

# MTI Students' Awareness of Professional Ethics Reflected in Interpreting Practice Reports --A Case Study of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

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***Abstract:** MTI students' awareness of professional ethics is analyzed by adopting bibliometric and text analysis approaches to interpreting practice reports of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) in 2013-2016, in particular, how the student interpreters handled information concerning the clients' privacy and whether they gained informed consent for recording and using the data. It is found that the majority of the reports did not voluntarily obey such ethics. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance professional ethics education of translator and interpreter trainees from such aspects as MTI curriculum design, textbook compilation, teaching, interpreting accreditation tests and students' translation and interpreting practices.*

***Keywords:** interpreting practice report; professional ethics; confidentiality; informed consent*

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of globalization and the translation industry, Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI), a professional degree aiming at training "high level, practical and professional" translators and interpreters was initiated in China since 2007. As of 2018, a total of 249 universities and colleges have been granted the right to run MTI programs. As MTI students are expected to become professional translators and interpreters after graduation, their awareness of professional ethics is an important indicator of their professional training and to some extent, impacts on their future professional performance. However, education of professional ethics has not received due attention in MTI education institutions, with only very few of which offering professional ethics as an independent course in their curricula (Wen & Mu 2009; Chen 2011)

In order to test MTI students' awareness of professional ethics, the author has chosen to analyze MTI students' interpreting practice reports, which serve as an essential component of their degrees. The motivation is based on two considerations. On the one hand, the interpreting reports come from students' authentic interpreting activities. On the other hand, the way they handle such matters as gaining their clients' "informed consent" to record the interpreting activities and handling privacy information, including the clients' names, organizations and businesses, can well reflect their awareness of professional ethics or the lack of it. If students manage to take these things seriously and handle them properly, they are ethically ready for their professional careers; otherwise, they need more ethics training even after they become professional interpreters. Gaining "informed consent" and handling privacy information have been selected as the focus of discussion as both are important components of confidentiality, one of the generally agreed ethical rules that interpreters should abide by.

As there are so many MTI students graduating each year all over China, it would be beyond the scope of this study to include all of them. Therefore, it is decided that students of Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (GDUFS) will serve as the research subjects for the following reasons.

First, established in 1965, GDUFS is one of the leading foreign languages universities in

China. In its over 50 years' history, it has cultivated numerous translators and interpreters in different language pairs for various sectors and at different levels.

Second, it is the first one in the country to establish a translation and interpreting (T&I) department and one of the few member institutions of CIUTI in China. Its T&I students have the chance to be interns at the United Nations. It is also one of the first 15 institutions granted in 2007 by the Academic Degree Committee under the State Council of the People's Republic of China to run MTI Programs. Now it has a complete range of degrees of T&I from bachelors to PhDs. It serves as headquarters of the National MTI Teaching Advisory Committee. So the MTI education at GDUFS can somewhat represent or reveal the status quo of the whole country.

Third, as a teacher at GDUFS, the author can conveniently access MTI teachers and students during the research process for clarification and confirmation of ideas and statistics.

The following sections are arranged this way: Section Two, a brief review of professional ethics for translators and interpreters and research into it; Section Three, research methodology, including MTI programs of GDUFS, research subjects and data collection; Section Four, findings; Section Five, discussions; and Section Six, conclusion and suggestions for further studies.

