

UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA

FACULDADE DE LETRAS



Multilingualism and Translation

The multilingual actor(s) and the involvement in translation, a view on Covid-19 pandemic

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Dissertação de Mestrado orientada pela Professora Doutora Helena Gorete
Silva Moniz, especialmente elaborada para a obtenção do grau de Mestre em
Tradução.

2021

UNIVERSITY OF LISBON

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES



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Acknowledgements

A Master's dissertation is a long and strenuous trajectory full of ups and downs, not only with many joys but also with countless surprises and uncertainties. Without the unconditional support and fundamental contribution of many distinct people, the path would have been very laborious and an arduous experience.

I graciously give special thanks to my family and friends for putting up with my broken routine and all the people who have unconditionally supported me throughout the process of this dissertation.

A particular appreciation for everyone who helped directly and indirectly; and recognition to those without whom this work would not have been possible: to the study participants.

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Resumo

A tradução está presente em todo o lado e quanto mais globalizados ficamos mais é necessária a tradução (Pym, 2008). O tópico desta dissertação de tese de Mestrado focar-se-á no multilinguismo e na tradução. O interesse por esta dissertação surgiu de um projeto anterior feito para uma das disciplinas do curso de Mestrado em Tradução sobre o bilinguismo. Nesse projeto pude compreender que os bilíngues são propensos a vir a traduzir conteúdos, mesmo não tendo as competências necessárias para uma tradução com qualidade, pois assumem que o conhecimento da língua é tudo do que precisam para desempenhar a profissão de tradutores.

Há vários estudos que comprovam e demonstram que grande parte da população mundial é bilíngue ou multilíngue (Grosjean, 2010). Porém, tal como em várias áreas científicas, a questão de como definir concretamente o bilinguismo e o multilinguismo ainda não foi estabelecida, especialmente na relação dos conceitos referidos com a área de tradução. Alguns investigadores, como Bloomfield (1933) e Halliday et al. (1964) defendem que um indivíduo que fale duas ou mais línguas só é considerado bilíngue ou multilíngue se o nível das suas línguas chegarem ao nível de proficiência de um nativo ou monolíngue (Lörscher, 2012). Da mesma forma, para os bilíngues e multilíngues é assumida a existência do domínio de uma competência especial para traduzir (Lörscher, 2012).

Atualmente, vivemos numa sociedade globalizada, com uma diversidade de culturas e línguas que representam uma parte essencial da sociedade, definindo-a com a sua identidade (King, 2018). Portanto, o fenómeno da globalização está conectado com a tradução (Cronin, 2010). Adicionalmente, o conceito de multilinguismo envolve o multiculturalismo, a coexistência entre culturas, continuando a evoluir de forma significativa no processo de globalização (Tranfaglia, 2015). O multilinguismo e a tradução estão interligados, uma vez que o multilinguismo é a habilidade de comunicar em mais do que duas línguas e a tradução pode ser definida como a conversão de uma língua por outra (Meylaerts, 2010).

Assim, o presente projeto foi elaborado no âmbito da obtenção do grau de Mestre em Tradução tendo como tema o Multilinguismo e a Tradução. Fornece um olhar teórico sobre o multilinguismo e a tradução, com uma visão predominante sobre a pandemia da Covid-19. No contexto de uma pandemia ou crise, como a que se vê nos dias decorrentes com a pandemia da Covid-19, existem comunidades linguísticas sem profissionais disponíveis e, para colmatar essa falta, os bilíngues, ou multilíngues, as comunidades de voluntários, entre outros, usam o seu conhecimento linguístico e distintas competências para a tradução de conteúdos, por exemplo sobre a Covid-19, para várias línguas. Algumas Organizações Não-Governamentais (ONGs), como a *Translators without Borders*, têm estado a trabalhar com a Organização Mundial de Saúde para a tradução de conteúdos relacionados com a pandemia da Covid-19. Este conteúdo é traduzido tanto por profissionais, como por comunidades de voluntários treinadas para esse fim. Este cenário é ainda mais premente quando se trata de línguas sem recursos. Estes indivíduos, sejam profissionais ou não, contratados ou não, ajudaram a população através da tradução de informações importantes.

Deste modo, as perguntas de investigação que serão abordadas nesta dissertação de Mestrado consistem em: (i) compreender o papel do multilinguismo e da tradução; (ii) analisar o papel de multilíngues como tradutores; (iii) explicitar o percurso que poderão seguir para melhorarem as competências de tradução em caso de trabalharem apenas com as suas competências linguísticas; (iv) comparar profissionais com voluntários multilíngues em contextos de pandemia; (v) analisar a importância dos atores multilíngues e tradutores em contextos da pandemia. Com os dados obtidos, será possível compreender o que está a acontecer atualmente e as vertentes do multilinguismo numa sociedade que enfrenta uma pandemia.

O objetivo principal é o entendimento do multilinguismo face à tradução. Para aferir as questões que se prendem com o multilinguismo e especialmente a relação deste com a tradução de conteúdos da pandemia, foi realizado um inquérito. Assim, através da amostra é possível compreender o que está atualmente a acontecer durante a pandemia da Covid-19, o papel da tradução e por sua vez os aspetos do multilinguismo na sociedade. Um dos objetivos é compreender se um falante bilíngue ou multilíngue está de alguma forma predisposto a

tornar-se um tradutor com base no domínio de uma ou mais línguas para além da sua língua materna.

O inquérito revelou a importância da tradução efetuada por uma diversidade de atores bilíngues e multilíngues, tradutores profissionais e voluntários. Demonstrou ainda a importância de uma comunicação simples, rápida e eficaz. Apontou também para indícios do impacto da pandemia na saúde mental e na sua contribuição para a precariedade no mercado de trabalho da tradução e interpretação. De salientar que o papel dos multilíngues como tradutores foi fundamental, uma vez que, ajudou na tradução de informação necessária e urgente sobre como se proteger contra o vírus, o funcionamento de equipamentos médicos, entre outros.

O número de respostas recolhidas foi relativamente baixo, 150 respostas obtidas através do questionário, no entanto forneceu uma amostra que deve ser entendida como representativa da população pesquisada. Com os dados obtidos, o inquérito revelou que a grande maioria dos tradutores ou intérpretes possui um curso superior no ramo e continuamente procura desenvolver as suas capacidades e conhecimentos, revelando, desta forma, a necessidade de uma educação adequada para trabalhar neste ramo e com uma aquisição e desenvolvimento constante das suas competências. Assim, para os bilíngues e/ou multilíngues que desejam uma profissão como tradutor ou intérprete devem apostar na sua educação, expandir o seu conhecimento, encontrar uma área de *expertise* e aperfeiçoar as suas competências.

Em contextos da pandemia da Covid-19, a saúde mental da grande maioria dos inquiridos foi afetada e muitos sofreram com stress e cansaço mental associado a síndrome de *burnout*, independentemente de serem estudantes em tradução ou profissionais, mas em distintos níveis. Quanto aos primeiros, a pandemia e as aulas *online* afetaram a sua saúde mental, como também as suas notas e os níveis de atenção nas aulas desceram. Quanto aos profissionais, uma vez que têm melhores condições de trabalho em casa ou remotamente do que os voluntários multilíngues, estão preparados para trabalhar de forma remota e possuem todas as ferramentas necessárias que os auxiliem no processo de tradução. No entanto, uma forma de minimizar esta diferença para os que tem as condições necessárias é a aposta na

formação e treino para todos aqueles que executam a tradução como profissão. O inquérito também revelou que alguns dos países estavam mais bem preparados para lidar com uma situação de pandemia, como a da Covid-19, enquanto que outros tiveram uma preparação mais tardia e a comunicação não foi tão eficaz ou imediata na prevenção do aumento do número de casos.

Em suma, os distintos atores foram cruciais no contexto da pandemia da Covid-19, uma vez que ajudaram a traduzir a informação rapidamente, de modo a chegar a todas as comunidades linguísticas, para saberem como se protegerem contra o vírus. Pelo facto de a tradução ser uma profissão pouco regulada e com pouco reconhecimento, muitas vezes é considerado que qualquer indivíduo poderá executar esta profissão, unicamente com base nos seus conhecimentos linguísticos de falante nativo de uma língua. Uma educação apropriada e a aposta em especializações em áreas de interesse de trabalho contribuirá para a qualidade do trabalho.

O multilinguismo tem vindo a crescer e é importante cada país reconhecer as suas comunidades e minorias, de modo a se preparar de uma forma adequada e eficaz quando for necessário, como no caso de uma pandemia, desastre natural, entre outros. Assim, o multilinguismo e a tradução são cruciais para a globalização e contribuem para uma maior fluidez e eficácia na comunicação, observável na pandemia da Covid-19 que poderá ser encarada como uma oportunidade de aprendizagem (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020).

Palavras-chave: Multilinguismo, Bilinguismo, Tradução, Covid-19, Comunicação em situações de Crise.

Abstract

The more globalised we become the more translation is needed (Pym, 2008). The phenomenon of globalisation is bound up with translation (Cronin, 2010). Nowadays, we live in a globalised society, rich in diversity of cultures and languages that represent an essential part of society and defines its identity (King, 2018). This work provides at first a theoretical look at multilingualism and translation with a predominant view on the Covid-19 pandemic. In the course of a pandemic or crisis, like the Covid-19 pandemic, bilinguals and multilinguals are essential to translate content into multiple languages. This scenario is even more pressing when it comes to non-resource languages. Whether they are professional translators or interpreters, volunteers or students, they help the population through the translation of meaningful information and interpretation of data.

The research questions that will be addressed in this thesis are to: (i) understand the role of multilingualism and translation; (ii) analyse the role of multilinguals as translators; (iii) understand the paths to improve translation skills, in the specific case of non-professional translators or interpreters; (iv) compare the enrolment of professionals and multilingual volunteers in pandemic contexts; and (v) analyse the importance of multilingual actors and translators in epidemic contexts. The survey conducted revealed that multilingual actors and translators were crucial in the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the context of a pandemic, professionals are more prepared than multilingual volunteers. For the multilinguals who would like to become a translator or interpreter, an investment in education and training would be beneficial, in order to be a more skilled and prepared translators or interpreters.

Multilingualism and translation are crucial for globalization and contributes to greater fluidity and effectiveness in communication, observable in the Covid-19 pandemic that could be seen as a learning opportunity (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020).

Keywords: Multilingualism, Bilingualism, Translation, Covid-19, Crisis communication.

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

Languages are part of someone's identity and life; multilingualism offers the chance of obtaining services in their language instead of using a *lingua franca* like English. After all, we find translation at the heart of multilingualism (Meylaerts, 2010). The central issue of this thesis focuses on the role of the multilingual actor(s). Equally important, this master thesis provides a theoretical look at their involvement in translation, focusing on the prevailing view on the Covid-19 pandemic.

This work will explore two main hypotheses with a questionnaire:

H1: Distinct bilingual and multilingual actors, regardless of their professional skills, work as translators, even though they are not qualified as such.

H2: Multilingual actors, especially professional translators, were essential during the health outbreak of Covid-19.

This study will draw attention to the importance of multilingualism and translation, a topic still not well developed in the literature and for which this work contributes to.

Currently, we live in a globalised and diverse society. The concept of multiculturalism is about the coexistence between cultures and keeps evolving, being more significant in the process of globalization (Tranfaglia, 2015). Our globalised society is connected through the linguistic linkage which typically comprehends translation (Cronin, 2010). The translation has a role to help the communication between the different ethnicities, groups or even countries since each language belongs to a culture, and multilingualism gives the capability to communicate with three or more languages (Tranfaglia, 2015). Nevertheless, the more we encounter and create cultural hybridity, contributing to a greater extent to becoming globalised, the more translated content is needed (Pym, 2008). Even so, language and culture are different, for example, languages represent an indispensable aspect of the society defining an identity (King, 2018), resulting in the phenomenon of multiculturalism. Whereas culture is defined anthropologically as all socially conditioned aspects of human life (Trosborg, 2017). Those two aspects combined promote the coexistence and remarkable

growth of several unique cultures in one place (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018). In addition, individuals often make multiple linguistic and cultural transitions that affect their linguistic repertoires (Pavlenko, 2007). Likewise, it has been prevalent in human communities and part of the social practice of sharing, exchanging and making use of information within networks of communication that rely on interconnected groups of people (Folaron, 2010).

Multilingualism and Translation are connected since translation can be defined as the conversion of one language for another, and multilingualism is the ability to communicate in more than two languages (Meylaerts, 2010). Additionally, the phenomenon of globalisation is bound up with translation, still, to understand the connection between globalisation and translation, it is necessary to better understand the impact of the economy since it is global and based on considerable amounts of information (Cronin, 2010). Throughout the 20th century, large multinational companies, medium-sized and small-scale enterprises, especially those that are not associated with monolingual international communities, have been increasing. These enterprises have generated throughout the 20th century and in the 21st century the most favourable field for multilingualism (Ciosmak, 2019). Heretofore, some practices that have contributed to the diversification of society are military conquests, slavery, colonialism, cultural and commercial exchanges, among others, which supplied a relationship between language, culture and identity and, as a result, contributed to bilingualism and multilingualism (Chumbow, 2018). Nowadays, migration contributes to the development of multilingual societies (Tranfaglia, 2015). Migration comes from an outcome of huge labour demands of service, and declining populations of wealthy countries (Cronin, 2010) also contributed to this noticeable increase (King, 2018). Furthermore, the technologies operating both as promotional agents for global expansion and as advocacy agents for local practice and customs have played an active role with contemporary globalisation (Folaron, 2010).

The multilingualism we are experiencing is a result of regional and global integration policies in fields such as: economics, human rights, security, among others (Ciosmak, 2019). Cross-cultural communication affects fields such as science, commerce, cultural content, information service, personal relations and technology (Pym, 2008). International

institutions, organisations and entities embraced multilingualism. Some of them are the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Health Organisation. Their diplomatic mission is to agree on policies and solutions, collaborate on issues related to security, economic and social development, humanitarian affairs and human rights, among others (Ciosmak, 2019). An institution or organisation may decrease the budget for translation resources by reducing the number of working languages, choosing only one or two official languages. In contrast, the organisations referred above promote a widening number of languages (Pym, 2008), with the involvement of translators for official documents such as agreements, treaties, directives, among others; whereas, for the meetings, there are interpreting experts.

This Information Age, driven by instant access to knowledge, information and communication technology, bilingualism and multilingualism are essential (Chumbow, 2018). When it comes to humanitarian and response sectors, multilingualism is not an exception to the rule. The term translation refers to all modalities of communication such as oral, written, signed, and multimodal. Those modalities are used in crisis preparation, response and recovery. Furthermore, in crises, an individual can serve as a translator of written content in one situation and an interpreter in another (Federici & O'Brien, 2019). Moreover, a health crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic does not occur on a regular basis, being hard to adjust in such a short time without knowledge or experience (Masselink, 2020). Alternatively, in a post-pandemic of the Covid-19, globally some industries will struggle to revive their business and with the aid of multilingualism with modern *linguas francas* – a language used as a means of communication between populations – many industries will help regain their *momentum* recovering the lost revenue.

2. Chapter 2: Core translation concepts

Throughout this chapter, we will highlight the core concepts use in this work. The first section will provide a description of the role of translation and translators, and the second section of bilingual and multilingual communities.

2.1. The Role of Translation and Translators

Firstly, it is necessary to understand the definition surrounding the word translation, a hard task since it encompasses very dynamic aspects. Translation is defined as interpreting the meaning of words or a text from one language into another by the website *Lexico Oxford Dictionary*¹. Moreover, translation can be a process, a product or a concept. Translation as a process can be explained as the activity to translate, while translation as a product is the final result of the process of that activity. Whereas translation as a concept includes both the process and the product – the process of translating and the product of that process (Trosborg, 2017). Conversely, some authors such as Munday (2016) and Chesterman (2009) believe that translators are essential to the translation process since their role of translators can influence the translation process and product in socio-cultural contexts such as their position at work as well as the ethical, political, social, cultural stances and their individual psychology in relation to their work (Masselink, 2020). A translation is the transfer of meaning and cultural encodings from one language to another (Federici & O'Brien, 2019). Nevertheless, like any other human activity, translation and the role of the translator have followed a process of constant evolution since its beginnings (Ciosmak, 2019). The increasing influence of technology has contributed to innovations in the way translators work and how their content is consumed.

