one listed under the responsibilities of translators and interpreters. Specifically, interpreters are asked to “serve all parties equally without expressing your opinions or sympathies”, regardless of who engages them. Guo (2015, p. 11) asserts that the inclination demonstrated in this document to limit and simplify the interpreter's role in conflict zones suggests general neglect of the depth and complexity involved in the interpreter's task in the context of war and conflict.

Meanwhile, it could also be seen that the organisations are perhaps aware of the potential influence the interpreter could create. Therefore, these professional organisations require the interpreters and translators to remain “impartial” to reduce factors that could result in losing control of the situation. In the guides and codes of conduct produced by these professional bodies, the interpreter's personal background, how they were recruited, their social connections with the local people and how they perform their interpreting tasks are primarily overlooked and not considered. In such contexts, simply stipulating that interpreters must be “neutral” and “impartial” does not offer any real insight into how the interpreters could deal with the challenges they encounter during their tasks. As Inghilleri (2010, p. 192) maintains, codes of ethics “largely lose their significance and their power to conceal the undeniability of interpreter agency”. It is inevitable that interpreters may often act as both “free agents and embodies conduits” in conflicts and wars (ibid.). Unlike

interpreters working in other settings, the task of a political interpreter has a unique set of characteristics that is highly relevant to the broader social, cultural and political environment. Therefore, the study of interpreters' agency, problem-solving strategies and activities of risk management could shed more light on the intricate power dynamics in a conflict. Exploring how political interpreters utilise their capital to achieve personal and institutional goals may also be helpful for the training and management of political interpreters.

Although this study focuses on interpreters involved in a particular historical event, the author believes that it could still provide some value in the modern-day context, especially regarding the training and management of political interpreters. The cases of interpreters during the First Opium War demonstrate that in the context of conflict, language skills are not the only set of skills that interpreters need to rely on in their practice. Their social skills, critical assessment of the power structures, cultural understanding, problem-solving skills, mediation and negotiation skills are significant to the interpreter's task. These factors are often neglected in existing professional models of interpreting. Nonetheless, this reveals a need for social skills-related guidelines to be included in the training and management of interpreters who practise in diplomatic and military settings.

By closely studying the dynamic relationship between the event's social, cultural and political aspects and the interpreter's decisions and actions, more understanding of the interpreter's role in conflict situations could be achieved. The existing principles of neutrality and impartiality in mainstream theories of interpreting do not apply to those working in a diplomatic or military context. As Footitt and Kelly assert, it is essential to "humanise rather than professionalise the process of interpreting in war" (2012, 220). For interpreters and their clients, a strict policy of "no interfering" and "no mediation" may not

help either party achieve the most ideal and beneficial outcome. Instead, knowledge of the power relationship between the two parties in a conflict and an accurate assessment of resources may help political interpreters build a more reliable risk analysis framework and better adapt their behaviour in bilateral relations. It should be noted, however, that some of the risks that are identified and analysed in the present project are specific to the interpreters during the First Opium War, which is a historical event that took place nearly two hundred years ago. As the social, cultural and political risks faced by the political interpreter is highly dependent on the broader historical and social context, the risks discussed in this study may no longer be relevant to some aspects of political interpreting today.

8 Conclusion

The present study uses a mixed-approach method to explore the risk in political interpreting during the First Opium War between Britain and China from 1839 to 1842. The prominent interpreters who served the British and Chinese governments during the war are selected as subjects for the case studies. There are two primary objectives in this research project. Although the First Opium War from 1839 to 1842 is an event of great significance in the history of China, the political interpreters who played a vital role in mediating the communication between the China and Britain received very little academic attention. Therefore, the first goal of the present study is to explore the experiences and tasks of the political interpreters who participated in the First Opium War. The second main objective is to investigate the relationship between the various risks and the interpreters' decisions and behaviours in a political setting.