## **2. Professional ethics for translators and interpreters and previous research into it**

According to Setton & Prunč (2015:144),

*Ethics is a branch of moral philosophy that seeks to establish principles of fairness or justice (or right and wrong behavior). Professional ethics...are considered a hallmark of its professional status, alongside mastery of the relevant skills and knowledge and the ability to apply them in real-life situations.*

Different professional organizations such as AIIC(2012), AUSIT(2012), AVLIC(2000), CHIA(2002), and NATTI(2000), to name just a few, have formulated different ethical rules for interpreters and translators. For example, AIIC<sup>i</sup> stipulates that “integrity, professionalism and confidentiality” are the basic rules for all interpreters. *AUSIT Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct*<sup>ii</sup> lays down nine general principles of ethics and conduct, i.e., professional conduct, confidentiality, competence, impartiality, accuracy, clarity of role boundaries, maintaining professional relationships, professional development, and professional solidarity. Large numbers of scholars have also offered their understandings of professional ethics for interpreters. Hale (2007: 108), for example, by reviewing the codes of conduct for interpreters of 16 countries, comes up with the most frequently listed principles of ethics, namely, confidentiality, accuracy, impartiality/conflict of interest, professional development, accountability/responsibility for one's own performance, role definition, professional solidarity and working conditions.

The number and contents of rules and principles of ethics vary from institution to institution and from scholar to scholar. However, confidentiality is universally recognized as one of the most important rules of ethics for interpreters across all sectors and settings (Gonzalez *et al* 1991:474; Setton & Prunč 2015:146). The emphasis placed on confidentiality reveals that this is a vulnerable field that is subject to legal constraints (such as obligation to report criminal activity) or to a higher moral imperative (such as to save lives) (Setton &

Prunč 2015:146).

Because of the importance of professional ethics for translators and interpreters, research on it is gaining increasing popularity in the academic circle (e.g. Angelelli *et al* 2007; Arrojo 2005; Baker & Maier 2011; Berman & Wood 2005; Bromberg & Jesionowski 2010; Corsellis 2005; Goodwin 2010; Hale 2007; Inghilleri 2012; Janzen & Korpinski 2005; Kaufert & Putsch 1997; Koskinen 2000; Lane-Mercier 1997; Larkosh 2004; Lipkin 2010; Mikkelsen 2000; Rudvin 2007; Venuti 1995 & 1998), which deal with vast related topics. China also sees a similar scenario. As of Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018, when the author used the title searches with “翻译伦理” (translation ethics), “口译伦理”(interpreting ethics), “译者伦理” (translator ethics) and “译员伦理”(interpreter ethics) on China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI)<sup>1</sup>, there were 392, 2, 32 and 2 returns respectively, adding up to 436 returns in total. These papers and projects cover a wide range of topics, such as definitions of translation ethics, reviews of translation ethics research in China and abroad, dimensions of translation ethics, and reviews of translations of different genres from an ethical perspective.

In contrast, education of professional ethics for translators and interpreters is yet to receive more attention, with varying degrees of importance attached to it from institution to institution and from country to country. For example, the European Master’s in Conference Interpreting lists professional ethics in its core curriculum (Niska 2005:49); codes of ethics is one of the five areas of training for interpreters in the public services (Corsellis 2005:158), of which observing confidentiality is one of the core requirements (ibid: 166). On the other hand, education of professional ethics for translators and interpreters remains largely ignored in the Chinese context (Wen & Mu 2009; Chen 2011).

In addition, little literature has been devoted to ethical issues with student interpreters. For example, a CNKI search only finds two journal papers dealing with education of T&I ethics (Chen 2011; Yang 2014). Chen (2011) maintains that because of the limited credit hours of MTI programs, it is more realistic to integrate education of professional ethics into existing courses such as Translation History to cultivate students’ awareness of professional ethics. Yang (2014) discusses the necessity to offer ethics education to T&I students. She based her arguments on the relationship between T&I and ethics, as well as the requirements of T&I professionalization on students. Apart from these two papers which argue for the necessity of offering ethics education to T&I students, no other paper has dealt with students’ ethical issues.

The very brief review above offers a solid basis for the current study: the importance of professional ethics for translators and interpreters and undue attention given to ethics education in MTI programs, still less to students’ awareness of professional ethics.