Translators and interpreters are essential whether they work in law, healthcare or public services (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020). The activity of translation, after a period of

¹ Definition of Translation by Oxford Dictionary on Lexico.com from Lexico Dictionaries. Retrieved from: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/translation> on 22 April 2021.

formal training, is carried out by professionals (who are employed or self-employed) (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010) and by bilingual or multilingual volunteers with no training at all. There is much in common between translating and interpreting; however, they require different skills and training. In addition, translators work with the written word while interpreters with the spoken word. It is required that interpreters and translators have a great capacity for analysis and knowledge of the source language. Moreover, it is essential to understand it first, so the essence of a speech or text can be expressed clearly (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018). When it comes to interpretation, there are two forms of interpreting as a profession. It can be simultaneous interpreting, for example, at international conferences; or consecutive interpreting in court or at diplomatic gatherings (Comissão Europeia, 2014). An interpreter must reveal the speaker's ideas and convictions with the same intensity and subtleties of meaning. Whereas in translation, most of the translators operate in more than one language but typically specialize in only one direction. To illustrate, a translator that works with English, German and Japanese might be more specialized in Japanese working in that direction, for instance, translating from English to Japanese or German to Japanese. Both professions – translation and interpretation – require knowledge and skills developed either by training or experience (Lafeber, 2012).

Translation theories help the translator to identify criteria and define strategies to solve translation problems (Camps, 2019). However, it is necessary to remember a medical translator is not necessarily capable of translating a legal contract. For example, literary translation is about aesthetic, imaginative and fictional texts. In contrast, technical translation is more pragmatic, a workday and a nonfiction text (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018). There is a corresponding translation strategy for each type of text acting according to a communicative purpose (Camps, 2019). When it comes to translation competence (the macro competence such as skills, knowledge, capacity and attitudes which are involved in translation), translators with the necessary skills and knowledge produce translations that meet the standards and are more likely to be error-free translations (Lafeber, 2012). Some types of errors might belong to phases as the pre-translation, translation process, translation quality assurance or from the translation production, and some types of errors that can occur can be such as typesetting or from a defective post-production quality assurance (Darwish,

2020). Additionally, revision and proofreading can help detect errors that might have been produced due to defective judgment, deficient knowledge or carelessness which threatens the communicative aim (Lafeber, 2012).

Translating has been considered crucial for human lives since it influences the transmission of cultural and technological aspects (Schäler, 2010). Culture is fundamental in the approach to translation because of its dependence on norms and since it has an instant connection with events, actions or behaviour (Trosborg, 2017). Additionally, globalisation and technology contributed to the existence of tools that are a determining factor in translation processes (Dickinson & Risku, 2009). Translation also plays a central role in intercultural mediation with fundamental concepts such as localisation, globalisation and internationalisation essential in the translation of websites, resources, guides, among others (Ciosmak, 2019). The internet contributed to the creation of virtual translation communities, where there is the possibility of knowledge exchange, social and professional contact or commercial and professional issues, and individual learning. These platforms may have benefits for translators offering collaboration, communication and knowledge (Dickinson & Risku, 2009). In addition, the internet helped translators to have more access to information and tools. It also fostered a global market for translation services, language localisation and translation software (Ciosmak, 2019). There can be scenarios where the translator's role is as a cultural mediator. For example, having to adapt a text to another culture in which to achieve an acceptable solution is necessary to arbitrate between the author and the text receiver (Bennett, 2013). Localisation is the cultural and linguistic adaptation of content for the local and foreign market, however, to have a prominently digital global information flow it is necessary the appropriate management of multilingualism, the establishment of services and specific technologies (Schäler, 2010).

One of the tools available online to everyone is Machine Translation. The translation done by professionals can be expensive and might be restricted in terms of time, language and even topics, contributing to an investment in computer-aided translation and automatic translation. Many translation agencies, governments, international organisations, transnational corporations and freelance translators incorporated the computer-aided translation into the translation profession (Bowker & Fisher, 2010). The computer-aided

translation (CAT) is projected to assist a human translator in the translation process (Bowker & Fisher, 2010). The computer software simplifies certain aspects of the translations offering some tools that help during the process, such as translation memories (retaining sentences, paragraphs or segments that have previously been translated and do not need to be translated again) (Semantix, 2021). For example, with translation memories when the system finds a match stored in the database and presents a suggestion to the translator that can be accepted, modified or rejected by the human translator (Bowker & Fisher, 2010).

Machine Translation (MT) is an automatic translation from one language to another and does not require human intervention in the process solely to provide the source text (Forcada, 2010). The computer programs currently available on the market are a valuable aid. It is possible to translate vast swathes of text in a short-term in more commonly spoken languages (Parker-Toulson, 2020). There are some languages where resources are not enough for the machine translation to learn and offer a proper translation. Emergency settings pose several challenges, since in those low resourced languages are tackled, which may impact the communication and information (Parker-Toulson, 2020). On the contrary, computers will never translate like a human being since the subtleties and nuances of human language remain beyond the reach of artificial intelligence (Comissão Europeia, 2014). The quality delivered by translation memories or data-driven machine translation will increase through human revision processes (Pym, 2008). In academic contexts, the Machine Translation can be valuable while learning another language, especially when it comes to writing and pronunciation (Chon, Shin, & Kim, 2021). It can help to achieve greater proficiency and a better comprehension of the use of writing strategies and can have a similar function as a dictionary (Chon, Shin, & Kim, 2021). However, the dichotomy between machine translation and human translation, weighing up the convenience of one or the other according to the variables involved in each case, might be unpredictable and variable (Ciosmak, 2019).

Not in all models, but some crowdsourcing translation involves free labour from the general crowd (Bowker & Fisher, 2010) and it is based on cooperating with volunteers to translate documents, products, among others, into several languages. These volunteers can

be translators, proof-readers and students². It is a fact that global information technology is the basis for this community of translation (Cronin, 2010). Whereas collaborative translation counts with the participation of volunteers but it can also be limited, selected or only for professionals (Bowker & Fisher, 2010). These volunteer translators are involved in translating, editing and localisation, for instance, fan translation has been used to translate the Korean soap operas and the Japanese anime causing a considerable effect (Cronin, 2010). These networks can prove invaluable, they have diverse causes and objectives, yet, have contributed to producing multilingual translations to language groups whose needs are not serviced by large commercial multilingual localisation projects (Folaron, 2010). There is little professional risk in helping or sharing tools or the benefits of experience since the same source of text will be translated by two different translators into two different texts (Dickinson & Risku, 2009). It is valuable to acknowledge empathy and cultural sensitivity; however, it is vital to regulate them, so they do not have a negative impact on their work (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020).

A language is the basis for learning content and has numerous central functions in learning. Alternatively, a language enables interaction and communication (Heuzeroth & Budke, 2020). One of the most obvious prerequisites for translation is learning a language (Malmkjaer, 2018). Translation studies are concerned with languages and cultures (Trosborg, 2017) and have been debating about the role of translation in language learning and acquisition (Malmkjær, 2010). However, translation as an academic study gained purpose with certain disciplines such as sociolinguistics and cross-cultural studies since it helps to contribute to a view of languages in relation to human behaviour and perception, culture and communication (Trosborg, 2017). There are foreign language teaching programmes focused on testing the learner ability and comprehension by translating into the language being learnt, however, this may mislead students by encouraging a mindset of a one-to-one correspondence between languages (Malmkjær, 2010). There have been some discussions about the traditional grammar-translation activities as it does not establish a proper training

² This information was retrieved from the website Crowdin from Crowdin Documentation. Retrieved from <https://support.crowdin.com/enterprise/crowdsourcing> on 10 April 2021.

for translating as a vocation (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018). The traditional grammar-translation method was used as the standard European method of foreign language teaching, the method consisted in the study of foreign language texts assisted by a grammar book and a dictionary (Malmkjær, 2010).

Throughout the multilingual perspective it was possible to develop a new pedagogical application such as plurilingual approaches that focus on learners' plurilingual repertoires and promote the integration and diversity of languages in the classroom (Kucukali, 2021). As mentioned above, machine translation has become one of the most useful tools for learning another language when used correctly. One of the most common uses of Machine Translation (MT) is to benefit learners in understanding the meaning of a word or in using phrases or sentence structures (Chon, Shin, & Kim, 2021). In other words, when writing a text using, for example, Google Translator or DeepL, the user has the chance to select words that would suit the sentence and to use certain words, phrases or sentences that might be unable to be retrieved on their own (Chon, Shin, & Kim, 2021). Although this tool does not replace a fluent professor, it can be beneficial while learning a language, especially in an initial stage (Chon, Shin, & Kim, 2021).

There is no official direct route for the career of a translator or interpreter in diverse countries. Since the translator acts as a service provider, and the complexity of the translation profession comes from the way professional translation service provision is arranged (Klimkowska & Klimkowski, 2020). Although, in some cases, a university degree in a different area may provide a proper foundation for a career in interpreting or translation (Comissão Europeia, 2014). For some time, Translation as a discipline has functioned with the concept of translator's competence, which differentiates the skilled and qualified professional from the non-expert as a way of describing different skills, knowledge, attitudes and aptitudes (Kelly, 2010). To provide the most appropriate curriculum for the students and in order to instruct professional translators, many studies have been done adapting the pedagogy and curriculum (Yan, Xie, & Chen, 2020). Some favourable recommendations for translator education consist in training in business strategy and management, marketing – and, for a specific example, personal branding or e-marketing portfolio – and on types of

interaction with the market such as administrative and tax regulations, among others (Klimkowska & Klimkowski, 2020).

Depending on the area in which an individual intends to operate, knowing a scientific or technical field can also be advantageous. Many translators and interpreters have a degree in languages and a postgraduate degree in translation or interpretation. A postgraduate course for interpretation or translation at a professional level offered by many universities. However, having completed an education degree in translation means that an individual has reached a point where he/she or they can begin activity with a minimum guarantee of success in the profession (Kelly, 2010). Having entrepreneurial competences is significant for a translation career (Klimkowska & Klimkowski, 2020).

Translators deploy a range of skills and numerous competences (Lafeber, 2012). Some of the skills required for a translator besides the obvious language skills, are social competencies (such as communication, teamwork and responsibilities), translation technologies and professional ethics (Yan, Xie, & Chen, 2020). However, a translator should demonstrate competence in the following elements: communicative and textual competence, cultural and intercultural competence, subject area competence, professional and instrumental competence, psycho-physiological competence, interpersonal competence and strategic competence (Kelly, 2010). Moreover, a translator is a professional trained to act based on their education and experience. Nevertheless, in a crisis setting, a professional (regardless of experience or qualifications) can mediate between two or more languages and cultures. During a crisis situation, diverse individuals translate and can act as cultural mediators (Federici & O'Brien, 2019). Crises as the abrupt coronavirus pandemic require the establishment of mechanisms between organisations (Cortez & Johnston, 2020). Countries need to work together and surpass the communication barriers. It is necessary to provide the correct instructions to all citizens, taking into account the language they speak. Translators, interpreters, volunteers and students work to facilitate the vital exchange of specific information (Clear Words Translations, 2020).

2.2. Bilingual and multilingual communities

In the Translation Studies (TS) the translators' positions in the translation process have become more significant and essential (Masselink, 2020). In a prescientific period, before translating and interpreting being considered a scientific discipline on its own, it was the object of a practitioner's reflection (Heidrich & Schubert, 2019). The *Theory of Translatorial Action* of Holz-Mänttari's from 1984 regarded the translator, a fully professional and independent actor within the translation process for the first time; and sees the translation process not as an independent act, but as being embedded in a realistic working situation with several actors, in other words translator acquires its place on a cooperative network, where communication and cooperation between the actors are crucial for the success of a translation process (Heidrich & Schubert, 2019). In a certain way, the translation process contributes to the language standardization and plays a significant role to disseminate the languages widely based on the widespread use of technologies (Pym, 2008).

Nowadays, if an individual wants to produce something for an international market, they need to have some command in a *lingua franca*, such as English, for example. The hegemony of English as a *lingua franca* has led to more competition and reduced job opportunities in the market of Translation (Katan, 2009). Nevertheless, translation helps to reach a wide range of cultures and languages. Furthermore, each language has a purpose either for local purposes, to create exchange relations with other languages or to become central or as known as *lingua franca* (Pym, 2008). To illustrate, some languages are only used by small communities while other languages can be more peripheral languages, assuring the communication between small communities with other communities. Languages such as English have a central role between the majority of communities, whereas the information is disseminated in the local language and in a language such as English. For instance, to facilitate communication and interethnic cooperation, certain multilingual African and Asian countries use pidgins³ as an unofficial *lingua franca* (Mufwene, 2010). The *lingua franca*

³ A pidgin is a grammatically simplified form or speech of a language. This information was retrieved from the online dictionary Merriam-Webster from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pidgin>.

expanding within intercultural and translation is reaching out beyond them (Pym, 2008). As an example, the United Nations employs languages such as Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. However, this obligates the speakers of other languages to learn them. When analysed in cost-benefit terms, language learning is by far the most efficient strategy for long-term relations being dominant within the most scientific and technical organisations and in institutions with just two official languages (Pym, 2008). However, for the communities, groups or minorities that do not speak the official or dominant language, community interpreting can help individuals to access the services provided by central or local government or communicate with the service providers; community interpreters are frequently required to provide on-site translation by videoconferencing interpreting (Hertog, 2010).

All over the world, the majority of the world's speakers are multilingual (Pym, 2008). Alternatively, there is a diversity of languages as the mother tongue of a more limited number of people; these substantial populations have distinctive languages as their first language. Besides, in several countries, they communicate in more than one language (King, 2018), multilingualism has always been present. There exists a different distinction among authors to define monolingualism (or monolingual), bilingualism (or bilingual) and multilingualism (or multilingual). As some refer to an individual's ability and others to fluency (Ellis, 2007).

Monolinguals only speak the language learned as a baby, known as their mother tongue. Alternatively, bilinguals speak two languages and can alternate and mix the two languages (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018). There are (at least) two concepts of bilingualism. The first concept occurs when an individual can use both languages to communicate and is a native speaker in his or her community. The second concept is when a bilingual person can communicate in another language (Lörscher, 2012). The notion of a bilingual individual divides into three categories: compound bilingual, coordinate bilingual and subordinate bilingual (Lörscher, 2012). A compound bilingual can be a child raised in contexts where they interact with speakers of different languages, for example, a Portuguese-speaking father and an English-speaking mother. Often in the same context, the two languages are learnt at the same time. A coordinate bilingual acquires the two languages in separate contexts. For example, an additional language learned in school or with online

applications such as Duolingo or Memrise (Ellis, 2007) (Chibaka, 2018). A subordinate bilingual has more difficulty in learning a second language, they usually interpret through the first language, the strongest and more predominant language (Postan, 2021). When it comes to bilinguals, the language experience is described by acquisition, functional language usage and proficiency (Luk, Mesite, & Leon Guerrero, 2020).

A multilingual consists of having the ability to use three or more languages (Kucukali, 2021). For instance, one language can be used at home, another in school, and another passively for listening or reading (Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck, 2005). Multilingualism is described by its complexity, dynamic, functional usage of languages and proficiency (Luk, Mesite, & Leon Guerrero, 2020). In certain circumstances, an individual can be bilingual (mastering two languages) and become multilingual when acquiring a third language (L3). To be multilingual, one must be subject to at least one circumstance or experience of bilingualism (Chibaka, 2018). However, the term Multilingualism can be applied to places that use many languages or to an individual that possesses competences in several languages. Some authors distinguish multilingualism as a social phenomenon (Barnes & Almgren, 2021), with more focus on the acquisition process and the result of the process of multilingualism (Heuzeroth & Budke, 2020). Others consider multilinguality as referring to individuals (Barnes & Almgren, 2021), focusing on attitudes, preferences, inner constructs of the speakers and mindsets (Heuzeroth & Budke, 2020).

The ability to communicate using a second language or a third one is becoming a prerequisite in academical terms and even for socioeconomic advancement (Hofer & Jessner, 2019). The acquisition process of a second or third language can happen naturally or in a controlled way, simultaneously or successively and influences the development of multilinguals (Heuzeroth & Budke, 2020). The language programmes train students in four skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening – which define language competence and contribute to achieving a higher level of comprehension in the language they are learning (Malmkjær, 2010). In addition, English is one of the choices to teach to language learners since it is a global *lingua franca* due to its economic development and world citizenship (Tabata-Sandom, Nishikawa, & Ishii, 2020).

Multilingual learning opportunities offer and provide everyday life-integrating and cross-curricular learning opportunities (Heuzeroth & Budke, 2020). In many countries, the education system has been implementing multilingual education that includes one or two modern languages in their academic studies (Calafato, 2020). The available languages to learn changes according to the year or grade the student is placed at. For example, in Portugal⁴, institutions offer English and the option of learning: French, German or Spanish. While in the United Kingdom, most schools teach one or more languages, such as French, German, and Spanish (Loft, Long, & Danechi, 2020). Even if their mother tongue remains the norm, the goal is to prepare children for our multilingual society (King, 2018). Alternatively, schools are promoting the teaching and learning of multiple languages, but in some countries this education is still dominated by monolingual teaching traditions and ideologies (Hofer & Jessner, 2019). Even so, some programmes of language teaching encourage students to translate the language they are learning into their native language which might have some interference in the comprehension and acquisition of the language (Malmkjær, 2010). To illustrate, translating the vocabulary they are learning to their native language instead of comprehending it. The pedagogical approaches are directed by externally administered guidelines (Tabata-Sandom, Nishikawa, & Ishii, 2020), this teaching has a basis in grammatical knowledge with linguistic accuracy because the primary goal while teaching a foreign language is to reach the language proficiency (Hofer & Jessner, 2019).

