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1. Introduction

In comparison to oral sources, written records have played a very dominant role in the field of historiography, something which is particularly true for translation and interpreting (T&I) studies. When compared to the history of important or simply powerful persons, historiography often relegates the views and fates of individuals into the background. As postcolonial perspectives in particular have shown, what we perceive as history is very often essentially the history of (white) men with power, influence, and nobility, and often presents a reduced perspective of a few people who stand out for their deeds or achievements. Average individuals are dismissed in favour of a hierarchical history that highlights a few prominent personalities. History has mostly been written from the point of view and for the glorification of those who were at the top of the social hierarchy and could afford to have their own historians to write history (and thereby influence its presentation) (Paul & Schoßig 1986: 24).

The real problem, therefore, is that historiography tends to place its focus on the history of a few individuals and their subjective memories and attitudes.

Some authors have argued that this method of approaching historiography is oriented toward more exceptional aspects that can quickly lead to misjudgements and misinterpretations; in German, limiting one's view to only consider that which is put

forward by recognised representatives of a group, the most important figures, the writers considered outstanding, etc. is called the *Höhenkammprinzip* 'high ridge principle' (cf. SINNER 2012a: 47-48, OESTERREICHER 1994: 297). The idea of the *Höhenkammprinzip* certainly overlaps, at least to some extent, with some of the fundamental ideas of the so-called Great Man Theory (cf. Spector 2015 who attempted "to treat the Great Man theory seriously and to present a fuller notion of the theory", 2015: 216). When applied to literature, the German term partly corresponds to the concept of *canonical*, where the term then refers to the attention being paid mainly to those canonical works which are recognised in a society as a model. As Kloss (1967: 29) once said in relation to the English terms for his theory on *ausbau* and *abstand* languages, as a non-native speaker of English I too believe that "it is not for me to suggest new English designations", and henceforth, I shall use the term *Höhenkamm principle* to refer to historiography's limitation to the viewpoint and opinion of privileged and outstanding persons (obviously shaped by their convictions, prejudices and ideologies), which must per se lead to a distortion of the perspective.

Oral history (OH) is about collecting the views of such non-privileged persons. OH can thus be included among those tendencies towards a paradigm shift that, like the *Nouvelle histoire*, aim at breaking the limitations of historiography to the view of white men with power and influence, an effort that has influenced the orientation of social and historical studies since the mid-20th century in particular (cf. LE GOFF 1988, RAPHAEL 1994). Compiling individual experiences and subjective memories and assessments might allow for the determination of an integrated image from a non-privileged perspective. Taken together, they provide an impression of the collective experience, perception, and memory of a particular social group.

This is the approach which was chosen for a long-term project on the OH of T&I carried out at the Institute of Applied Linguistics and Translatology (IALT) at Leipzig University and presented in the course of this paper. The following overview of OH and translatology is derived from this IALT project (cf. chapter 4) whose precise aim is to trace the history of training and professional activity in the field of T&I in East Germany on the basis of the protagonists who actually experienced it.

The oral sources produced within the project will serve as primary sources that can be used both for the historiography of T&I and in the context of T&I didactics. Since it can reveal important aspects of the relation of training and later professional practice from the individual perspective of the graduates, the resulting interview corpus can also provide new perspectives on the development of T&I training. Furthermore, previously unknown or unreported aspects of training and professional practice can be uncovered, e.g. with regard to the reason for certain developments, and insights into historical developments can be provided (cf. RITCHIE 2003: 48).

The aim of this contribution is to give an overview of oral history and its role in historiography; the relationship between history, T&I Studies, and OH; and to demonstrate the possible contribution of OH towards T&I research.

In the following, we will first take a close look at the development of OH and the current state of research, briefly discussing the different approaches and representatives of OH research in different countries (chapter 2). Then, designation and definition of

OH, different approaches and the potential of OH as a method will be discussed (chapter 3.1.). Subsequently, methodological or general aspects and problems associated with OH will be taken into consideration (such as, for example, those regarding the reliability of memory and therefore also the quality of OH sources) (chapter 3.2.). We shall then focus on the fundaments of conducting OH interviews, on terminological aspects, on recording, the post-processing of the interviews, their analysis and interpretation and, finally, their publication.

As the influence of other scientific disciplines on OH, especially qualitative research in the social sciences, is of great importance for the methodological approach of OH (and the Leipzig OH of T&I project), and as, at the same time, the concept of interdisciplinarity itself raises some questions in the context of OH, these aspects will be examined in more detail (chapter 6). In the following sections in chapter 5, the use of OH in the field of history will be summarised (5.1. History and T&I) and its application in T&I research will be summarised and discussed (5.2. OH in T&I research). In the following, a short outline of the Leipzig OH of T&I project will be given (chapter 6), from the objectives and history of the project (6.1. Project history and objectives) and its realisation (6.2. Project outline) to the first insights and results, that is, the first emerging trends, but also the potential for expanding the scope of the project and redefining it as a whole, aspects which are derived from the project research itself (cf. chapter 6.3. First insights and results: some examples). In the closing section (7. Perspectives and conclusions), the need for further research and the potential that OH presents for T&I studies will be discussed.