In order to find out how well students are ethically prepared, this paper intends to approach this topic from a new perspective, namely, by looking at MTI students’ interpreting practice reports, and specifically, whether the student writers have abided by the confidentiality rule of gaining “informed consent” for disclosure of information and keeping the parties concerned anonymous, both of which are important indicators of their professionalism. The students’ handling of such matters as whether they informed and obtained (written or oral) consent from the relevant parties to record the interpreting activities and use the subsequent transcripts, and whether they disclosed the names and identities of

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<sup>1</sup> China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI)<sup>1</sup> is the most comprehensive database in China embracing literature of journal articles, Masters’ and Doctoral dissertations, newspaper articles, almanacs, conference proceedings and research-fund projects.

their clients and their affiliations accidentally or deliberately or tried to make them anonymous, can reveal, to some extent, their training of professional ethics or the lack of it.

### **3. Research Methodology**

In this section, first a brief introduction to the MTI programs of GDUFS is offered before the research subjects and data collection methods are explained in detail for a better understanding of the whole picture.

#### *3.1 MTI programs of GDUFS*

GDUFS was among the first 15 institutions granted the right to run MTI programs in 2007. In the first few years, it just enrolled part-time students. But now, all its MTI students are full-time. To be enrolled, candidates have to sit for the National Entrance Examinations for Postgraduate Studies and the reexaminations by GDUFS, the latter of which include both written and oral tests. Except Political Science which is uniformly proposed by the Examination Center of the Ministry of Education, all the other examined subjects are proposed by GDUFS. Anyone who holds a bachelor's degree is eligible to sit for the exams, so MTI students have varied academic backgrounds, including fresh graduates or people with a few years of working experience with a bachelor's degree in foreign languages and literature, translation and interpreting, teacher education, business English, economy, technology, management and journalism, to name just a few. Some have received T&I training during their undergraduate years while others have not.

The MTI programs of GDUFS include the following tracks: conference interpreting, public services interpreting, business translation, legal translation, media translation, and translation and localization management. All the programs are mainly practice-oriented with few theoretical courses in T&I studies, but require students to have translation practices of no fewer than 150,000 words or interpreting exercises of no fewer than 400 hours. During their two years (a maximum of four years) study, MTI students have to complete all the required credits and a degree paper, which will be discussed below later.

The MTI courses are divided into the following types, namely, public courses, 6 credits; degree compulsory courses, 6 credits; specific track compulsory courses, 12 credits; degree elective courses, 16 credits; and internship, 2 credits. Besides, they have to sit for the China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI) Grade II before graduation, but not necessarily with a passing score. Students are required to complete their credits within one to one and a half years, while spending the remaining time writing their degree papers, which can take one of the following forms:

- (1) Internship reports of translation management, including the three important posts as a project manager, a project translator and a project proof-reader, to be written in English with no fewer than 15,000 words.
- (2) Translation or interpreting practice reports, namely, description of the translation or interpreting process, the problems they have encountered and/or the lessons they have learned. Students on the translation track, under the guidance of their supervisors, translate original texts which have never been translated before into or out of Chinese, with the word count of the source texts no fewer than 15,000 Chinese

characters/English words while interpreting students should transcribe no fewer than 15,000 words of their interpreting practice(s) and write a practice report in English of no fewer than 5,000 words.

- (3) Translation or interpreting experiment reports, namely, description of translation or interpreting experiments and findings. Under the guidance of their supervisors, students carry out experiments on certain aspects of T&I, and write an experiment report of no fewer than 15,000 English words. The experiment report should include task description (purpose, subject(s) and means of experiments), task process (hypotheses, variables, working definition(s), selection of respondents, organization of experiment and collection of the experiment data), analyses of experiment results, summary and conclusion of experiment.
- (4) Translation or interpreting survey reports, namely, surveys and analyses of translation and interpreting policies, translation and interpreting industry, and translation and interpreting phenomena. The contents include task description (purpose, subject(s), means of survey, etc.), task process (selection of respondents, organization of survey, collection of survey data), analyses of survey results, and conclusion and suggestions of surveys, with no fewer than 15,000 English words.
- (5) Research papers. Under the guidance of their supervisors, students write research papers on translation or interpreting, with no fewer than 15,000 English words.<sup>iii</sup>