There is an alternative to language learning which consists of having all languages translated into all other languages, that is Multilateral Translation (Pym, 2008). In cross-cultural communication, an individual may produce texts in their native or first language (Pym, 2008). Within the European Union, this practice can be identified through the laws and outgoing documents that have to be drafted in all official languages (Pym, 2008) however with the increasing use of pivot languages (such as English and French) as an intermediary used to facilitate communication between two or more languages, in translation and

⁴ The information was retrieved from the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science. (Direção-Geral da Educação, n.d.) *Línguas Estrangeiras*. Retrieved from Direção-Geral da Educação.: <https://www.dge.mec.pt/linguas-estrangeiras-0> on 28 February 2021.

interpreting services there is not a proper multilateral translation as we have the presence and combination of language learning and translation.

The development of language competence can be favourably affected by multilinguality, language awareness and metacognitive skills (Heuseroth & Budke, 2020). Therefore, in the acquisition of a language, factors such as age, culture, language aptitudes, cognitive (learning) styles, learning strategies, motivation, tolerance of ambiguity, and anxiety (Meguro, 2020) can affect the learning process. However, it can commonly occur during the learning process and after it a language mixing, also known as code-mixing or code-switching (Kafle, 2020). Code-mixing means the lexical, syntactical combination of several languages, whereas code-switching means maintaining the lexical and syntactical structures while altering languages (Heuseroth & Budke, 2020). All interlingual correspondences or contrasts are working to enhance communication, however, these competences evolve when language systems interact (Mayr, 2021). Multilingual awareness allows us to compare multiple languages at all levels, from semantics to pragmatic (Hofer & Jessner, 2019).

The repertoire of the majority of the world's speakers that are multilingual, might be constituted with a *lingua franca*, a peripheral one and a language normally used at work or at home (Pym, 2008). In a situational continuum, bilinguals and multilinguals shuffle between their language repertoires. Though, in a monolingual situation a bilingual or multilingual will speak in either of their languages, while in a multilingual situation the interlocutors speak by code-mixing – mixing multiple languages in a form of language mixing (Kucukali, 2021). To illustrate, two speakers who are both fluent in Portuguese and English might switch between both languages while communicating. Not all individuals live in a multilingual community; many bilingual or multilingual individuals live in a monolingual community (Barnes & Almgren, 2021). Currently, in a multicultural society it is common to encounter situations of intercultural communication. However, to acquire an intercultural competence, the learner from the interpretative limits of his or her own culture should observe the foreign culture, later on should adopt an intermediate position which enables him/her to properly describes the two; and, finally, the learner achieves the

appropriate distance from the cultures, obtaining a role of mediator coping adequately and satisfactorily in situations of intercultural communication (Ciosmak, 2019).

Lately, translation and multilingualism have attracted attention from scholars (Meylaerts, 2010). In 2007, the Council of Europe defined multilingualism as the prominent features of a place such as a society or a nation-state where several languages are the norm for the population (King, 2018). Plurilingualism is precisely defined as the distinctive attribute of an individual who has a repertoire of varieties of languages (Council of Europe, 2007). Plurilingualism is different and the opposite from monolingualism as it embraces the language diversity referred to as the mother tongue and any number of other languages or varieties (King, 2018). Additionally, plurilingualism implies the construction of a linguistic awareness incorporating new languages into his/her repertoire. This contributes to the acquisition of languages as the learner searches for similarities between the languages already acquired. If there are no similarities, the learners will progressively develop proper strategies (Pinto, 2012).

Many authors, as Grutman (2009), establish a connection between multilingualism and translation (Meylaerts, 2010). Translation and multilingualism are connected since translation can be defined as the conversion of one language for another and multilingualism is the ability to communicate in more than two languages (Meylaerts, 2010). Therefore, the term of a multilingual individual will represent the ability to communicate in more than two languages. The notion of bilingualism and multilingualism will aid the foundation of the concept of an individual who acquires a level of proficiency in other languages besides his or her native language and can communicate effectively. It is our belief a bilingual and multilingual society can contribute to better relations between countries.

3. Chapter 3: Translation and the pandemic

This chapter will provide an overview on translation during the pandemic; therefore, the first section provides an introduction on bilinguals and multilinguals in a crisis situation, and the second section offers a description of the main aspects related to the Covid-19 pandemic, starting with a timeline of the events that led to the pandemic and the role of translation in the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.1. Bilinguals and multilinguals in a crisis situation

Globalisation increases the linguistic contact, diversity and the cultural and material flows (Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck, 2005). Currently, most of the publishing in the world relies on translation. All things considered, translators are decisive in intercultural and international communication, and their work is essential to mediate between cultures (Masselink, 2020). When it comes to intercultural crisis communication in a globalised world, the need for translation is even more emphasised (Wang, 2019). Translation allows the access to information in any situation, even in an emergency response (Zhang & Wu, 2020). Communicating across languages and cultures is complex and resource-demanding (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018). It is essential to execute informed decisions and have a plan for any cultural or linguistic barrier (Wang, 2019). However, the role of a translator is often only minimally indicated in the credits of particular works. Throughout the world, these professionals and volunteers continue performing essential tasks in less than desirable conditions (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018).

The role of translation in a crisis situation became in recent years a relevant area of research (Masselink, 2020). When it inevitably comes to disaster response, the translator, interpreters and bilingual and/or multilingual volunteers carefully translate to facilitate effective communication. A disaster is an unexpected natural catastrophe like tsunamis, earthquakes, among others and affects the infrastructure. It can inevitably cause significant destruction or physical damage, loss of life or an irreversible change to the natural

environment. While crisis situations can represent disruptive events that occur at a specific time; and inevitably have an instantaneous cascading effect on surrounding societies and regions over time (Federici & O'Brien, 2020). In the case of a health crisis, one of the adverse effects can be a socio-economic impact, being essential for efficient and accurate communication to everyone (Masselink, 2020). In addition, it is crucial to carefully gather the necessary data and reliable information on hazards and risks. Similarly, the knowledge of various languages is continuously disseminated through communication channels. The information contributes to implementing measures and helps concerned stakeholders to make better decisions. However, the lack of appropriate linguistic knowledge may lead to catastrophic consequences (Federici & O'Brien, 2019). It is essential to keep revising and training the translation policy for crisis situations, so the vulnerabilities will be addressed and will improve the response and recovery contributing to an accurate and fast translation (Way, et al., 2020).

Evidently, translation is crucial in global situations such as war, natural disasters or health outbreaks (Masselink, 2020). Everyone has the right to have information during and after all phases of a crisis and ideally the information and translation should go in both directions (Way, et al., 2020). Furthermore, during disasters and crises, communication is frequently about the distressed community's wellbeing and health. But the conditions of the volunteers and professionals might not be ideal (Rossetti, 2020). Volunteers offer their time and effort to aid others without monetary compensation in most cases, contributing to the public sphere (Cadwell, Bollig, & Ried, 2020). Professional and qualified translators are rare in many language combinations. The bilingual and multilingual staff of non-profit entities and non-governmental organisations, without training or support, sometimes has to work as a translator. Besides, communicating across languages and cultures can be resource-demanding, involving the translation of relevant hazards and risk information from one language to another. During disaster response, translation can facilitate communication between multiple languages, however, the modes of delivery require an adjustment to the situation (Cadag, 2020). Since each person or group, traumatized victims and survivors, stakeholders have specific and shared language needs based on their emotional state and

condition. On top of that, translators and interpreters may inevitably be affected by the harsh conditions in which they work (Federici & O'Brien, 2019).

The use of Machine Translation will help to mitigate some of the adversities, offer a quick message or information when needed and prevent exposure of individuals to dangerous situations (Way, et al., 2020). However, during a crisis setting, people with multilingual competence volunteer to translate and interpret if required. Because professional translators may not be available or accessible. In some situations, it is expensive to hire many professional translators, so people may resort to volunteers (Way, et al., 2020). The crowdsourced translation during public emergencies has been used to aid in urgent and complex multilingual crisis communication (Zhang & Wu, 2020). Additionally, websites such as Crowdin⁵, a community translation platform, allows people to work in a collaborative network in translation projects. Non-professional translators volunteer in these communities searching for some experience, contributing with their support to non-profit organisations (Pérez, 2020). The crowdsourced translations are a community of volunteer translators who collaboratively assist in disaster relief efforts, for example: high efficiency, international networks, mobilisation of a significant number of potential human resources and cost-effectiveness (Zhang & Wu, 2020).

When it comes to a health crisis, the information advised to prevent the spread of infections must be translated to reach all communities. Health information should be communicated to all audiences (especially people with low levels of health knowledge, vulnerable groups). Intralingual translation can be precisely defined as a simplification of scientific knowledge, for example, health content (Cadwell, Bollig, & Ried, 2020) (Rossetti, 2020). The dissemination of health content through images undoubtedly reaches everyone, native and non-native. Simple drawings of figures demonstrating detailed actions represent an effective way to communicate health care instructions (Rossetti, 2020). The World Health

⁵ This information was retrieved from the website Crowdin from Crowdin Documentation. Retrieved from <https://support.crowdin.com/enterprise/crowdsourcing/> on 10 April 2021.

Organization⁶ advises the messages to be easy to understand and concise, so all audiences can comprehend them, encouraging easy-to-understand language and visualizations to make effective communication easy to understand (Rossetti, 2020).

3.2. Covid-19 Pandemic

The disease caused by a novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) was first announced through a report of cases of viral pneumonia in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (Way, et al., 2020). The number of cases started increasing during the Lunar New Year in Wuhan with 11 million permanent residents and 12,000 foreign residents; being the first place to deal with the public health crisis (Zhang & Wu, 2020). Known as Covid-19, the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (Public Health England, 2021). The immediate crisis response to fight against the virus was to take care of urgent and diversified communication needs – for example, medical consultations or the procurement of medical materials – for several linguistically diverse communication needs (Zhang & Wu, 2020). The virus of Covid-19 is a highly infectious respiratory disease and a complex systemic disease (Blomberg, et al., 2021) causing symptoms like a potentially severe, primarily respiratory illness and the most common symptoms are fever, coughing, and shortness of breath⁷.

As the residents of Wuhan were combating this virus and to overcome language barriers in China's rescue and relief operations countless online volunteers' translation communities were set up on social media platforms (Zhang & Wu, 2020). Since global crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, does not happen regularly, thus the knowledge is limited,

⁶ This information was retrieved from the website of the World Health Organization about how communication should be addressed from "Use plain language". Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/about/communications/understandable/plain-language> on 10 April 2021.

⁷ This information was retrieved from the Public Health England on website of the UK GOV about Covid-19 information. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-background-information> on 2 January 2021.

and the research of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects are relevant (Masselink, 2020) this situation in Wuhan represents the first moment of the contribution of volunteer translators to the disaster relief efforts of the pandemic (Zhang & Wu, 2020), revealing the importance of cross-cultural communication, multilingualism and translation.

The local health care system of Wuhan was under stress and with medical supplies running out due the rapidly rising numbers of infected cases (Zhang & Wu, 2020). On the 24th of January 2020 the shortage of medical supplies contributed to a significant weakness in the prevention and control of the epidemic and affecting the treatment and threatened the safety of medical staff leading to many hospitals requesting for donations of medical supplies through social media (Zhang & Wu, 2020). The World Health Organization declared on 30 January 2020 the outbreak of a public health emergency of international concern (Way, et al., 2020). The global epicentre of the pandemic slowly moved to Iran, Europe and later to the whole world (Zhang & Wu, 2020). Countries were advised to contain, control, delay and reduce the impact of Covid-19. Some countries imposed strict barriers on human movement (Yan, Xie, & Chen, 2020) to reduce the transmission of this highly infectious respiratory disease. Subsequently, since March 2020 almost instantaneously, the virus spread worldwide (Way, et al., 2020) followed-on the Covid-19 reached pandemic levels (Andreini, et al., 2020). The unknown virus was simultaneously being transmitted in multiple countries; subsequently it was the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus (Nature Microbiology, 2020). Quoting the World Health Organization Director-General at the media briefing on Covid-19 on 11 of March of 2021, “We have never before seen a pandemic sparked by a coronavirus. This is the first pandemic caused by a coronavirus.”⁸ Still in March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) recognised Covid-19 as a pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020).

⁸ This information was retrieved from the website of the World Health Organization about WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020> on 13 of September of 2021.

As the virus quickly spread across the planet (Masselink, 2020), the outcome was an unexpected crisis of information. Not only communication needed to be delivered as promptly as possible (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020), but it was also necessary to provide enough information and context about the virus (McCulloch, 2020). Because of the growing numbers of Covid-19 patients all over the world, there was a need to translate information as fast as possible and in a clear way (Clear Words Translations, 2020). The Covid-19 impacted the public health and health care delivery globally (Andreini, et al., 2020), threatening the communication accuracy because of the urgency of aiding the Covid-19 patients (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). In addition, a disease outbreak contributes to new circumstances and conditions that society must adapt to (Masselink, 2020). It is a highly infectious respiratory disease and, in order to protect public health, the public health recommendations messages or guidelines must be linguistically and culturally adapted, since an inaccurate, poorly translated or limited messaging may result in an increase of viral transmissions (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). Effective communication is crucial including in formats for people who don't speak the dominant language where they live, people with none or low literacy, and people without access to different forms of communication. Some of the recommendations to control infections, such as using a face covering, washing hands or avoiding agglomerations, have been proven crucial to control the disease (World Health Organization, 2021).

With the virus quickly spreading across the planet (Masselink, 2020) and in need of medical treatments or vaccines (Andreini, et al., 2020), the health outbreak affected all countries, in one way or another, forcing many lockdowns (Masselink, 2020). Still, with an increasing patient volume, the number of clinicians, professional medical interpreters or onsite interpreter staffing decreases. Throughout the Covid-19, proper language access is essential. Furthermore, the pandemic revealed urgent and potentially life-threatening neglected health communication for multilingual minorities whose communication needs cannot be fulfilled satisfactorily in the dominant language (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020).

In several countries, the linguistic barriers contributed to a significant number of Covid-19-related health disparities where their communicational needs were not met, some

emergency health communications are associated with an elevated risk of medical error due to communication (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). It's challenging on every front, not only to work as well as a race against time and information coming from unreliable sources. Furthermore, because of the growing numbers of Covid-19 patients, some professionals due to convenience, urgency or even lack of knowledge have to resort to their limited language skills, untrained family members, staff or machine translation such as Google Translate (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020).

The translation of medical research is significant to increase the capacity and ability to work and produce more efficient treatments and vaccines. Unfortunately, during the late 2020 the development of variants of the virus of Covid-19 increased the risk of infection and jeopardized public health (World Health Organization, 2021)⁹. The pandemic changed everything from the way we live to work in order to prevent the transmission of the virus (Anichini & Nemeth, 2020). However, with the growing number of Covid-19 patients, one of the measures against the virus propagation was to lockdown. This measure had a drawback causing adverse effects on employment and the economy (Masselink, 2020). Across the globe, many organisations and industries got affected (Masselink, 2020), including the translation industry or the language industry (Anichini & Nemeth, 2020). This contributed to language industry professionals losing their jobs (Masselink, 2020). Interpreters typically work face to face, but, as events and conferences across all industries are postponed or cancelled, they are not able to have suitable conditions. The organisation FIT Europe¹⁰ appealed, through Twitter, to associations and institutions to include language professionals – like independent and freelance interpreters and translators – to alleviate the severely negative impact of the Covid-19.

⁹ This information was retrieved from website of the World Health Organization about Tracking SARS-CoV-2 variants. Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/en/activities/tracking-SARS-CoV-2-variants> on 06 of July of 2021.

¹⁰ This information was retrieved from FIT Europe on Twitter from: https://twitter.com/FIT_Europe/status/1236210961687642112 on 20 February 2021.

Alternatively, the volume of information started increasing (Way, et al., 2020) there was a demand to translate contents as health information, travel advice, and hygiene guidelines. Having access to translated information in any disaster or crisis involving a multilingual population is crucial (Zhang & Wu, 2020). However, relying on human professional translation was not enough (Way, et al., 2020), Machine Translation and volunteers helped to ease the process. With most of the population at home due to the lockdown, many started working from home and some volunteered to translate (Albarino, 2020). Some volunteer translators used social media platforms to organise themselves and carry out urgent translation tasks (Zhang & Wu, 2020). The internet has available some information in certain languages, still the information gets limited by the population language competencies (Way, et al., 2020). Non-profit entities and organisations, like the World Health Organization, International Rescue Committee, Doctors of the World, Translators without Borders, VolunteerMatch, Points of Light, United Nations Volunteering and Cochrane worked with bilingual and multilingual volunteers and translators or interpreters organizing information, fact sheets, materials into numerous languages (Ochab, 2020). The materials have to be updated in a fast-paced manner based on new scientific findings as the pandemic evolved tremendously. Professional translators and non-professionals (bilingual or multilingual volunteers) worked together to share the accurate and precise information with all communities.