2. History and OH

Taking into consideration the primacy of the spoken language, it is only logical to assume that OH is as old as history itself (cf. SAUSSURE [1915] 2005; VACHEK 1976; TOROKAI 2009: 11; SINNER 2014: 209-210, in this respect) and, undoubtedly, it is hard to disagree with Thompson and Bornat (2017: 23) when they note that "[i]t was the first kind of history" and that it is only quite recently, in the 19th century, "that skill in handling oral evidence has ceased to be one of the marks of a great historian".

As Ritchie (2003: 20-21) points out, Thucydides (c. 460 B.C.–c. 400 B.C.) described the Peloponnesian War on the basis of soldiers' oral reports. According to Morrison (2006: 164), Thucydides "bridges the gap between the pre-dominantly oral culture of the fifth century and the coming of a book-reading public in fourth-century Athens"; while his sources for the war itself were largely oral, "he self-consciously refers to the status of his work as a written document" (MORRISON 2006: 160). The ancient historian highlights the meticulous work necessary on his part due to the contradictory or biased reports he received, stating that "[f]inding out the facts involved great effort, because eye witnesses did not say the same things about the same events, but [reported] according to favoritism or [lapses of] memory" (Thucydides apud Morrison

2006: 161, with additions from the latter).[1] As Ritchie claims, by mentioning the fact that "different eye-witnesses give different accounts of the same events, speaking out of partiality for one side or the other or else from imperfect memories" (Ritchie 2003: 20), he is highlighting a problem of oral sources which continues to be controversially discussed to this day: lack of objectivity (cf. chapter 3.2.). For this very reason, historical research has traditionally focussed on written sources and turned away from orally transmitted descriptions of historical events. Although we know that interviews with witnesses of historical events took place in earlier times (cf. Plato 1998: 63), the lack of sound recording possibilities delayed the application of OH in historical research. Fully functional and relatively easy to operate recording devices were only available from the mid-1930s. Dictaphones, which used wax cylinders as a recording medium, had been in extremely limited use since the 1920s, and wire recordings had their heyday from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s, while the world's first tape recorder, the *Magnetophon K1*, developed by AEG and BASF, was presented to the public at the 12th Great German Radio Exhibition (*12. Große Deutsche Funk-Ausstellung*) in Berlin (ENGEL et al. 2013) in 1935. OH only began to be used to a greater extent in the 1940s, above all in the USA, where, thanks to the country's poorly established archive system and the important role of oral tradition in the cultures of the Native Americans and the African slaves deported to the New World, it met with great success (RITCHIE 2003: 20-21; WIERLING 2003: 83-84).

When Forrest Carlisle Pogue, official United States Army historian during World War II, made wire recordings of interviews with injured D-Day soldiers on a hospital ship off Omaha Beach in 1944 (cf. POGUE 2001), he "helped lay the groundwork for the development of oral history as a research technique" (SOMMER & QUINLAN 2009: 1). The founding of what is today the Columbia Center for Oral History, in 1948, under the aegis of American historian and journalist Allan Nevins, represented a major step towards establishing the biographical interview as a key method in historical research. Like other representatives of the OH movement in the US, Nevins initially centred on the memories of prominent and influential figures in politics, business and society; this focus on the viewpoints of the elite can be traced back to the goal of gaining insights into the methods and reasons behind (political) decision-making (OBERTREIS 2012: 8). It was only gradually that the focus of OH began to shift towards the experiences of average citizens. A frequently cited example of this re-orientation of research is Joe Gould's project "An Oral History of Our Time", which, though never actually implemented, aimed to research history from the perspective of average workers; although the idea led nowhere, the name *Oral History* prevailed (MITCHELL 1999 [1965], RITCHIE 2003: 22). Until the 1960s, the creation of OH sources, especially those based on the experiences of working-class Americans and, in particular, disadvantaged sections of society, literally boomed; this can be attributed both to the steady growth in social emancipation movements and to a rise in the availability of recording devices such as the increasingly cheap cassette recorder (SOMMER & QUINLAN 2009: 2, RITCH-

[1] As Morrison (2006: 160) states, while Thucydides' sources for the war were largely oral, "he consciously refers to the status of his work as a written document".