Of the five forms of degree papers, interpreting practice reports are the most popular among the students on the interpreting track while research papers are the least chosen form. One reason is that interpreting practice reports are more closely related to the interpreting sector in that they are based on students' real interpreting activities for real clients. Another reason is that MTI programs are practice-oriented rather than research-oriented so students are encouraged to write practice reports rather than research papers for which they have not been properly trained.

This paper will focus on the interpreting practice reports by MTI students of the Chinese-English language pair at GDUFS. Although there are MTI programs of other language pairs at GDUFS, they are of much smaller scale and thus excluded in this study.

### *3.2 Research subjects and data collection*

The research subjects are interpreting practice reports of MTI students of GDUFS between 2010 and 2016, namely, from the year when the first cohort of MTI students of GDUFS graduated and the year when the latest reports were available on CNKI at the time of writing this paper. The research will follow bibliometric and text-analysis approaches.

In order to find out the number of MTI students of Chinese-English language pair who had written their degree papers in the different forms, the author searched the CNKI for relevant literature by taking the following steps. First, select the Database of Masters' Degree Papers; second, key in the name of the university "广东外语外贸大学"(Guangdong University of Foreign Studies) in the "degree conferring institution" box, and "口译" (interpreting) in the "subject" box, select the starting year "2010" and the ending year "2016", and then click "search". The search hit 323 returns. Papers dealing with other language pairs such as Chinese-Japanese, Chinese-French, and Chinese-German; and those written by Masters of Arts in Translation Studies were manually removed. In the end, a total of 199 papers on interpreting written by MTI students were selected and downloaded. Between 2010 and 2012,

there were no interpreting papers; in 2013, there were 32; in 2014, 53; in 2015, 49; and 2016, 65, consisting of the five required forms mentioned above, the details of which are illustrated in Table 1.

Year	practice reports	Experiment reports	internship reports	Survey reports	Research papers	Total
2013	16 (50%)	5(16%)	0(0%)	9(28%)	2(6%)	32
2014	30(57%)	5(9%)	2(4%)	10(19%)	6(11%)	53
2015 <sup>iv</sup>	29(59%)	5(10%)	3(6%)	3(6%)	9(18%)	49
2016	48(74%)	3(5%)	1(2%)	4(6%)	9(14%)	65
total	123	18	6	26	26	199

Table 1 *MTI Interpreting Papers in 2013-2016, GDUFS*

It is clearly shown in Table 1 that each year the majority of MTI students select practice reports for their graduation papers, and there has been an increasing trend year on year. Of the 199 interpreting papers, 123 are interpreting practice reports, accounting for 61.8%. So analyses of the practice reports can reveal the overall situation of MTI students on the interpreting track.

All these 123 interpreting practice reports have been read thoroughly, with special focus on whether the student interpreters explained the purpose and the subsequent use of recording to their clients, whether they sought to obtain their informed consent for so doing, whether they revealed such privacy information as the clients' names, affiliations, positions, businesses and products.

#### 4. Findings

This section will discuss the findings by close reading of all the interpreting practice reports, including overview of the reports, gaining informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity.

##### 4.1 Overview of the interpreting practice reports

The 123 interpreting practice reports vary greatly in terms of modes of interpreting, importance of events, and level of formality and industries involved. The interpreting practices cover the most common modes of interpreting, namely, liaison interpreting, consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, and whisper interpreting. None is on sign interpreting or interpreting for the blind and hard of hearing, because these are not included in their professional training. Some events are international conferences on education, psychology or social studies; some are lectures, some are business negotiations; some are court interpreting of international suspects of drug-smuggling or illegal immigration; and some are sight-seeing tours in China. They also cover a wide range of sectors, such as education, agriculture, tourism, medicine, electronics, law, machinery, logistics, religion, sports, furniture, TV programs or even videos of automobile reviews. Depending on the formality and contents of events, the degree of confidentiality should vary as well.