As political interpreters, they participated in many critical events throughout the war and played an essential role in the communication between the two nations. In particular, the British interpreter John Morrison earned a high level of trust from the British plenipotentiaries and was heavily relied upon for his language and cultural knowledge. Morrison was not only an interpreter but also a consultant, military advisor, and lead representative in the peace negotiations. Throughout the war, John Morrison is observed to take the initiative and capitalise on his linguistic skills and unique position as a political interpreter to achieve his goals on a personal and international level. Examples in the case study show that Morrison was able to give answers to questions on behalf of his commanding officers without their permission. Morrison's behaviour demonstrates risk

avoidance and mitigation strategies during the peace negotiations. However, Morrison also actively took some risks when it suited him to pursue national and personal interests.

Another notable interpreter who served the British government was Karl Gutzlaff. Born in a small town in Prussian Pomerania, Gutzlaff travelled to China to conduct missionary work. Therefore, from a personal standpoint, Gutzlaff was an “outsider” in the First Opium War as he did not belong to either the British or the Chinese party in the conflict. Gutzlaff's decision to become a British government-affiliated interpreter reveals a unique aspect of risk in political interpreting. In the context of war and conflict, there is no room for a “neutral” or “third-party” interpreter. In order to ensure his personal safety and continue his religious work in China, Gutzlaff had no choice but to choose a side in the conflict that could offer him sanctuary.

Robert Thom is the third and final interpreter affiliated with the British government discussed in the present study. Thom first travelled to China as a merchant and, therefore, did not have a high level of political motivation until he became a government interpreter. In some of his writings, it can be seen that Thom sympathised with the Chinese people and refused to take part in the opium trade, which he despised. However, due to his outward appearance and ethnicity, Thom was not accepted by the local Chinese communities and eventually sought employment within the British government. During his time working alongside the British army, Thom's life was targeted by the Chinese government, demonstrating the risk and danger that may appear in the career of a political interpreter.

Nevertheless, all three interpreters hired by the British government were highly respected and trusted, which allowed them to make outstanding contributions to Britain. Bernard

(1847, p. 139) describes John Morrison and Robert Thom as “the indefatigable interpreters and secretaries, the value of whose services throughout the war it is impossible too highly to appreciate”.

On the other hand, the interpreters who served the Chinese government were not treated the same way as their British counterparts. Prior to the outbreak of the war, the Chinese official Zexu Lin assembled a team of language specialists to gain more information about the British. However, he did not trust them at all. Lin never allowed the language specialists access to confidential documents and frequently had their translations checked by other experts. When Lin was exiled, his successors from the Chinese government dismissed the entire team and did not make an effort to hire more interpreters to replace them.

The Chinese officials did not treat the language issue seriously during the war. Except for a few compradors who completed simple tasks such as delivering messages to the British party, Chinese official Qishan's personal interpreter, Peng Bao, was one of the only political interpreters affiliated with the Chinese government. After Qishan was arrested, Bao's loyalty was also questioned. Some Chinese officials accused him of being a spy for the British and leaking vital military intelligence. As a result, Bao was put on trial and eventually exiled to a remote part of China. Since this incident, Qishan's successors, Qiying and Yilibu, ultimately gave up on hiring their own interpreters. Instead, they relied on interpreters from the British party until the end of the war. Ironically, the Chinese officials did not trust their own interpreters but were willing to trust interpreters from the opposing side of the conflict. The different fates of the British and Chinese interpreters also reveal that the risks faced by political interpreters are highly dependent on the social and political setting of the event.

This project furthers existing knowledge of political interpreting in the following ways. Firstly, by examining the social, cultural and political contexts of the First Opium War where the interpreting took place, various potential risks related to the broader social setting of the political interpreting are identified. The author analyses the political interpreters' awareness of where they stand in the conflict and how their employers perceive their roles. As a result, a possible causal relationship between the interpreters' behaviour and their assessment and management of risks is explored.

In high-level political settings, the task of a political interpreter may go far beyond the literal translation of words and involve critical decision-making related to actions such as side-switching, stance-taking, and ideological mediation. This decision-making process of a political interpreter is usually particularly challenging to analyse and examine. However, by analysing their decisions from the perspective of risk assessment and management, this project offers a new approach through which scholars could study political interpreting and explain how the actions and strategies employed by a political interpreter can be justified. In this regard, the present study is able to contribute to the evolving theory of risk management in interpreting.