For qualified translators and non-professional translators and interpreters, the stressful workload and the loss of key clients affected their wellbeing and performance (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020). Nevertheless, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a need to translate resources and pieces of information into many languages (Public Health England, 2021). As the virus continues to spread, there is an urgent need to convert significant information about the virus and resources when preparing for and/or experiencing a pandemic (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020). Language barriers constitute a recognised source of health inequities, in emergency circumstances – such as respiratory distress or end-of-life care – carrying elevated risk of medical error due to miscommunication and are increasingly common during the current pandemic (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). However, the information requested to be translated sometimes could be sensible, and not all professionals

or non-professionals translators and interpreters were able to work with Covid-19-related work, due to the consequences for their mental health (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020). It is important to evaluate the sociological and psychological impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on translators (Masselink, 2020). The year 2020 was crucial for the development of content such as health information, travel advice and hygiene guidelines. From 2020 to 2021, the epidemic has severely affected every country, with different consequences, inevitably requiring special countermeasures (Frontieres, Medecins sans, 2021).

During a global pandemic the lack of language rights and communication threatens communities and sometimes, governments, organisations, who do not have the tools to publish or distribute in all required languages (Parker-Toulson, 2020). Non-profit entities and organisations such as Translators Without Borders¹¹, have translated documents and created glossaries about everything that surrounds the Covid-19. The following quotation was presented on their website: “Everyone needs reliable Covid-19 information in a language and a format that they understand. Responders need to be able to listen to people to understand their needs – no matter what languages they speak.” The glossaries made by Translators Without Borders (TWB) are regularly updated, as the virus is quickly spreading and mutating across the planet, these glossaries are addressed to enhance contact between respondents and affected communities, assist field workers and interpreters to increase knowledge of Covid-19 by communicating with communities. Alternatively, the United Nations have an online programme called The United Nations Volunteers (UNV). This programme allows non-profit organisations (such as UN agencies, governments, public institutions and civil-society organisations) and volunteers to work together (World Health Organization, 2021). Online volunteers are a valuable resource, since they contribute to the development of organisations anywhere in the world while improving their talents and taking on new positions that may not always be available in their professional life. This programme contributes to sustainable human development. In comparison, Cochrane is a non-profit organisation interested in healthcare that cooperates across the world to synthesize health-related research evidence

¹¹ This information was retrieved from the website Translators without Borders. TWB’s Global Response to Covid-19. Retrieved from: <https://translatorswithoutborders.org/covid-19> on 23 December 2020.

and make it available online. It is composed of researchers, health professionals, patients, translators, volunteers and students (Cochrane, 2016). Located all over the world, Cochrane¹² translators incorporate health professionals, students, and translators. The resources on Covid-19 are published in up to 13 languages. Their goal is to reduce the linguistic barrier to global evidence-informed health decisions. Furthermore, projects like The Endangered Languages project helped to coordinate multilingual Covid-19 response in over 500 languages (Parker-Toulson, 2020).

In Wuhan, in the response phase that happened from 8 January of 2020 to 7 April of 2020, government translators with the help of external volunteer translators provided language services available and accessible to troubled foreign nationals (Wang, 2019). Alternatively, when China experienced a severe shortage of medical supplies, international donations came from more than seventy countries which led to a rise of translation needs. This international donation and procurement represent multilingual communicative practices involving information transfer between countries with not only commonly used languages of international or regional communication but also “smaller” and less commonly taught languages (Zhang & Wu, 2020). The International Organization for Standardization does not have a universal international standard for the quality of many medical products. Each country formulates its own technical standards or production guidelines. This arose against some complications when it came to medical products being translation really important in helping medical staff and emergency response workers recognise the quality standards of foreign medical products.

Areas as medical investigation and legal translation are crucial in times of crises when governments need to implement new restrictions and rules about new medical findings, the information needs to be shared worldwide as soon as possible (Masselink, 2020). The website

¹² The information was retrieved from the website Cochrane from Translate Cochrane evidence. Retrieved from Cochrane: <https://www.cochrane.org/join-cochrane/translate> on 21 February 2021. And from Cochrane resources and news: <https://www.cochrane.org/our-evidence/coronavirus-covid-19-resources> on 23 February 2021.

Doctors of the World translated some guidelines for the British Health System, the NHS. If someone felt ill, they could call 111; however, if they do not speak English, they just need to answer all the questions yes, and an interpreter will be provided¹³.

The pandemic of the Coronavirus-19 caused a humanitarian breakdown (Cortez & Johnston, 2020), contributing to the awareness of the fact that in our globalised world only a minority of the inhabitants are monolinguals (Barnes & Almgren, 2021). Professionals and volunteers have translated in over 500 languages information about Covid-19 (McCulloch, 2020). The current pandemic generated a lasting impact, especially in health care, medical education and communication (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020).

In a disease outbreak and a global crisis, having access to an accurate translation could enhance communities' capability to mitigate hazards (Federici & O'Brien, 2019). Many translators, interpreters and linguists kept working despite the mental health risks with significant and valuable content ranging from ventilators to travel guidelines (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020). To improve health equity (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020) during the coronavirus pandemic and after requires an international response, contributing to multilingual communication (Cortez & Johnston, 2020). However, this provides an opportunity for learning and improving our health system and communication with one of the strategies proposed to hire qualified bilingual staff and medical interpreters (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020).

¹³ The mentioned guideline can be found at the Doctors of the World at <https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/English-infographics-selfcare.pdf>. This information was retrieved on 23 July 2021.

4. Chapter 4: Methodology

Chapter 4 will detail the questionnaire implemented, but, before introducing the structure of our questionnaire, the first section is about the role of surveys in Translation Studies, whereas the following sections are related to the construction of the questionnaire, the participants, the pilot studies conducted and the final version of the questionnaire applied in this study.

4.1. On Surveys

The field of social sciences frequently uses a social research method known as survey (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010) and can substitute or enhance other data collection types (SurveyMonkey, 2019). Some of the data collection that exists are interviews, focus groups, case studies, observational research, among others (SurveyMonkey, 2019). Nowadays, through surveys all types of information can be gathered: opinions, attitudes, hardships or a specific incident. A survey is a data collection technique belonging to the non-experimental designs of empirical fields (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010) that gathers information from specific respondents (SurveyMonkey, 2019). The data collected can be divided into qualitative data (non-numeric data) and quantitative data (numeric data) (Yan, Xie, & Chen, 2020). The questions are carefully selected; therefore, the information of interest is accurate and from a real-life situation. This method (questionnaire) can help comprehend and learn more about a specific group or area. However, it has become the most representative social analysis technique as an essential tool for investigating social relationships (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010). Because of its versatility, it can be applied to a broad range of fields (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010). When conducting a research study, it is necessary to have a representative sample of the group. The sampling process can reduce the costs, and its accuracy can help draw conclusions (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010) on the inquired subject.

There are two complementary methods for a questionnaire, quantitative and qualitative research. Whereas quantitative data provide the numbers for general questions of

the questionnaire, the qualitative data brings insights and details of the collecting information that seeks to describe a topic instead of measuring it.

There are at least four defined social groups in the surveys: Translators, translator trainees, employers of translators, and translation users (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010). The sociological research in translation can give a reflection of the issues, working conditions, career, the use of CAT tools, among other aspects (Dolmaya, 2012). Translation studies is an interdisciplinary academic field to explore, comprehend and study (Ciosmak, 2019). Nevertheless, its findings can be applied to other fields, for example, marketing, healthcare or demography (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010).

Nowadays, the Translation Studies (TS) is in the cognitive-communicative stage – it includes, but it is not restricted to, sociolinguistic aspects and it is regarded as a sequence of communicative actions – however, until the 1960s translation was solely viewed as the act of creating equivalence between the source and the target text (Heidrich & Schubert, 2019). Conversely, a performative branch of the Translation Studies, known as Applied Translation Studies (ATS), is related with the translator training or education, translation tools among others (Rabadán, 2010). In Translation Studies the surveys make a contribution to the social research, being necessary to define and delimit the diverse social groups involved in the practice of translation (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010). Particularly, the branch Applied Translation Studies has the role to evaluate a particular group or problems through social research, for instance with surveys (Rabadán, 2010). Furthermore, one of the responsibilities of the Translation Studies is to recognise alternative and diverse working strategies and decision-making strategies on the audience (Heidrich & Schubert, 2019). In addition, the academic and professional world is interested in the current state and information of the professional practice of translation. As a result, survey-based studies allow this contact to happen and the Translation Studies to expand and comprehend the socio-professional groups involved in this practice (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010). According to Rabadán (2010), regardless of the framework or the nature of the empirical data, there are at least three stages which encompass sourcing and selecting useful and usable data; conceptualisation and verification; and evaluation of the applicability in the process of collection and analysis of the data (Rabadán, 2010).

Our survey was designed taking into account these main principles, as it will be explained in detail in the following sections and subsections.

4.2. Research questions and hypotheses

To understand the central issue of this work, a survey will be conducted targeting multilingual actors (for instance, professional and non-professional translators, volunteers). The aim is to understand their involvement in translation focusing on the Covid-19 pandemic. The two main hypotheses (Lafeber, 2012):

H1: Distinct bilingual and multilingual actors, regardless of their professional skills, work as translators, even though they are not qualified as such.

H2: Multilingual actors, especially professional translators, were essential during the health outbreak of Covid-19.

A third hypothesis was added as through the research about the Covid-19 revealed signs of deterioration of the working conditions for all the actors involved during the Covid-19 pandemic.

H3: The working conditions during the pandemic deteriorated for all the actors involved.

The first hypothesis refers to multilingual actors translating on the basis of their language knowledge, even if they are not professional translators. Anyone that knows at least two languages (their native language and a peripheral language or a modern *lingua franca*) can translate. However, the translation and interpretation profession are unregulated in many places and there is little to non-regulation or a policed profession code of conduct or even quality control (Katan, 2009). For example, Non-governmental Organisations (NGOS) ask volunteers to translate information related to Covid-19 to their mother tongue. Non-professional translators volunteer in communities such as Community Translation Platforms, searching for some experience contributing to non-profit organisations (Pérez, 2020). Certain languages pairs do not have translators available, being essential both the bilingual and multilingual volunteers to fill that spot.

The second hypothesis refers to all multilingual actors and professionals' translators that helped translate essential information about Covid-19. The information is from diverse areas, such as medical to travel and tourism. The survey will allow us to understand the statements and characterizations made about bilingual and multilingual participants and translators (Pavlenko, 2007). The sample will be a circumstantial sampling (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010), since only volunteers who wish to take part in the study will answer the survey.

The third hypothesis refers to the deterioration of the working conditions such as unemployment, stressful workload, loss of clients, wellbeing and mental health issues (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020). This hypothesis is about all actors involved during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In an online questionnaire it is more manageable to obtain a large sample with distinct communities (Masselink, 2020). The website Google Forms will be used in the creation of the survey and later on also in the management of the participant's answers. The website offers many useful features (Masselink, 2020) and provides a report of the results with charts and graphs. The first step of creating a survey was to prepare questions suitable for our participants. The questionnaire has simple questions; therefore, the vocabulary and syntax of this survey are kept simple – as questionnaire design handbooks recommend (Harkness & Schoua-Glusberg, 1998). For most questions the answers are: short-answer text or checkboxes. The survey will be divided into demographic data, the Covid-19 pandemic and the role of the translators. The first section is essential to provide a perception of the number of multilinguals there are in our sample and as a proxy to our society nowadays. It will, in addition, tackle their linguistic background, their perspective on Covid-19 and multilingualism. Additionally provide a division between individuals who are monolingual, bilingual, multilingual and bi or multilingual individuals who translate. The second section provides an insight into the reality lived by the participants during the Covid-19 pandemic, whereas the third section provides the insight from the translators and interpreters. Moreover, the questionnaire will offer an insight into the translators' experiences, working conditions and wellbeing (Masselink, 2020) during a disease outbreak and a global crisis. This survey is a result of a process consisting in: preliminary version, testing group, modifications and

final version of the survey (Kuznik, Albir, & Berenguer, 2010). The sample received from the testing group is essential to understand if the survey is ready to be delivered.

4.3. Participants

The questionnaire will be divided in two as it is hard to carefully determine who answers the poll. The questions were directed to monolinguals, bilinguals and multilinguals in general and bi/multilingual professional translators and for those who do not identify themselves as translators but nonetheless engage in translation and learn about it collaboratively. For example, volunteers, migrants that translate information in rare languages, journalists that create news in more than one language and staff in humanitarian organisations who translate aid-related information, among others. These individuals may not be identified as translators, but the tasks require them to develop competences and knowledge about translation. In the first part, both groups of participants will share identical questions and in the second part, a detailed questionnaire will be provided to the group involved with translation. It was estimated that the questionnaire would take between five to fifteen minutes to complete. For the pilot studies the link was distributed through personal contact (Katan, 2009) from emailing academic colleagues and students. For the final version of the questionnaire, the link was also distributed through emailing academic colleagues, past students, professional translators and agencies. Additionally, it was distributed in different channels such as LinkedIn and Facebook. However, for the questionnaire, we received more answers from small groups dedicated to translators. Probably, the time for data collection could have more answers if it was a little earlier before the start of the Summer.

4.4. Pilot studies

Two pilot studies of the questionnaire were conducted before sending out the final version. The participants from the pilot studies sent a message or an email sharing their suggestions or recommendations. The first pilot study was carried out with a testing group composed of six participants. The data collection started on the 6th May of 2021 until the 11th May of 2021.

4.4.1. Data collected from the first pilot study

This section describes the data that were collected with six participants. All of the participants said it was easy to answer, the explanations were useful and took between five to ten minutes to complete the survey. A few participants commented on its contents and suggested the following:

- For the demographic section to have the languages organized alphabetically and more options of languages to choose from.
- For the Covid-19 section, on the question “Did you translate anything about Covid-19?” was suggested that when a participant answers “no”, it should be guided to submit the form as their information and view might not be useful for the aim of the thesis.
- For the role of translators’ section, on the questions about the machine translations, it was suggested adding “I did not use it” as an option for: “Did you use machine translation to support you? Which translating system did you use? Was the machine translation helpful?”. And a description saying “if you have not used machine translation you do not need to answer it” for the question: “Would you provide some reasons why it was helpful?”
- The last participant gave a suggestion of having a question saying “Have you ever provided any translation services?”. Moreover, it might help to draw a line between professional and non-professional translators. Since many may translate information for everyday life, sometimes using the aid of Machine Translation, they might be induced to answer yes in “Have you ever translated?”. To be certain someone has translated not only in everyday life but also at work or volunteerism, having “Have you ever provided any translation services?” it will help to sort out the answers.

The section “Role of translators” needed some reordering, so this section was divided into three. The second section is dedicated to all professional and non-professionals that have provided translation services in the course of their career. While the last section is only dedicated to professional and non-professional that have translated during the pandemic of Covid-19.

4.4.2. Data collected from the second pilot study

The second pilot study was made with four participants, two bilinguals and two professionals, after the integration of the suggestions from the first one. The bilinguals took approximately seven minutes to finish the questionnaire. Both said it was easy to comprehend and very easy to go through. While the two professionals had some difficulty comprehending some questions and provided some feedback on their doubts. The participants suggested the following:

- For the demographics section, it was suggested to have an open answer for the question “What are your languages pairs?”, so the participants can use the acronym of each language to identify their language pair, for example, EN-IT and PT_IT.
- For the Covid-19 section, one of the participants got confused with the question “In times of crisis, as we are experiencing at the moment with Covid-19, do you think bilinguals/multilinguals are necessary?” requiring a description.
- In the section dedicated to the role of translators in the second sector intended to all professional and non-professionals that have provided translation services in the course of their career, one participant asked a description for the question “Have you done specialised training and/or guidance to work as a Translator? Which one?”.
- In a section of the role of translators in the sector dedicated only to professional and non-professional that have translated during the pandemic of Covid-19, one of the participants required a description for the following questions: “Did you feel the need for specialised training and/or guidance?”.

The following question “Could you share any aspect of your experience as a translator working during the Covid-19 pandemic?” was added to the survey. It can give an insight into the difficulties that a translator might have been through. Based on the feedback received by the two groups, some changes were made improving the overall structure and comprehension making it more accessible.