#### *4.2 Gaining informed consent*

It is an ethical requirement for interpreters to abide by the confidentiality rule by non-disclosure of any information concerning the interpreting activity to any third party. In case such needs arise, the interpreter should obtain informed consent from the client(s) for such information to be disclosed for whatever purpose, be it personal or academic and the clients retain the right to reject such requests at any point, at the very beginning, during the process or even after completion of the task. The students' use of the interpreting transcripts for writing their degree papers surely violates the confidentiality rule, so it is ethically appropriate to obtain their clients' permission prior to the recording. As student interpreters of GDUFS writing interpreting practice reports are required to discuss issues related to their interpreting activities and attach the transcripts in the Appendix for a comprehensive assessment of their performance, recording is a must for all students who choose this form of degree papers. Therefore, how they handle the recording issue can reveal their awareness of professional ethics and the ethics education they have received.

Analyses of the 123 papers reveal that students' handling of the recordings falls into three types. First, informed consent was gained from the clients. This first type consists of only 9 reports (7.32%), the authors of which mentioned that they had asked their clients for permission to record the interpreting activity. The students simply stated, "With the consent of the client, the interpreting was recorded and transcribed later for detailed analysis" without bothering to describe how they explained the situations to their clients, what the clients' responses were and whether there were any restrictions for the use of such information. Second, the informed consent was neglected and the recording was not mentioned at all. There were 73 such reports (59.35%). The transcripts were just attached in the Appendix without any explanation. Third, the recording was mentioned but not the informed consent. Forty-one reports (33.33%) simply mentioned the transcripts at different locations of the papers, some in the abstract, some in the first chapter about task description and some in the conclusion, and explained the tools for recording (mobile phones or digital voice recorders) and/or the purpose of the transcripts. This last type did not explicate whether the recordings were done with the informed consent of the parties concerned. Instead, they talked about using transcripts for detailed analyses and self-assessment of their interpreting behaviors, processes and/or outputs.

#### *4.3 Confidentiality and anonymity*

Another confidentiality issue in the interpreting practice reports concerns the clients' privacy, such as their names, organizations, positions and businesses. Even for academic purposes such as writing an interpreting practice report to qualify for an academic degree, the parties concerned should remain anonymous lest some harm or losses might be incurred to them.

How did the students perform in terms of confidentiality and anonymity? As the students were required to describe their interpreting tasks, all of them provided very detailed information about their clients and their institutions, differing only in whether the specific names were provided or not.

Of the 123 reports, only 32 (26%) made some technical treatment to the clients' privacy information, such as keeping their clients and their affiliated institutions anonymous,

replacing their names with letters or pseudonyms, or using initials instead of full names. The other 91 reports (74%) gave the full names of their clients and their institutions, together with other information such as their history, business scopes and product ranges. Except one student who mentioned that her client would like to remain anonymous, all the other 122 students gave no reason for disclosing or covering up their clients' names and/or identity. The one student claimed that as there were a lot of business secrets in the business talk, she was determined to omit the technical terms in both the in-text discussion and the transcript. Three other students showed their awareness of professional ethics in the reports. In one report, there is a section entitled "ethics of liaison interpreting", in which the student writer acknowledged the importance of codes of conduct and listed some explicit requirements for interpreters, including, an interpreter should have a thorough understanding of his/her ability, provide high-quality interpreting, know his/her role well, and not disclose information of secrecy. Despite such awareness, this very student made no mention of whether she had obtained permission from her client for recording and provided the full name and detailed information about the client and his institution, all of which are against the confidentiality rule. Another student listed confidentiality and faithfulness as employers' expectations of the interpreter. However, despite her awareness of confidentiality, she disclosed the name of her employer, a very important governmental institution, after all. Still another student also had a section entitled "ethics of the interpreter", in which the responsibilities of an interpreter are listed, but with no mention of confidentiality.