Within the field of Translation and Interpreting Studies, the risk management framework is relatively new, and the majority of research dedicated to the risk model is primarily concerned with written translation instead of interpreting (e.g. Pym, 2015; Pym & Matsushita, 2018). This study is conducted in response to Takeda's call for more research in the area of risk management in social, political and institutional settings (2007). To the author's knowledge, the present study is among some of the first projects to apply the notion of risk management in political interpreting. Furthermore, by adopting a mixed-approach

method consisting of historical and archival study, case study and text analysis, this study presents a research framework that may be of reference value for future research on similar topics.

It needs to be specified that the author of the present study does not intend to exaggerate the role played by the interpreters during the First Opium War. The cause of the War was essentially an economic one. As mentioned previously, there was a massive trade imbalance between Britain and China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this time, technological advancements achieved after the industrial revolution made Britain's army more powerful than the Chinese military forces. In order to counter the trade imbalance, the British East India Company sold opium to China in the early eighteenth century. The detrimental effect of opium on the people of China led to the Emperor banning the sale and smoking of the substance. However, banning opium did not stop it from being traded. By the mid-nineteenth century, the scale of addiction to opium was such that the Qing Emperor took steps to enforce the law, which included seizing and destroying stocks held in British warehouses. This action eventually led to the military conflict that we know today as the First Opium War.

From the beginning until the end of the First Opium War, the Chinese government did not actively communicate with the British. In the case study chapters, it is mentioned that the British made efforts to initiate talks with China. Nonetheless, all of those attempts failed. According to the British interpreters, a large-scale military conflict was never their intention but the last resort (Zhang, 2018. p. 5). Therefore, some may even argue that if more effective communication had been established between Britain and China, history might have unfolded differently. However, the deep-rooted problems that caused the conflict could not

have been solved by communication or interpreting alone. The author believes that even if China were willing to talk to the British forces, based on the social and economic contexts, it would have been very unlikely for the Qing government to agree to any conditions proposed by the British. In other words, a war between the two nations was inevitable.

Furthermore, the *Treaty of Nanking* was only the first of a series of unequal treaties China signed with Western powers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While European nations benefited from industrial movements and increased their military and scientific power, China's development stagnated. Moreover, the “Celestial Empire” refused to open its doors to the outside world, and its military was not strong enough to defend itself from foreign invasion. These factors show that the conflicts between China and European powers were not avoidable, and this situation could not have been changed by political interpreters alone.

Another key limitation of the present study is the data used in the analysis. Throughout the undertaking of the present study, finding information related to the interpreters' work was highly challenging. As echoed by other scholars in the field, such as Takeda (2007), Lung (2011), and Roland (1999), the scarcity of data remains a significant challenge in the historical approach to interpreting. As many interpreter-mediated events took place long ago, obtaining audio or video records of the interpreter's work is sometimes impossible. Often, the researcher is limited to solely relying on written records. Even though a detailed analysis of such written records can offer a glimpse of some of the risks experienced by the interpreters, it does not deliver the same richness and depth that could have been achieved by audio and video recordings. Inevitably, written records involve an element of subjectivity from the author, and some descriptions may not be entirely accurate.

To analyse the interpreters' behaviour from the most objective standpoint, richer data sources, such as audio and video recordings, are more effective and contain more information about non-verbal aspects of the communication. Ideally, in order to investigate the relationship between social and political risks and the interpreter's behavior in a political setting, audio-visual materials may provide valuable insight for the purpose of the research. Nevertheless, due to the highly sensitive nature of political interpreting, it is often not realistic for researchers to obtain such audio-visual data. Under those circumstances, the author would like to suggest that the researcher may utilise other data sources such as the interpreter's memoirs and personal recollections of the interpreted event. Furthermore, subject to available resources, interviews with political interpreters may also be conducted in order to examine the dynamic process of risk assessment and risk management.

Furthermore, in the present study, the interpreters had a high level of freedom in making adjustments and changes to the original speech due to the lack of a scrutiny system in the First Opium War. In modern practices of political interpreting, it is not uncommon for governments to employ monitors to check the accuracy of the interpretation. Future studies could be conducted on the risks faced by political interpreters under the pressure of scrutiny for researchers interested in this topic. Aside from interpreting in a political setting, various risks may also exist in other high-stake events, such as medical and legal interpreting, which may interest researchers in these fields.

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