4.5. Applied Questionnaire

After collecting all information from the pilot studies, all the changes were adapted to the final version of the questionnaire. The survey is compliant with the Data Protection and Online Privacy policies (Wolford, 2019). All the information shared by the participants will be collected anonymously and merely for statistical purposes for this dissertation exclusively. The section of Data Protection and Online Privacy¹⁴ will guarantee the rights of the participants since personal data such as gender, age, location and school qualifications can lead to an individual being directly or indirectly identified (Wolford, 2019). All information in this questionnaire will only be used for quantitative purposes of this dissertation, and all data acquired through the survey will be deleted by December 2021. To guarantee the participants are aware of their rights, there is a message saying the following: “The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a regulation in EU Law on data protection and privacy in the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA). The information shared here will be collected anonymously and merely for statistical purposes. The survey answers will be deleted by December 2021. Do you authorise me to collect or reuse your personal information for the purpose of this dissertation exclusively?”. The participant has the option to answer yes or no. If the answer is yes, there will be redirection to the next section, whereas if the answer is no, there will be redirection to submit the form.

The sections of the survey will be divided into demographic data, the Covid-19 pandemic and the role of translators. The section of the demographic is about Multilingualism and Translation. In a survey, demographic data encompasses age, gender, and education since these are key demographic variables that help to describe and identify participants and their

¹⁴ The information about the Data Protection and Online Privacy was retrieved from GDPR.eu about What is GDPR, the EU’s new data protection law? Retrieved from <https://gdpr.eu/what-is-gdpr/?cn-reloaded=1> on June 2021.

representativeness (IBM, 2016)¹⁵. The first questions are demographic ones allowing us to understand the characteristics of the participants. They include age, gender, school qualifications, the country they live in and their mother tongues. These questions will help during the data analysis to create groups, compare them and understand the audience. This way it's possible to divide the data in a meaningful way when writing the data analysis (SurveyMonkey, n.d.). One of the questions is about the language pairs and it is an open question. To aid the comprehension of the question, it was added the following explanation: "Language pairs refers to two or more languages an individual is able to talk and switch from without problems. For example, a professional is able to translate from one to the other. If you only speak one language, just mention that one."¹⁶

There are four questions dedicated to languages, the first one about the languages learned at home, the second one about the languages learned at school, the third one about languages learned through self-education and the fourth one about languages learned by moving abroad. These four languages and the questions about language pairs will help separate the monolingual, bilingual groups and multilingual groups. The questions about language pairs presumably will only have the language the participant feels confident with. There might be some discrepancies when it comes to data, but it will also provide if there is a *lingua franca* among the respondents. The discrepancies, for instance, could be from a respondent that used to learn French at school, and that language does not belong to their language pair, meaning at a certain point they lost their fluency in the language. Other could be a misinterpretation with languages learned at home and languages learned through self-education as the participant might presume, being languages learned alone at home through self-education and mixing the information. The question about the languages learned at

¹⁵ This information was retrieved from the website: How-to Guide for IBM® SPSS® Statistics Software, retrieved from: <https://methods.sagepub.com/dataset/howtoguide/age-in-ess-2016-spss> on 5 August 2021.

¹⁶ The questionnaire was open to anyone to respond, despite being a professional translator, a student, among others. However, the way the participant answered could indicate whether they are a translator or not. To illustrate, a translator would answer with EN-IT and IT-PT, for example.

school includes every language learned in any education cycle from Primary to Higher Education. Before concluding this section about Multilingualism and Translation there are some questions dedicated to the impact of Covid-19. Public health recommendation messages or guidelines strategies must be culturally and linguistically adapted, since a delayed, imprecise, poorly translated information may result in magnified health disparities (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). It is crucial to provide information linguistically and culturally for all communities and minorities (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). The participant can indicate which languages they have seen the information about Covid-19 prevention. English as a *lingua franca* may well be more prevalent than other languages. The question “In times of crisis, as we are experiencing at the moment with Covid-19, do you think bilinguals/multilinguals are necessary? Why?” will show what the majority of the participants think about it and their perspective of the importance of speaking more than one language.

The next question “Could you share any aspect of your experience during the Covid-19 pandemic?” was created having in mind the scenario that during the Covid-19 pandemic most of the activities become remote-access (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). For instance, interpreting through video and telephone became a necessity, however, technological challenges, inaccessibility, limited skills, delays or untrained individuals contributed to low quality services and the increase of some barriers. This question hopefully might give some insight of problems that the participants might have encountered and will help to have an insight of each participant, either how they felt or what they have experienced. Alternatively, it might help to see the impact of Covid-19 and how it was perceived by each group age and location.

Moving on, to the section on the Role of Translators, it's divided, so according to the answer given in certain questions such as “Have you ever provided any translation services?” and “Did you translate anything about Covid-19?” the questionnaire will be submitted. For example, on the question: “Have you ever provided any translation services?”, those who have only translated for small purposes such as everyday life or school related will be able to submit the form. This next part is dedicated to understanding the background of the participant who has provided services such as translation, interpretation and subtitling. The

first question will be about the difficulties in the course of his/her or their translation practice either in general or Covid-19-related. Some of the expected difficulties are low pay rates and lack of motivation. The first part has three questions: “What recommendations would you give to improve the quality of intercultural communication in crises situations/settings?”; “Have you volunteered to translate anything about Covid-19?”; “Have you ever provided any translation services?”.

The following part is intended to all professional and non-professionals that have provided translation services in the course of their career. The participant has a chance to add something from their experience in the question: “Could you share any aspect of your experience as a translator working during the Covid-19 pandemic?”. The question: “Did you translate anything about Covid-19?” It is essential to divide the participants into those that have translated about Covid-19 or did not. However, for those who reach this part, the survey might take a few more minutes to finish. The last part is dedicated to professional and non-professional that have translated during the pandemic of Covid-19. The volume of information to be translated about Covid-19 was increasing over time since the beginning of this virus (Way, et al., 2020). Through the sample of participants, it will help to understand the number of professional translators and volunteers that worked and/or helped to provide the translated information. This final section of the role of translators is dedicated only to those who have worked with Covid-19-related content. The first question is about the languages required for this job, whereas the final questions will help to understand which tools have been used to assist during the process of translating about Covid-19. The questions are about machine translation (such as Google Translate, DeepL, Bing among others), glossaries or translation memories, if it was an urgent request, and if there was time to edit and proofread the translation properly.

5. Chapter 5: Results and discussion

Chapter 5 will describe the aspects and features of the data collected. Each question of the questionnaire will be studied and examined. The last section reviews the results obtained from the questionnaire and discusses the information connecting with the main hypotheses.

This questionnaire aims to gain insights on the involvement of multilingual actors in translation during the Covid-19 crisis, taking also into account their working conditions. A health crisis as the Covid-19 introduced new circumstances and conditions all over the world (Masselink, 2020).

The data collection started on the 3rd of July until the 3rd of August, for a total of thirty-two days. The goal for this questionnaire was to reach 200 answers (Masselink, 2020), but the data collected is from 156 respondents. However, only 152 participants consented to the use of the answers they provided as data exclusively for this dissertation. Since two of the respondents are not 18 years old, the total number of participants will be 150. The questionnaire respondents and their answers were utterly anonymous. Ultimately, the sample of this questionnaire included 150 completed questionnaires, of which: 9 are monolingual, 67 are bilingual, 74 are multilingual. 27 of 150 participants have volunteered to provide a language service to work about Covid-19. From the 116 respondents that have provided any translation service: 27 are students, and 83 are freelance translators, 12 are in-house-translators, 1 from crowdsourcing and 1 from an agency, 4 of them are neither a translator or interpreter and 1 is retired. In addition, 60 translators worked with Covid-19 content. This study, nonetheless, has some limitations with the participant pool (Tabata-Sandom, Nishikawa, & Ishii, 2020). In terms of response rate, we would expect to have more answers from translators or interpreters.

The questionnaire has short answers, multiple choice answers and open questions. The open questions or qualitative data are more individualised and explicit data (Masselink, 2020) showing some of the effects of the pandemic. These answers can give a glimpse on the impact of the pandemic in our society and all over the world. One of the methods for the open

questions was to identify key words to define the general words in the responses (Masselink, 2020). One of the drawbacks of an online questionnaire is that the responses were not as in-depth (Masselink, 2020) as they could be, and many were left blank resulting in an incomplete answer. Questions such as “What recommendations would you give to improve the quality of intercultural communication in crisis situations/settings?” and “Which difficulties did you have to face in the course of your translation practice either in general or Covid-19-related?” are the ones with the most blank answers. We suspect that the question is personal and the participants may not be comfortable in answering those. The data analysis of the questionnaire has one goal – understand more about the three testable hypotheses and the research question. Not only will we have a better understanding of Multilingualism and Translation as we have a study case of the pandemic of the Covid-19.

5.1. Data collected

This section describes the data that was collected from 150 participants with different backgrounds and language pairs. The analysis process will start with an overview of all the data received – all the answers from the usable questionnaires were included (Lafeber, 2012). Complementary metadata such as age, gender and school qualification were obtained from the 150 participants. The questionnaire was initiated with demographic questions and then experiential questions (Masselink, 2020). This online questionnaire contributed to the research about multilingualism and translation and provides an insight of the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic might have caused in the community, in the translation and interpretation industry. Its main focus is to provide an insight through a sample of 150 participants of the involvement of actors in translation and the impact that the pandemic had in their work.

5.1.1. Demographics

The first question was “Do you authorise me to collect or reuse your personal information for the purpose of this dissertation exclusively?”. The participant had a chance at any point to give up and withdraw their consent (Wolford, 2019). From the 156 participants, 4 of them answered “No” meaning they did not authorise to collect the data and information of their answers. The 152 participants (97% of the participants) agreed to have

their information given through the questionnaire used solely and exclusively for this dissertation. As explained above, we only took into consideration 150 participants above 18 years old.

The next questions are part of the demographic variables being age, gender and education or school qualifications. The metadata measurements information will help to contextualize our participants. The three questions had a short answer. If someone did not want to share this information or did not feel confident in sharing, they could answer with a dot and move to the next question. For better understanding, the following graphic has the information from age and gender combined.

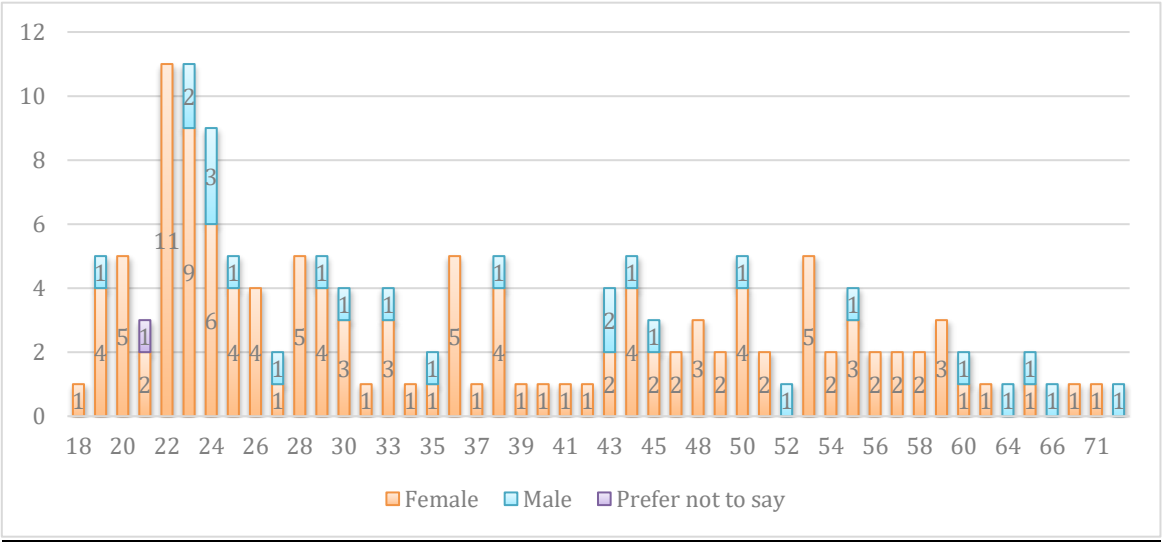


Figure 1 - Graphic of the age and gender of the 150 participants of the survey.

For the question of gender (refers to the identity to which the participant identifies with) it was an open question, in which, had the opportunity to choose their own category. The categories we received were: female, male and “prefer not to say”.

The European Language Industry Survey¹⁷ from 2020 before and after the Covid-19 revealed that translators and interpreters are more likely to be females. Whereas the average language service company has more female employees and the average independent language professional is more likely to identify themselves as a female. Our data is in line with these tendencies. The majority of the participants, approximately 85% identified themselves as female. Only 17% of the participants are male and 1% preferred not to identify their gender. Resulting in 125 answers from participants that identified themselves as female from all age groups, the youngest is 18 years old and the oldest is 71 years old. And 26 answers from participants that identified themselves as male that are also present in almost all age groups being the youngest 19 years old and the oldest 73 years old.

The next question was about education, specifically school qualifications, the question refers to the education acquired, and it is divided into Primary, Secondary and Higher Education. Primary education refers to the first levels of schooling following early childhood. Secondary education refers to the second stage of formal education beginning at about age 11 years old to 13 years old and ending at 15 years old to 18 years old depending on the country. Whereas Higher Education is any of various types of education given in postsecondary institutions of learning. Observing the data: one participant only has primary education¹⁸; fourteen participants have secondary education. Fifty-five participants had a bachelor or an equivalent, while sixty-five participants had a Master or an equivalent, eight participants had a postgraduate course or an equivalent whereas seven participants had a doctoral level. The majority had a higher education degree across all age groups, being more common a bachelor in the age group from 19 to 23 years old.

The next demographic questions are “In which country do you live in?” and “What is your mother tongue?”. The question “In which country do you live in?” had an open

¹⁷ The information from the European Language Industry Survey 2020 was retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/2020_language_industry_survey_report.pdf on 15 of August of 2021.

¹⁸ The participant with only primary education is an adult.

answer, presumably, when the participant answered the survey, they were living in that country at that moment. From the 150 participants, 16 participants were from the Asian continent, the majority from South Korea. One participant was living in Australia. From North America, there are 11 participants, the majority living in the United States of America. From South America, there are six participants, the majority living in Argentina and Brazil. From Europe there were 116 participants, the majority living in Portugal, following the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Germany and Netherlands.

Alternatively, the question “What is your mother tongue?” revealed the number of monolinguals, bilinguals and multilinguals. This question helps to understand the presence of bilingualism or even multilingualism from a young age.

Table 1. The mother tongue of the participants.

	Monolingual	Bilingual	Multilingual	Total of participants
Asia	10	1	-	11
Africa	-	-	-	-
Europe	119	7	-	126
Oceania	-	-	-	-
North America	6	1	-	7
South America	6	-	-	6
				150

Observing the data and comparing it with the question “In which country do you live?” is it clear that many of the participants have immigrated to another at some point in their life, most of these participants being Europeans. There are 141 participants that have only one language as their mother tongue, being monolingual. These monolinguals have been

exposed only to one language in their community and interact only with that language. From the 150 participants, there are nine cases of a compound bilingual. As mentioned before, a compound bilingual is a child exposed to two languages since birth and raised in contexts where they interact with speakers of different languages (Lörscher, 2012), for example, a Portuguese-speaking father and an English-speaking mother. The other 141 participants were raised and exposed to one language only from birth; the second language might have only been introduced during their primary education or even later on.

The following question is about the language pairs. A language pair refers to two or more languages an individual is able to talk and switch from without problems. Observing the answers, the most common language pairs have a combination with English. Since this language is taught at many schools all over the world from primary education on, it explains why it is so common between this sample of participants with different ages and educational backgrounds. The most frequent languages spoken by the monolinguals are English, Portuguese or Spanish. Since the questionnaire was in English, the Portuguese and Spanish respondents could have used the automatic translation available on the browser. In the survey the question had the following description: “Language pair refers to two or more languages an individual is able to talk and switch without problems. For example, a professional is able to translate from one to the other. If you only speak one language, just mention that one.” The following graphic has the information about the language pairs and how many of those are probably a translator or interpreter from giving an answer, for example, “EN-PT, PT-KOR, KOR-EN”, “German-English” or “English \diamond Indonesian”.