The MTI students' interpreting practice reports suggest that the concept of confidentiality is unknown or irrelevant to the student authors. One student even mentioned that her client, an Italian fashion dealer, was ill-tempered and capricious so that other interpreters just could not stand him and chose to quit halfway instead of staying with him during his trip in China. The student cited this example as one of the various difficulties she had to overcome before and during her interpreting task. Apart from violating the confidentiality rule, this student's case raises another ethical issue, namely, is it appropriate and professional for an interpreter to discuss his/her clients' shortcomings in their back? Apparently, such a concern did not cross her mind.

## **5. Discussions**

From the above analyses, it is found that the students followed closely the requirements of the MTI programs by providing all the necessary information in their reports, revealing that their awareness of professional ethics is not strong enough and needs to be strengthened by more professional ethics education. The majority of students did not bother about explaining the purpose of recording the interpreting activity and gaining "informed consent". Neither did they try to protect the clients' privacy by treating their personal information with anonymity. In the following, some possible reasons for such phenomena will be discussed and some suggestions offered to change the status quo.

There are several possible explanations for the students' purposeful or accidental neglect of ethical rule of confidentiality. First, the students have not received pertinent training of professional ethics during their study at the university, because professional ethics was only offered as an independent course in GDUFS after these students had graduated. In the author's interviews with 6 MTI interpreting teachers of GDUFS, they admitted that they did not discuss such ethical issues with their students either in class or in the students'



interpreting practices. In addition, the teachers themselves often recorded their own interpreting activities without asking for the clients' permission. Without proper guidance from their courses and their teachers, it is no wonder that they had no idea about the ethical rules; neither did they realize that it was deceitful to record the interpreting activities and to disclose the clients' information without prior consent and that it might lead to lawsuits. Of course, judging from the nature of the interpreting tasks, many of them need not be kept secret absolutely. Given the fact that they had never been formally taught during their study to abide by the ethical rules, it was too much to require them to follow them voluntarily, especially if they had never read relevant literature either.

Second, the students lacked relevant academic training. There are two different cases for not mentioning whether they had gained informed consent from the clients. One is that the students recorded the interpreting activities without the knowledge of the parties concerned, because the advances in science and technology make confidentiality even harder to keep. The prevalence of smart phones and digital voice recorders makes recording so much easier and invisible. If practitioners do not warily follow the professional codes of conduct, business secrets are easily leaked out. The other is that the students did gain the consent of their clients for recording, but had no idea that they had to mention it in their reports. In the former case, it is an indication of their lack of professional ethics; and in the latter one, it is their unfamiliarity with relevant academic conventions. As the aim of MTI education is to turn out high-quality, professional and practical translators and interpreters, greater importance has been attached to developing students' practical competences rather than to academic ones, so most of the curricula are practice-oriented rather than research-oriented, and courses of research nature such as academic writing, translation theories and research methodology are not offered to MTI students. This partly explains their violations of the ethical rules.

Third, ethics education remains a field of negligence in MTI education. In the syllabus of MTI education of GDUFs or of China as a whole, such norms as confidentiality, anonymity or informed consent in interpreting practices or subsequent research are not mentioned or emphasized enough. The writing template of interpreting practice report provided by the School of Interpreting and Translation Studies of GDUFs makes no reference of any ethical requirement, though it offers a detailed format of the report, which includes both paratexts and the body of the report. The paratexts consist of a front cover, a title page, an abstract in Chinese and English, acknowledgement, table of contents, list of abbreviations, list of graphs and tables, and transcripts of recording, while the body consists of task description, task preparation, case analysis, conclusions and references. The students took it for granted to record their interpreting activity and to provide information about their clients and their organizations in their interpreting practice reports. Those who decided to keep their clients anonymous or semi-anonymous, by replacing their names with letters or pseudonyms or with some generic terms such as "a foreigner", "three foreign students", "a Thai tourist" or "an Italian client", may have done so involuntarily instead of ethically, as indicated by the fact that none of them explained the reasons for so doing. As all these students have already graduated, we have no way of knowing for sure from their reports whether it is because they were aware of the ethical rule of confidentiality, because their clients had required them to do so, or just because such treatments had been prompted by their impulse.