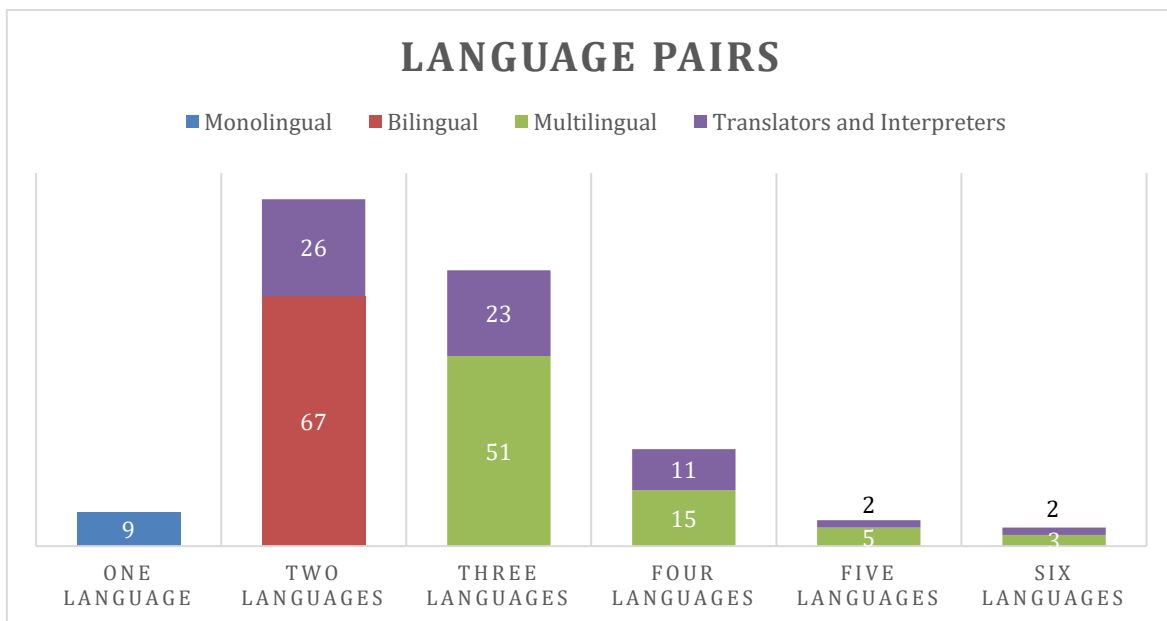


Figure 2 - Graphic about the language pairs, with monolinguals, bilingual and multilingual.

Observing and analysing the graphic about the language pairs, with nine monolinguals, sixty-seven bilinguals and seventy-four multilinguals (had fifty-one that spoke three languages, fifteen that spoke four languages, five that spoke five languages and three that spoke six languages). Comparing the information of Table 1 with Figure 2, around 117 participants that were raised in a community that only spoke one language are no longer monolinguals, as they learned one or more languages and are now bilingual or multilingual. On each group, except monolingualism, there is a purple colour that represents the number of translators or interpreters in that specific group having as foundation the format how the respondents answered. In the bilinguals we have 26 of 67 participants that could be translators or interpreters. In the multilinguals the number of participants that could be a translator or interpreter is 23 of 51 participants from the section that only has three languages, from the four languages section 11 of 15, from the five languages section 2 of 5 participants and from the six languages section 2 of 3 participants.

Moving on to the next questions, “Which languages have you learned at home?”, “Which languages have you learned at school?” and “Which languages have you learned alone (self-education)?”. The following two tables (specifically Table 2 and Table 3) have the information about the languages learned at home, at school or through self-education.

Nonetheless, there was some confusion between the participants as some assumed they were the languages learnt from self-education and not the languages learned at home through the parents or the community they were exposed to, since the data from the question “What’s your mother tongue?” does not match with the data available at “Languages learned at home”. These three questions had twelve options and a blank space called “other” so each participant could add their language if it wasn’t available in the list. The choice of these twelve languages is linked to the six official languages that the United Nations employs, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish,¹⁹ and the most learnt languages and the most common to find in learning apps. This could have contributed to having six modern lingua franca. The first table has the list of languages available for the participant to choose, while the second table has a list of languages added by the participant.

Table 2. Part 1 – The languages learned at home, school and through self-education.

Options of languages available:

Languages	Learned at home	Learned at school	Learn through self-education
Arabic	2	4	2
Chinese	3	12	3
Dutch	9	9	5
English	52	125	33
French	17	99	12
German	17	52	9

¹⁹ This information was retrieved from the website Britannica about the *Lingua franca* in the topic linguistics. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/lingua-franca> on 11 August 2021.

Italian	13	20	19
Japanese	1	7	8
Korean	3	8	12
Portuguese	64	33	8
Russian	4	10	7
Spanish	14	45	34
None	0	0	39

As we can observe in Table 2, English is the language with more learners, following French, German and Spanish. English and French have the highest number of learners since these two languages are implemented in the education system of many countries, with the goal of offering in their academic studies multilingual education that includes one or two modern languages (Calafato, 2020). De Swaan (2001) in his analysis of the European languages observes there is a greater push the more the languages are used in a geographical area for the *linguas francas* (Pym, 2008).

In the column of learning a language through self-education, English, French, Italian and Spanish have the majority of learners, followed by Korean with twelve learners. Approximately thirty-nine respondents stopped their language learning education after concluding their studies.

Table 3 refers to all the languages added by the participants learned at home, school and through self-education.

Table 3. Part 2 – Other languages learned at home, school and through self-education added by the participants.

Other languages added by the participants:

Languages	Learned at home	Learned at school	Learned through self-education	Languages	Learned at home	Learned at school	Learned through self-education
Amharic	0	0	1	Javanese	2	1	0
Bulgarian	1	1	0	Kazakh	0	1	0
Catalan	1	0	2	Latin	0	11	0
Creole	0	0	1	Latvian	1	0	0
Croatian	1	0	0	Malay	0	0	1
Czech	0	0	1	Malayalam	0	0	1
Danish	2	0	0	Norwegian	1	0	2
Dialect Limburgs	1	0	0	Occitan	1	0	0
Finnish	1	0	0	Romanian	1	0	1
Frisian	0	1	1	Serbian	0	0	1
Galician	1	1	0	Swedish	1	1	3

Greek	1	3	4	Scottish Gaelic	0	0	1
Georgian	0	0	1	Tamil	1	1	0
Hindi	1	0	0	Telugu	1	0	0
Hebrew	1	3	0	Thai	0	0	1
Icelandic	0	0	1	Turkish	0	0	1
Indonesian	2	2	0	Welsh	0	0	1
Irish	0	0	1				

When it comes to languages learned through self-education, the European languages – Catalan, Greek, Norwegian and Swedish – have a higher number of learners. In addition, Latin has more language learners with eleven respondents.

To finalise the section about languages, for the last question “Have you learned a language by moving abroad?” at least 58 (approximately 38%) of the 150 participants had the opportunity to learn a language by moving abroad. There was an option to identify the language the respondent had an opportunity to learn. Some participants shared that they learned a new language by studying abroad, others moved to a different country while still young having to learn the language of the country, others while travelling and some while working abroad. One of the participants revealed learning a new language by marrying a foreigner and belonging to their spouse's community in the participant’s own country. From the 58 answers, only 33 shared the language they had an opportunity to learn. These languages are Catalan, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian.

The next questions are about the public health recommendation messages or guidelines strategies for the Covid-19. Each specific community has their own needs, and

public health messages should address the social policy-makers of health care services (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020).

5.1.2. The Covid-19 pandemic

The Public health recommendation messages or guidelines strategies for the Covid-19 were a strategy to teach all communities living in a country how to protect themselves and prevent the transmission of the virus.

The following questions “Have you seen information about Covid-19 available in your language?” or “Was the information on your language always available?” discloses and reveals the reality of our respondents during the Covid-19 pandemic on Table 4.

Table 4. Public health recommendation messages or guidelines availability.

Have you seen information about Covid-19 available in your language?			
Yes	146		97
No	4	%	3
Was the information on your language always available?			
Yes	135	%	90
No	15		10

The Public Health Recommendation Messages or Guidelines strategies about the Covid-19 was available in their languages for 146 respondents. Four respondents answered “no”, these four respondents have Portuguese, German, Bulgarian and French as their mother tongue. This means at a certain point the information took more than expected to reach these respondents’ communities, workplaces, among others. For 135 respondents the information in their native language was always available. However, for 15 respondents that was not the

case. These fifteen respondents at the moment they answered the questionnaire and presuming they have not travelled recently were living in Portugal, France, United Kingdom, Canada, Indonesia, South Korea and Australia.

Table 5. Public health recommendation messages or guidelines available in different languages.

Have you seen information about Covid-19 prevention in several languages in your country?			
Yes	116	%	78
No	34		22
Have you seen information about Covid-19 prevention in several languages online?			
Yes	141	%	94
No	9		6

The question “Have you seen information about Covid-19 prevention in several languages in your country?” intended to raise awareness that many countries prepared their public health recommendation messages or guidelines strategies for the Covid-19 with one or two *lingua franca* (for example, English and Mandarin) and the native language. However, it was not enough for it to be made available and readable for peripheral languages. This situation was presumably the case of the 116 respondents that answered “Yes”. For the other 34 respondents there is a possibility of only having the information in English and the native language of the country. The Public health recommendation messages or guidelines strategies for the Covid-19 and in the online ‘atmosphere’ several organisations, blogs, institutional websites, social media channels spread information with public health recommendation messages or guidelines strategies to prevent the Covid-19 virus adapting the language to the public or audience. Few of the information shared online were about handwashing, social distancing or instructional videos for face covering (McCulloch, 2020). For the question “Have you seen information about Covid-19 prevention in several languages online?” the

majority of the participants, 141 respondents, have seen this information in several languages online while nine have not.

The disease caused by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) was first reported through a report of cases of viral pneumonia in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 (Way, et al., 2020). As a way to reduce and prevent the transmission of the Covid-19 it was prepared public health messages or guidelines for the population having Chinese, English and the local language as the main targets. The following step was finding out which languages have the respondents seen having the question “Which languages have you seen the information about Covid-19 prevention?”.

Table 6. The languages seen with the information about Covid-19 prevention.

In which languages have you seen the information about Covid-19 prevention?			
Languages available		Languages added	
Arabic	4	Bulgarian	1
Chinese	18	Croatian	1
Dutch	9	Finnish	1
English	145	Greek	1
French	30	Indonesian	3
German	21	Javanese	1
Italian	15	Latvian	1
Japanese	4	Norwegian	1
Korean	4	Romanian	2
Portuguese	73	Swedish	2

Russian	6	Thai	1
Spanish	27	Turkish	1
		Hindi	2
		Telugu	1
		Persian	1
		Tamil	1
		Kazakh	1

Some languages are central (Pym, 2008) as English for example, since it is a global *lingua franca* (Tabata-Sandom, Nishikawa, & Ishii, 2020). Other languages are more peripheral as the ones added by the participant serves local purposes since only a small community speak those languages (Pym, 2008). However, between these two types of languages there is one language that creates exchange relations with other languages. Through the data available on Table 6 the information about the prevention for Covid-19 was more available in English. There were only 18 participants that reported as seeing the language Chinese included in the language of the public health messages or guidelines.

In the next question “In times of crisis, as we are experiencing at the moment with Covid-19, do you think bilinguals/multilinguals are necessary?” the majority of the participants, approximately 97%, answered “Yes” to the question where approximately 3% answered “No”. For this question, the respondent had to justify their answer, however, some of the respondents left a blank space in their answer. Table 7 has all the answers gathered for the question “Why” and it has been organised by the themes or trends more common in the answers.

Table 7. Reasons why are bilinguals and/or multilinguals necessary in times of crisis.

Bilinguals/multilinguals are necessary in times of crisis:

To transmit, communicate and widespread reliable information in different languages within a short time	77
To help minorities with different languages who don't speak the language of the place they are living	27
For translation purposes	21
It is essential in all aspects of life	8
To foster understanding across language barriers and to help explore new avenues of thought	7
Their work is a contribution to global health	5
N/A – No answer	5
Total	150

Table 7 has the answers summarised in topics common between the answers given by the participants. It is clear that the majority agrees that bilinguals and multilinguals are essential before, during and after a crisis setting as they are meant to help translate the information as fast as possible for every community. Followed by the importance of helping minorities, emigrants, tourists among others in translating or interpreting information; and the role of translations between users that know two or more languages. One respondent said that the professional and non-professional need guidance when asked to translate something as some are only volunteering having the knowledge of languages as a basis. Another one added that the automatic translation can give a gist of the message; however, to work internationally it was essential having culturally-adapted translations. A few of the respondents explained that there would always be a need for bilingualism and/or multilingualism as they can help non-natives, refugees and migrants communicate with service providers. When it comes to the Covid-19 pandemic, the help provided by professional and non-professional bilinguals and/or multilinguals has a crucial significance and reveals the immeasurable importance of a translator's work. The majority of the

respondents said the work done during the beginning of the pandemic was a contribution to global health. However, there seems to be a perception that multilinguals are obligated to help in times of crises since they know the language of linguistic communities or minorities that exist in the country. Paraphrasing one of the respondents, “multilinguals are always necessary as multilingualism is considered a basic requirement for everyone to communicate properly with foreigners”.

The question “Could you share any aspects of your experience during the Covid-19 pandemic?” gave the opportunity for some respondents to share the difficulties they have faced during the Covid-19 pandemic. The data collected were divided into three tables, Table 8, Table 9 and Table 10. However, it does not represent the total of the participants as their answers mentioned several aspects of their experience during the Covid-19, for this reason, the information was divided through the three tables. To illustrate, a freelancer mentioned the status of his mental health and the misinformation about the vaccines he found online. Table 8 refers to the overall aspects of the experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic shared by the participants, Table 9 is about the impact that had on the participants mental health, and Table 10 displays information on the students’ experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. A handful of the participants’ answers reveal the adverse effects on employment, economy and mental health. According to Masselink (2020), in his dissertation about the Covid-19: “Adverse effects on the healthcare infrastructure, employment, the economy, and communication are widespread, and likely to grow in future.”. As a consequence of the pandemic of the Covid-19, many industries are and will be experiencing changes in their markets (Masselink, 2020).

Table 8. Part 1 – Overall experience of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Could you share any aspect of your experience during the Covid-19 pandemic?	
It was normal	23
Increased workload or more work	13
Misinformation shared online about the virus and vaccines	12

Government only provided information in the local language	12
Difficulty finding reliable information, for example, information about the virus in different languages was contradictory leading to confusion	10
N/A – No answer	9
I liked home office/remote work	7
Government provided the public health recommendation messages or guidelines strategies in several languages	6
Unemployment and low pay rates	6
Less work available for translators/interpreters	5
Volunteered to translated Covid-19-related work	5
Translated or interpreted with Covid-19-related work	3

Table 8 reveals the difficulties felt for the majority of the participants. Nine of the participants left a blank answer expressing that they did not wish to share their experience for this question. For 23 respondents, their experience during the Covid-19 was similar to their daily lives before the Covid-19. Many already revealed they worked from home. In terms of workload, some increased, but the time to accomplish the task remained the same as before, whereas others struggled to find some work in their areas. Some of the areas that found an increase of work were in audio-visual translation, transcription and captioning. The information about Covid-19 is highly sensitive, and there is no room for misunderstanding. However, there was a lot of contradictory information and misinformation about the virus and vaccines affecting some individuals as it was hard to get information in their language. Some countries only had monolingual safety notices being written in the local languages. One of the participants mentioned the measures for prevention of Covid-19 in Portuguese with some mistakes while others said that the information was contradictory in the same paper with three languages – Portuguese, English and Italian. Two respondents mentioned

that emergency services workers did not speak other languages besides the local language, being difficult in the access to information. For countries, for example, from Latin America, the information took longer to reach than it should. Moving onto Table 9 where we have the answers of the respondents that were related to mental health.

Table 9. Part 2 – The mental health status of the participants during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mental health aspect of your experience during the Covid-19 pandemic	
Isolation/loneliness	21
Affected my mental health	18
Mentally demanding and emotionally demanding/exhausting	18
Stressful	10
Difficulty concentrating especially during lockdown	4

Overall, 71 from the 150 respondents revealed having their mental health affected in some way due to isolation, stress, severe loss in revenue, emotional constraint, deterioration of prior mental disorders, among others. The data on Table 9 reveals that for many respondents the loneliness and emotional restraint was due to being alone or far away from family when they needed help. The stress increased due to the phobia of germs fearing catching the virus for others was the overall experience or because of the financial constraints. It was mentally demanding and exhausting for the respondents with young children at home. Home-schooling and trying to thrive professionally became a burden for some of the responses being more demanding and exhausting. Two of the respondents, despite not being asked for confidential reasons, had Covid-19, and it affected their mental health. For those working from home, it was hard to concentrate during the lockdowns. One of the main explanations for why it was exhausting is because of having to work all day looking at the computer, and after finishing, they were still at home with no separation from work and home.