Fourth, interpreting practice reports, as a new form of degree papers, are still being probed by all MTI institutions in China, with no precedent to follow. Though *A Guide to Writing MTI Dissertations* (Huang, 2012) offers some guidance for writing the different forms of MTI degree papers, it does not touch upon any issues of professional ethics.

Fifth, it reveals the students' lack of critical thinking. They just did what was asked of them rather than thinking independently about the rationality for doing so. This might be explained as: (1) It is a reflection of Chinese culture. Students have been educated to respect rather than challenge authorities since the beginning of their formal education. It is considered inappropriate or rude to question established authorities. As they have been instructed to act in a certain manner, they just do as required. (2) Chinese sense of privacy is quite different from that of the rest of the world. For example, it is quite natural to ask people's age, income or marital status in China, but discussing the same things with people from other countries will be considered an intrusion of their privacy. So the students may just take it for granted to provide the full information about their clients, without realizing that it may be inappropriate.

From the above discussions, it is clear that professional ethics is not followed closely by the student interpreters in both their interpreting activities and their writing of the practice reports. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the MTI education institutions to enhance ethics education of their students, who will become in-house or free-lance translators and interpreters in the T&I market upon graduation. If they cannot follow the professional ethics well, their behaviors will negatively impact on the whole T&I sector. So during their study at the university, the authorities should offer related courses of professional ethics to them and emphasize professional ethics in the practical and academic experiences, so that students know what they should or should not do as maturing translators and/or interpreters.

It is suggested that textbooks on professional ethics be compiled and listed as a required reading of MTI students. In addition, as Baker & Maier have argued, the increased emphasis of accountability has urged translator and interpreter trainers to be more directly and explicitly engaged with the issue of ethics and build it into the curriculum (2011:3). Therefore, it is necessary to integrate professional ethics education into all MTI courses so that students can cultivate their sense of professional ethics and voluntarily abide by it in their practices. Furthermore, the National MTI Advisory Committee can also draw on the practices of Australia and other countries to include professional ethics in the China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters to test interpreters' understanding and conformity of codes of ethics. Last but not least, one should be aware that ethics education is a lifelong process which is far from enough by simple transfer of ethical knowledge.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study is an attempt to look at MTI interpreting students' awareness of professional ethics from a different perspective, i.e. by looking at whether they had obtained informed consent from the clients to record the interpreting activity and how they treated confidentiality issues when dealing with information concerning the clients' names, background, and organizations. The results show that there is much room for improvement in MTI interpreting students' awareness of professional ethics during their interpreting activities and subsequent writing of their practice reports. Hopefully, this research will shed some light on and draw more attention to professional ethics education for MTI students in China. To have a more comprehensive picture of MTI students' awareness of professional ethics, it is suggested that more research methods such as interviews, questionnaires, and class observations be adopted, larger samples investigated and more aspects of professional ethics taken into consideration.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://aiic.net/page/6724/code-of-professional-ethics/lang/1>.

<sup>ii</sup> [https://ausit.org/AUSIT/Documents/Code\\_Of\\_Ethics\\_Full.pdf](https://ausit.org/AUSIT/Documents/Code_Of_Ethics_Full.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> <http://sits.gdufs.edu.cn/info/1018/3594.htm>.

<sup>iv</sup> As the percentages are rounded off, the total of 2014 and 2015 do not add up to 100%.

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