Table 10. Part 3 – The students experience during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Students experience during the Covid-19 pandemic	
Attending online lectures/classes became hard to learn and had more workload	8
Affected my mental health (mentally and emotionally demanding)	4
Difficulty finding a job	3
Opportunity to participate in virtual international conferences and webinars through zoom	3
Difficulty in learning languages via zoom	2
Loneliness or isolation	3
Affected my grades	2
Opportunity to start as freelance translator and being a student	1
Delayed the acquisition of the degree	1
Lower pay job opportunity	1

Table 10 has the data of 25 respondents from 150 participants that are or were students at the time when they answered the survey. However, the numbers of Table 10 do not represent the total of the participants as their answers mentioned several aspects of their experience during the Covid-19, for this reason, the information was divided. For instance, a student suffered from loneliness and their experience during the Covid-19 affected their grades. Overall, the learning through platforms such as Zoom was hard for the majority of the students, and some had an increase in the workload from each class or lecture. Some students said having classes from home was mentally demanding, lonely, weird and they did not learn as much as they should. Many were stressed due to having family members sick, unemployment (some of the students worked as a freelance translator) and having more

workload compared to before the pandemic. There were delays in the acquisition of the degree. On the positive side, the students had the opportunity to participate in virtual international conferences and webinars from universities abroad through Zoom, internships, among others. One respondent had the opportunity to work as a freelance translator. Overall, the Table 8, Table 9 and Table 10 gave an insight of the mental impact of the pandemic of the Covid-19 in the respondents of the survey made exclusively for this work in the Summer of 2021 when some countries already had a daily life close to what it used to be. For many participants the transition to work or study from home was hard affecting their concentration and performance.

The following question “Have you ever translated?” was meant to reduce the number of participants so the information could be more accurate and reliable to have a better insight on the language providers community. From the 150 participants, those that answered “Yes” moved on to the next section having a total of 135 answers, meaning 89% of the participants have translated at some point of their life either work related or not. While those that answered “No”, with a total of 15 participants – approximately 11% of the participants – had to submit the survey. For the following questions the data collected is from 135 of 150 respondents.

5.1.3. The role of translators

Starting the section dedicated to the role of translators the first question was “What recommendations would you give to improve the quality of intercultural communication in crisis situations/settings?”. Subsequently, when it comes to intercultural communication in an emergency crisis, the role of the translator may be invisible and often underappreciated (Masselink, 2020). Communicating across languages and cultures is complex and resource-demanding (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018). An intercultural crisis in a globalised world has accentuated the need for translation (Wang, 2019). Throughout the world, these professionals and volunteers continue performing essential tasks in less than desirable conditions (McArthur, Lam-McArthur, & Fontaine, 2018). Through this question some insight of the community was expected.

Table 11. Recommendations to improve the quality of intercultural communication in crisis situations/settings.

Recommendations to improve the quality of intercultural communication in crises situations/settings	
Simple and effective cross-cultural awareness and communication	48
Use qualified translators and interpreters	27
N/A – No answer	26
Government investment in highly qualified training for our translators/aspiring translators.	9
Educate general public and decision makers on translation, the role of competent language services and intercultural communication	7
Improve foreign-language learning at both school and university level	5
More trainings, guidance or courses for translators/interpreters in crisis settings	4
Making translation a priority rather than an afterthought	3
Improvement of machine translation engines	3
Prepare all the population for different types of crises	2
Public multilingual glossaries about crucial issues	1

Table 11 has all recommendations provided by the respondents and 26 of 135 respondents gave a blank answer or written “N/A”. The recommendation to use simple and effective cross-cultural awareness and communication has the majority of respondents. Having short, effective and explicit communication should be one of the priorities for an effective cross-cultural awareness and communication. Some added that the communication and cultural awareness should use images, pictures or cartoons to make sure everyone understands the message even if they do not understand the local language. With the aid of

native speakers of different languages, it will be possible to understand if the message through images, pictures or cartoons was even understood with the cultural differences. The following recommendation, with 27 recommending it, was the investment and use of professional translators or interpreters, qualified translators and interpreters to convey the message and ensure the quality, reliability and cultural aspects transmission; however, intercultural mediators would aid in going beyond the language. Nowadays, it is essential and crucial to provide more training, guidance courses for translators and/or interpreters in crisis settings; one of the ways is the government's investment in highly qualified training for our translators and students that are aspiring to become professional translators. The improvement of machine translation, public multilingual glossaries about crucial issues and promoting multilingualism in emergency responses will contribute to an increase in the quality of intercultural communication. One recommendation "making translation a priority rather than an afterthought" has been present in many last-minute requests for many translators. One of the respondents related to receiving many last-minute requests for Covid-19-related work. The other recommendations focussed on showing the importance of translation, the role of competent language services and intercultural communication and the improvement of language services and intercultural communication. These two recommendations will educate the general public and decision makers as we currently live in a globalised and diverse society, whether with cultures or spoken languages, on the importance of language and culture to improve the quality of intercultural communication in crises situations/settings and strengthen and speed up communication between countries and communities.

Moving into the following question "Have you volunteered to translate anything about Covid-19?", the data collected is from 135 of 150 respondents and only 27 have volunteered offering and providing translations services to translate anything about Covid-19. The majority of the respondents that volunteered are females and are independent language providers or freelancer translators. The age group goes from 20 to 70 years old.

Table 12. The number of participants that volunteered to translate during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Number of participants that have volunteered to translate Covid-19-related work

	Female	Male	Total
Volunteered	22	5	27

Those who volunteer to help the response to the Covid-19 share their intercultural communicative competence, the multilingual repertoires, the social resources and the humanitarian spirit (Zhang & Wu, 2020).

The question “Have you ever provided any translation services?” was meant to eliminate those who never provided a translation or language service and from the 135 respondents, only 116 approximately 85% moved to the next section. Having 20 from the 136 of the respondents submitted the form at this stage.

The following questions will be about the opinion, perceptions and insights from 116 respondents. The first question was dedicated to “Which difficulties did you have to face in the course of your translation practice either in general or Covid-19-related?” Table 13 and Table 14 has all of the answers collected from the 116 respondents; however, it was divided since some of the answers mentioned more than one difficulty. The numbers on Table 13 and Table 14 does not represent 116 participants but represent all answers given by the participants and the different difficulties.

Table 13. Part 1 – Difficulties felt in the course of translation practice in general.

Which difficulties did you have to face in the course of your translation practice either in general?	
Rates negotiation (low rates)	16
No difficulties	15
N/A – No answer	14
The role of translator and work being undervalued	7
Tight deadlines – unrealistic due dates	3

Lack of affordable tools to assist the translation process	3
Reviewing low quality machine translation or drafts	2

There seems to be a misunderstanding from some respondents as they interpreted difficulties as problems during the pandemic of the Covid-19 or explained their answers given to other questions. From the 116 respondents, 14 have a blank answer and 15 had no difficulties in the course of their translation practice either in general or Covid-19 related.

Table 14. Part 2 – Difficulties felt in the course of translation practice Covid-19 related.

Which difficulties did you have to face in the course of your translation practice Covid-19-related?	
New terminology, vocabulary	23
Less work during the Covid-19 pandemic	22
Difficulty in communication	11
Decrease in productivity while working from home	4
More workloads during the Covid-19 pandemic	3
Late payments	3
Lack of specialised training for new fields as “Covid-19”	2

Overall, one of the most difficulties the participants faced in the course of their translation practice was the pay rate. While most of the professions based on time, effort and expertise have established their hourly rates or market-value, many translators and freelance translators have their time, effort and expertise based on cents per word. The payment cents per word, according to the participants, were lower to what it should be. This not only shows how these translators or interpreters are treated and paid but also how translations are handled by agencies and translation commissioners (Darwish, 2020). One of the participants, a

freelancer translator, revealed having experienced lower pay rates than usual from translation offices and agencies. While other participants revealed a late payment to their clients due to financial and economic issues or a lower rate because the pandemic affected everyone financially and translators are obligated to lower their prices. Two participants revealed that some agencies emailed the linguists telling them they were reducing their rates due to the pandemic, whereas others tried to negotiate lower rates with the translators or interpreters. Another difficulty is the role of translator and work being undervalued as many assume that it is a side hustle and not a job, being underpaid many times, and in many countries, there is lack of legal protection for this profession. For other difficulties related to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ones with most respondents are the new terminology and vocabulary, fewer work opportunities and the difficulty to communicate, either by lack of instructions, difficulty comprehending each other or lack of an intermediary agent, among others. One example given by a respondent on the difficulty in communication was that certain clients insisted on in-person meetings, as they felt they could not communicate well through a screen; however, there were violations regarding the mask and distancing policy.

The following question was: “Have you done specialised training and/or guidance to work as a translator?”. The majority, approximately 66% that corresponds to 77 respondents, answered “Yes”, while 39 respondents answered “No”. The next question was “Which one?” and 74 respondents answered it.

Table 15. Specialised training and/or guidance to work as a Translator.

Specialised training and/or guidance to work as a Translator	
Higher Education Degree in Translation and Interpretation	44
Professional Development training	5
Specialised training in Literary Translation	4
Specialised training in Subtitling	4
Specialised training with Machine Translation	3

Specialised training in Court interpreting and translation	3
Specialised training in Technical Translation	3
Would be better but not 100% necessary	3
Specialised training in Web Localization and Localization	2
Specialised training in Finance Translation	2
Specialised training in Project Management	2
Online translator course	2
Internships	2
In-house Training	2
Courses in Editing, Proofreading, Creative and Business Training	1
Training with CAT Tools	1
Specialised training in Medical Translation	1

Observing Table 15, most of the participants – corresponding with 44 respondents – had a higher education degree (Bachelor, Master or Postgraduate) in Translation and Interpretation Studies. The majority of the respondents had more than one specialised training and three participants answered that a specialised training or guidance is not 100% necessary in the course of their translation practice but would be good to have. One respondent said:

“I never really felt the need for it training or guidance, but the more time I spend with the translation community the more I feel like I wish I had had some when starting out... then again, the course I am currently doing does not provide the type of guidance I wish I had had (regarding pricing, dealing with customers, practical translation tips as opposed to theoretical scenarios in which there is no internet and no other people

to ask for help... so I think maybe even if you do get specialised training, it isn't necessarily the training you will need).”

For two respondents, the internship was a way to have experience in learning new skills.

The following question is “Did you feel the need for specialised training or guidance?” We had 35 respondents answering “No” and 81 respondents answering “Yes”. This corresponds to 70% of the participants needing a specialised training or guidance in the course of their translation practice either in general or Covid-19-related. It is common among independent professionals to keep learning and gain expertise in their work fields.

Table 16. Work situation of the participants.

Work situation of the participants			
	Female	Male	Total
Freelancer	66	12	78
Student	19	2	21
In-house translator	10	1	11
Not a translator	2	1	3
Agency	1	-	1
Retired	1	-	1
Crowdsourcing	1	-	1
			116
Additional information about the participants			
Volunteered	22	5	27
Student + Freelancer	4	-	4
	77		

Other	3	1	4
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Observing Table 16, the majority of translators work as freelancers, corresponding to 78 of the respondents. Most of the participants are females, and most of them work as freelancers. There are 21 students who presumably provided a translation or language service during the course of their studies and four students are also freelancers. For 11 respondents, they work as an in-house translator and one in an agency. One of the participants was already retired but used to work as a professional translator.

Table 17. How long have you been a translator?

How long have you been a translator?	
N/A – No answer	3
For a while	1
Less than a year	3
From one to two years	8
From three to four years	11
From five to six years	13
From seven to eight years	9
From nine to ten years	4
More than ten years	17
More than twenty years	16
More than thirty years	16
	Total
	103

On Table 17, some of the answers came from students, professors among others. From the 116 respondents, only 103 worked as a translator or interpreter. The majority of the respondents, about 49 participants, worked more than ten years as a translator, 17 respondents for more than ten years, 16 for more than twenty years and 16 for more than thirty years. In the next frequent answers are the categories from three to four years and five to six with 24 participants in total.

The question “Could you share any aspect of your experience as a translator working during the Covid-19 pandemic?” will help understand the problems that a translator might have faced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 18. The overall experience of translators about the Covid-19 pandemic.

Could you share any aspect of your experience as a translator working during the Covid-19 pandemic?	
It was the same as before	31
N/A – No answer	21
More workloads	16
Finding a job due to market being more volatile and unpredictable	11
Less work	8
Home-schooling and working from home were exhausting	6
Affected my mental health	6
Pay rates	5
Harder to work from home	4
Didn't work during this time	4
Needed more glossaries and terminologies about this new field	2

Was required to translate even not being a translator	1
Late payments	1
Total	116

Observing Table 18, from the 116 respondents, 21 left a blank answer and 31 revealed to be the same as before, having little to no change to their daily life and work day. For others they had more workloads, for instance, there was an increase in written assignments over interpreting jobs, or accepting more work than what could be normally handled fearing there would not be any work in the future. For eight participants, there were fewer projects or work offers and the majority of the ones they received were Covid-19-related. One of the participants mentioned being a literary translator and in 2020 publishers seemed reluctant to commission translations. For 11 respondents, it was difficult to find a job because of the market being volatile and unpredictable. However, the explanation for this is that unlike most professions, the translation and interpretation does not have a career structure in the profession, implicating that translation and interpretation have a need to make a name for oneself individually in order to survive in the market (Katan, 2009). For six respondents, the double burden because of home-schooling their children and trying to survive professionally increased during the lockdowns of their countries, forcing some to give up their full-time jobs and organise to a more flexible schedule. The volume of information to be translated on Covid-19 was increasing over time since the beginning of this virus when it was first detected (Way, et al., 2020). Many countries, organisations and companies relied on professional translation and volunteers.

The following questions will help to understand which tools have been used to assist during the process of translating Covid-19-related topics for the 60 respondents, from the 150 respondents, that answered “Yes” to the question “Did you translate anything about Covid-19?”. Table 19 offers a view of all languages that the respondents have worked for translations on Covid-19.

Table 19. The languages that respondents have worked on for Covid-19 content.

Languages that the respondents have worked with:			
English	57	Korean	1
French	27	Bulgarian	1
Spanish	16	Catalan	1
German	14	Danish	1
Portuguese	13	Indonesian	1
Italian	8	Romanian	1
Dutch	7		
Russian	5		
Chinese	2		
Swedish	2		

Observing the information in Table 19, English is one of the most used languages followed by French and Spanish. Most of the language’s pairs have a language and one more different language, whereas there is a minority with English and more than three or five languages. For example: English to French-German-Italian-Spanish or Dutch-English-French-Spanish.

Foremost, the following questions intended to understand which technologies were used to assist participants: “Did you use machine translation to support you?”, “Which machine translation service did you use?”, “Was the machine translation helpful?”, “Would you provide some reasons why it was helpful?” and “Have you used glossaries or translation memories?”. The first question “Did you use machine translation to support you?” 36

respondents answered “no” and 24 respondents answered “yes”. As for “Which machine translation services did you use?” Table 20 reveals the answers provided by the respondents.

Table 20. Machine translation used by the respondents.

Machine translation services	
DeepL	15
Google Translate	9
E-translation	1
Memsources	1
Smartling	1
Bing	0
Other computer-aided translation (CAT)	
SDL Trados Studio	2
Matecat	1
Smartcat	1
MemoQ	1

36 of respondents did not use the machine translation for the translation work about Covid-19 they have done. For those who have used it, the most used machine translation system is DeepL. In crises scenarios there have been uses of automatic translation services being part of a rapid-response infrastructure (Way, et al., 2020). Usually, a translator assisted by the software finds a decrease in the time invested in the process of translation (Bowker & Fisher, 2010). One of the questions “Was the machine translation helpful?” had 24 respondents answering “Yes”, four answering “No” and 32 answering "I didn't use it".

The next one was “Would you provide some reasons why it was helpful?”. The explanation given why it was helpful: (i) gave the general idea of the subject or a decent first draft; (ii) helps with consistency (if there was a doubt of a specific term or a need for synonyms, for example, the machine translation could aid); (iii) delivered helpful translations; and (iv) less typing and speeds the translation process. Other respondents added the Machine Translation was not ready to replace translations made by humans. While others added that they did not use the machine translation because terms and jargons are not translated correctly by these instruments, and it gives a very poor first draft, for example, one respondent said the Dutch MT was poor and even worse than other languages.

As for “Have you used glossaries or translation memories?”. A Translation Memory is a tool that allows to store, consult and reuse previously translated texts and are typically integrated with terminology, whereas the translator can customise terms records with various fields (Bowker & Fisher, 2010). The majority, approximately 87% of the respondents (52 respondents) answered “Yes”. The computer-aided-translation affects the status of translations, their remuneration (since clients may ask to pay less) and intellectual property rights (Bowker & Fisher, 2010), and that might be the explanation for the 8 respondents that answered “No”. Having in mind the work done about or for the Covid-19, the question was “Was it an urgent request?”. Around 58% of the respondents answered “Yes” while 42% answered “No”. This translates into 35 respondents having a shorter deadline to deliver the work than 25 respondents who had more time to dedicate to the work. The following in our survey was: “Did you have time to edit and proofread it?”. The vast majority answered “Yes” that they had time to edit and proofread the work before delivering it. Whereas six of the participants answered “No”.

The last question “Was it more demanding?”, if the answer was “Yes”, the following and last question would be “If you found it more demanding, what was the reason?”. For 13 respondents, this work about the Covid-19 contents was more demanding some of the reasons are medical terms, new vocabulary, the need to be more accurate, extremely short deadline and ongoing update of the original document, the amount of work was overwhelming in the beginning, and terminologies regarding specific metrics of infection differ between cultures.

5.1.4. Discussion of the results

The objective of this dissertation is to understand multilingualism in relation to translation, especially regarding Covid-19 pandemics. The number of collected responses was relatively low, the questionnaire with 150 answers provided a limited sample, and should be regarded as a glimpse into the complex holistic system of translation during the pandemics. Even so, it contributes to understanding and recognising some problems or misconceptions related to translation and multilingualism and in a health outbreak such as the Covid-19 pandemic, with the batch of data collected offering a window into the challenges that the translators have faced and are facing.

The qualitative data will aid in having more detailed information and validate the hypotheses. For the hypotheses made in this research project for the questionnaire:

H1: Distinct bilingual and multilingual actors, regardless of their professional skills, work as translators, even though they are not qualified as such.

H2: Multilingual actors, especially professional translators, were essential during the health outbreak of Covid-19.

H3: The working conditions during the pandemic deteriorated for all the actors involved.

Observing the poll of participants, the voluntary participation of the 150 respondents has attracted a higher proportion (Tabata-Sandom, Nishikawa, & Ishii, 2020) of freelancer translators or independent professional translators, professional interpreters and students. The majority of the respondents have a higher education degree or are completing one.

When it comes to education, first starting with school qualifications – referring to the Primary, Secondary and Higher Education – one participant only has primary education²⁰; fourteen participants have secondary education. Fifty-five participants had a bachelor or an equivalent, while sixty-five participants had a Master or an equivalent, eight participants had a postgraduate course or an equivalent whereas seven participants had a doctoral or equivalent. For some participants they are concluding their Higher Education degree. The

²⁰ The participant with only primary education is an adult.

majority of the participants, approximately 126 participants, were inserted into a monolingual community and context for the first years of their life, whereas nine participants were raised in a bilingual community and context learning two languages from a young age. Regarding language pairs, with nine monolinguals, sixty-seven bilinguals and seventy-four multilinguals. As for the languages learned at home, school and through self-education, the majority had the opportunity to learn more than one language during their education at school. However, even when learning two languages at school, one of them becomes more dominant while the other gets slowly forgotten. The most common languages among the participants are the modern languages such as English, French, German, Spanish, among others. On a similar note, the participants that learned more than one language at home, had those languages considered as a language pair. Adding the new language learnt through education, this individual has a higher chance of keeping working on their languages pairs and becoming a multilingual.

The information acquired through the questionnaire about the Covid-19 revealed the public health recommendation messages or guidelines strategies was available in their languages for 146 respondents and the information was always accessible for 135 respondents. When it comes to the public health recommendation messages or guidelines strategies in different languages, many countries opted for one or two *lingua franca* (as it was the case in many countries English and Mandarin) and the local or native language of the country. In some countries it was not enough, and it lacked information for the peripheral languages. For 116 respondents they had the information available in more than one language. However, for 34 respondents the information was not available in several languages. As a way to help spread more awareness about the virus and decrease the number of infections by teaching their audience the internet and the *online* world played an important role, while the majority, corresponding to 141 respondents, have seen the information in several languages online, nine of the participants have not. Some of the insights revealed during the Covid-19 pandemic were that some countries had a better answer in dealing with the virus than others. The ones with more strict rules of entering and leaving the country with mandatory quarantine dealt better with the number of cases. However, for disabled individuals, as in the case of one of the participants of the survey with mobility problems,

there were more problems as they lost some support from caretakers, for example and cannot leave their home without a wheelchair.

For the first hypotheses made in this research project for the questionnaire – distinct bilingual and multilingual actors, regardless of their professional skills, work as translators, even though they are not qualified as such – the data collected from the survey validate this information. This reality can be a little difficult to analyse since the profession is unregulated in many countries, anyone with the knowledge of two languages can be a translator or interpreter (Katan, 2009). One respondent mentioned in one of their answers “But these bilinguals/multilinguals must have a degree to translate this kind of sensitive information. Being bilingual does not mean you are a translator.”. On Table 15, observing the data collected, most of the participants – corresponding with 44 respondents – had a Higher Education degree (Bachelor, Master or Postgraduate) in Translation and Interpretation Studies; however, 39 respondents affirmed not having any specialised training or guidance to work as a Translator or Interpreter.

The professionals felt the need to protect their standards because of the influx of unqualified Translators and Interpreters onto the market. The European Language Industry Survey²¹ from 2020 before and after the Covid-19 provided some insight about the language service industry and the professionals. The insight they have about independent professionals’ translators or interpreters is provided by the questionnaire run by FIT Europe. In the language industry the interpretation was the one most affected, followed by small translation companies and independent professionals. Some of the interpreters had to adapt and diversify their services to translation and remote interpreting. The majority of Translators and Interpreters are equipped for remote working.

For the second hypothesis – multilingual actors, especially professional translators, were essential during the health outbreak of Covid-19 – the data collected from the

²¹ The information from the European Language Industry Survey 2020 was retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/2020_language_industry_survey_report.pdf on 15 of August of 2021.

questionnaire shows that 60 respondents from 150 have translated something about the Covid-19. Some of the respondents revealed having to interpret doctor's appointments but never related to the Covid-19 due to the risk of contamination. Other said that they translated documents about SARS-CoV-2 testing and another one translated a lot of companies and tourist information on Covid-19 protections measures. Two respondents shared having joined volunteer groups of translators to help translate information Covid-19-related and took part in initiatives from Translators Without Borders, among others. This information validates that multilingual actors, and professional translators were indispensable during the health outbreak of Covid-19.

For the third hypothesis – the working conditions during the pandemic deteriorated for all the actors involved – the data collected from this questionnaire revealed that during the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the majority of industries and put a strain on people's lives throughout almost every aspect of it. Not only have the daily lives changed, but households have become tense, and as the working conditions declined the workloads increased being difficult to cope with. Nonetheless, the pandemic heavily impacted on everyone's mental health, one way to fight it could be psychologists and/or courses (Masselink, 2020). Some students and professionals said that the productivity dropped and the workload increased. A few of the respondents mentioned the burden of home-schooling and working at home caused them to be mentally exhausted being forced to leave their full-time remote job and having a more flexible schedule or even a part-time remote job. For professional and non-professional translators and interpreters, the stressful workload and the loss of key clients affected their wellbeing and performance (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020).

Undesirably, this health outbreak reinforced the precariousness of the freelance situation – more independent professionals than ever combine work as an employee with their freelance translation/interpreting work or think about diversifying their income streams. Moreover, the independent professionals that answered the questionnaires intended to take up other activities to diversify earnings, having to rely on other income streams because they aren't earning enough, even considering online teaching classes. One respondent said that the state provisions were uneven across Europe in terms of accident or illness.

This crisis situation generated more competition, keeping building their existing expertise, increased rates, remote work, cloud-based management, need for more reliable terminologies and glossaries, pressure for lower payments and tight deadlines. This contributed to some stress for independent translators and interpreters in areas such as time management, rushed deliveries and tight deadlines and difficulty in propositioning themselves in the market, among others. Furthermore, to the translators and interpreters that wish to have more work-life balance, it is essential to keep contact and network with friends and family to combat loneliness, reject short deadlines, set more boundaries and be stricter or assertive and improve negotiation skills, among others.

Overall, the data collected from the questionnaire revealed the precariousness within the communities of translators or interpreters that worsened with the pandemic. In a certain way, the precariousness is associated with the lower pay rates sometimes viewed as renegotiable rather than fixed. Unfortunately, in this area of work, the work flow can be unstable, without regular payments, or access to social insurance and pension plans. Many translators and interpreters have to deal with short and tight deadlines, unrealistic for the amount of work. In addition, the data showed the importance of translation and multilingualism, especially in cross-cultural communication. One answer precisely said “being an absolute necessity to be multilingual in places with multicultural diversity.” This sentence shows the importance of multilingualism in our daily lives, and for many it is beginning to be part of their own identity and culture.

One of the main problems is the communication between layers in the process is very poor because of the content added by people who have no knowledge of the language, then sent out without a language speaker checking to see the editing, typesetting, formatting, among others. This affects the clarity of the messages. Hiring more translators and/or interpreters with a broader set of language skills so that they can reach a wider population would be a viable solution. Furthermore, the promotion of multilingualism contributes for better preparation in the emergency services not only for a health outbreak but also for the daily day.

This questionnaire, in some sense, is multidisciplinary since the Translation Studies takes an interdisciplinary approach on all fronts. It is possible to acknowledge from a limited

sample some of the problems that might exist with the translators or interpreters, communities and society. The pandemic of the Covid-19 is a perfect example of the importance of Translation and Multilingualism. Translation is evidently crucial in global situations like war and natural disasters, and therefore during a global pandemic too (Masselink, 2020) and without the Multilingualism and translators and interpreters, the communication that needed to be accurate, precise and delivered as soon as possible would have been affected.

6. Chapter 6: Conclusions and future work

This study investigated Multilingualism and Translation through a study case with an online questionnaire about the multilingual actors and their involvement during the pandemic of Covid-19. The central issue of this dissertation thesis is focused on the role of the multilingual actor (s) in translation. It is essential that translators, interpreters, volunteers, among others are given a voice and are understood in order to ensure adequate international communication (Masselink, 2020). Equally important, this work provided a theoretical look at translation and bilingualism and multilingualism focusing on the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a gap in translation research, since, to the best of our knowledge, there was no research about the involvement of multilingual actors in translation during the pandemic of the Covid-19 as of the time of writing this work.

Throughout the time, communication has always been essential; however, to simplify the exchange of information between two different languages, a translator or interpreter is needed. Moreover, during a crisis setting such as natural disasters (tsunamis, floods, earthquakes, among others), wars or even a global pandemic, there is an imperative need to have the right and reliable information – translation is evidently crucial. The role of multilingual actors needs to be recognised, explored and developed into these settings. The results of the survey show that there is little to non-existent specialised training or guidance for this type of situation. Sometimes the number of certified translators or interpreters is not enough, having to rely on bilingual and multilingual natives to support spreading the right information as soon as possible. It is understood that bilingual or multilingual individuals need more skills than being proficient in two languages to deliver a clear and easy to understand message and to become good translators (Ciosmak, 2019). Both human and machine language expertise needs to be invested and prepared so they can be more useful in a crisis (McCulloch, 2020). Therefore, a translator is a profession and implies a thorough knowledge of the subject matter (Ciosmak, 2019).

The Covid-19 pandemic was the first one where humanity had an understanding of diseases and hygiene contributing to act fast and preparing strategies that would stop the transmission of the virus (McCulloch, 2020). With the internet it was a faster way to share and provide the right and reliable information because of the network of linguistic care that

aided translation to the majority of languages, including peripheral languages. Moreover, translators and interpreters are an essential professional category in times of a pandemic, as they simplify the exchange of information between governments, researchers and the public. In addition, translators due to their multilingual competences, can work as mediators in multilingual written environments (Ciosmak, 2019). However, in some occasions, professional translators and interpreters are simply not available, bilinguals and people with multilingual competence will volunteer to translate and interpret when required. In humanitarian crisis and emergency situations areas such as volunteer translation, interpreting, and localisation are equally active and important (Folaron, 2010).

During the Covid-19 pandemic there was a global demand for content to be translated and localized into multiple languages (Folaron, 2010), a race against time and misinformation circling in the internet and deriving from unreliable sources. However, we will only be able to see the real impact of Covid-19 a few years later.

The role of multilingualism and translation is essential in any circumstances, from daily life to an emergency response. Multilingualism makes sure from the communities, minorities to the *lingua franca*, peripheral languages or local languages are heard while translation provides the communication. Without multilingualism it would not be possible to have cross-cultural communication. In the questionnaire made solely for this dissertation, there was a question “In times of crisis, as we are experiencing at the moment with Covid-19, do you think bilinguals/multilinguals are necessary?” the respondent had to answer “Yes” or “No” and explain why. From the answers, one can assume that a multilingual individual is obliged to provide aid either in translation or interpretation solely because this individual has knowledge in more than one language, even if one does not have the training or education needed to perform such tasks. For an individual to work as a translator or interpreter, he/she should have an education which would teach the knowledge necessary in his/her or their expertise and training to prepare for any type of situation where their work could be required.

The data obtained through the questionnaire revealed precariousness and instabilities in the community of translators, the renegotiable pay rates, tight and unrealistic deadlines for the amount of work got worse during the pandemic. Many bilinguals and multilinguals volunteered to translate Covid-19-related information because they felt they could be useful

for society this way. In addition, the data showed the importance of translation and multilingualism, especially in cross-cultural communication. The multilingual actors and translators in pandemic contexts were essential in helping translate information from medical instructions of medical instruments, for instance ventilators, to guidelines for the tourism. Conversely, the globalised multilingualism has helped to increase the interest in Translation Studies (Cronin, 2010).

In times of a global pandemic, the majority of translators work as freelancers (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020), as shown by the survey conducted. In every sector, they have been affected economically and mentally (Hubscher-Davidson, 2020). In other words, the pandemic of the Covid-19 uncovered the unmet requirements for communication and equity, even in health and medical sectors (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). One of the ways to combat this unmet equity and communication would be teaching and assessing the linguistic and cultural communication skills as a strategy to improve language and culturally appropriate care for minorities, both during and after the pandemic (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). Besides, all of the previous research has been conducted in situations of war or natural disaster. Therefore, the psychological effects may be expected to be rather different and need to be handled differently. The side effects of the pandemic in the industries and their respective markets can go for longer than we can think of (Masselink, 2020).

Nowadays, there are applications and websites with maps prepared for bushfires and floods, with a simple structure and guidelines that can be translated. One idea which has been suggested by one of the participants of the survey from Australia is to adapt these applications and websites that already have warnings for floods, electricity outages, storms, fires to add places in lockdown, places for testing and vaccines. It would be an effective way to combat the Covid-19 and ensure a part of the population, even if someone does not speak the local language has the possibility to access actual information in their language or a *lingua franca*.

Translation and multilingualism are connected. If we consider translation as the replacement of one language for another and multilingualism the co-presence of two or more languages in an individual or society (Meylaerts, 2010), there is clearly an established connection between these two terms showing multilingualism and translation are crucial for globalization and communication. Thereafter, this disease outbreak provided an opportunity

for learning (Ortega, Martínez, & Diamond, 2020). This work should help understand the importance of this theme for the society and the translation profession. For future research, we intend to focus on more fine-tuned questions taking into account the multilingualism, translation and the pandemic of Covid-19 some suggestions are:

- (i) information about Covid-19 vaccines: if the information about it was obtainable to everyone even minorities (for example, translated to other languages);
- (ii) the mental health impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in our societies;
- (iii) the precariousness in Translation;
- (iv) the role of translation in recovery, reconstruction, and preparation phases (disaster settings, health outbreaks);
- (v) communities of practice of translators;
- (vi) the effectiveness of urgent public health messaging strategies in linguistic minority communities.

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8. Chapter 8: Appendix

8.1. Structure of the questionnaire

1. Multilingualism and Translation
2. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a regulation in EU law on data protection and privacy in the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA). The information shared here will be collected anonymously and merely for statistical purposes. The survey answers will be deleted by December 2021. Do you authorise me to collect or reuse your personal information for the purpose of this dissertation exclusively?
3. Age
4. Gender
5. Education
6. In which country do you live?
7. What is your mother tongue?
8. What are your language pairs?
9. Which languages have you learned at home?
10. Which languages have you learned at school?
11. Which languages have you learned alone (self-education)?
12. Have you learned a language by moving abroad?
13. The language you had opportunity to learn
14. Have you seen information about Covid-19 available in your language?
15. Was the information on your language always available?
16. Have you seen information about Covid-19 prevention in several languages in your country?
17. Have you seen information about Covid-19 prevention in several languages online?
18. In which languages have you seen the information about Covid-19 prevention?
19. In times of crisis, as we are experiencing at the moment with Covid-19, do you think bilinguals/multilinguals are necessary?

20. Why?
21. Could you share any aspect of your experience during the Covid-19 pandemic?
22. Have you ever translated?
23. What recommendations would you give to improve the quality of intercultural communication in crises situation/settings?
24. Have you volunteered to translate anything about Covid-19?
25. Have you ever provided any translation services?
26. Which difficulties did you have to face in the course of your translation practice either in general or Covid-19-related?
27. Have you done specialised training and/or guidance to work as a Translator?
28. Which one?
29. Did you feel the need for specialised training and/or guidance?
30. Which of the following best describes your work situation?
31. How long have you been a translator?
32. Could you share any aspect of your experience as a translator working during the Covid-19 pandemic?
33. Did you translate anything about Covid-19?
34. Which languages have you worked with?
35. Did you use machine translation to support you?
36. Which translating system did you use?
37. Was the machine translation helpful?
38. Would you provide some reasons why it was helpful?
39. Have you used glossaries or translation memories?
40. Was it an urgent request?
41. Did you have time to edit and proofread it?
42. Was it more demanding?
43. If you found it more demanding, what was the reason?