IE 2003: 22, OBERTREIS 2012: 8). The growing acceptance of OH also becomes manifest in its increased institutionalisation, for example with the founding of the Oral History Association, devoted to encouraging "standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, dissemination and uses of oral testimony" (OHA 2020) and committed to the academisation of OH and the establishment of scientific rules, such as the "Goals and Guidelines" for OH in 1968 (BERGER GLUCK 2020) or the recently adopted, revised "Principles for Oral History and Best Practices for Oral History" (OHA 2018a) in 2018. This laid the foundation for ethically impeccable and scientifically reliable work with OH (in this sense, see RITCHIE 2003: 252).

In the European approaches to OH, the everyday lives and experiences of average, non-privileged or even socially disadvantaged citizens have been at the centre of attention from the very beginning—English OH, for example, focussed on the history of the left-wing working class, French OH aimed at the history of the class struggle of the working class in general—, while, in the US, the history of (and from the perspective of) blue-collar workers was only taken into account decades after the beginnings of OH (THOMPSON & BORNAT 2017 passim; OBERTREIS 2012: 8, RITCHIE 2003: 23). In contrast to its North American counterpart, German OH in particular is characterised by its far-reaching theoretical debates, for example regarding the term OH itself and most notably with respect to its methodology (cf. OBERTREIS 2012: 10). In West Germany, that is, in the Federal Republic of Germany, OH only took off in the 1980s (cf. NIETHAMMER & TRAPP 1980), after decades of neglecting the possibilities of biographical interviews. While German historians hardly acknowledged OH in the post-war years and during the years of the reconstruction of the country, the movement to finally address and investigate National Socialism, the war crimes committed during this regime and, in particular, the Holocaust, lead to an increased interest in precisely those individuals whose experiences could only occasionally be gleaned from the written sources that were available back then: the persecuted, the disenfranchised, emigrants, refugees, Holocaust survivors, displaced persons, etc., that is, powerless individuals whose voices had basically never been heard before (cf. NIETHAMMER & PLATO 1985 passim; PLATO 1998: 60; OBERTREIS 2012: 9).

Due to their deep-rooted distrust of everything that could be considered an individual or a subjective source, Eastern Bloc countries, among them, the GDR, left OH aside. In Socialism, the individual was expected to step into the shadows in favour of the collective, and, accordingly, individual memories per se were seen as ideologically questionable. In addition, oral sources, unlike written ones, may have been more difficult to censor, and therefore it was easier to induce researchers to leave them completely aside by discrediting such sources as unscientific. One of the few exceptions to this was an OH project, sensational in its time, which was carried out in the GDR before the upheaval of 1989/1990 that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall (NIETHAMMER 1991). Within the framework of the LUSIR project on Biography and Social Culture in the West German Ruhr Area, directed by Niethammer, biographical interviews with citizens of the German Democratic Republic were conducted as early as 1987 (PLATO 1998: 67).

Since OH was practically illegal in the East, it only gained a foothold after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its allies and satellite states in Europe from 1989 onwards. It is therefore not surprising that OH research in former socialist Eastern Europe (and thus also in East Germany), was primarily concerned with "processing" the totalitarian regimes, finding explanations for their occurrence, and investigating other hitherto hidden aspects thereof (WIERLING 2003: 85, OBERTREIS 2012: 11-12). OH was now also used for political historiography, with both victims and perpetrators of the socialist regimes being asked to express their opinions (PLATO 1998: 67).

From today's perspective, the work of Svetlana Alexievich deserves special mention here. In her novels, actually based on OH in a narrower sense, she reconstructs the history of women in the Soviet army (who, in official historiography, were hushed up or turned into common whores) (ALEXIEVICH 2017), or investigates the Chernobyl catastrophe from the perspective of the citizens and the emergency services involved (ALEXIEVICH / GESSEN 2006). The Swedish Academy awarded her the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2015, praising her "polyphonic writings, a monument to suffering and courage in our time," and for inventing "a new kind of literary genre" (PRH 2020). Time and time again, her work has been lauded for "constructing narratives from witnesses to some [of] the world's most devastating events" (BBC 2014) and for "using private human history to create a portrait of time" (BLISSETT 2014).

Ritchie (2003: 13) attributes the success of OH to its "democratic impulse" that convinced historians it was "time to hand the mike to the people". As Ursinus (2014: 12) sums up, what all approaches to OH have in common is their will to contribute to the democratisation of history or a "solidary historiography" (NIETHAMMER 1986: 18) by allowing social groups without power and influence or minorities to tell their story as an emancipatory act (cf. OBERTREIS 2012: 9); central to this is the intention to let the objects of great historical processes speak for themselves, as subjects, to recognise their experiences, their evaluations and their social practices as an independent historical achievement (cf. WIERLING 2003: 85).

Although early OH was clearly shaped by the needs and interests of history, as Wierling (2003: 86) points out, history is neither the first nor the only discipline that uses oral sources for its purposes. Today, OH is firmly established within history and a host of other disciplines, and its methods are being further developed and adapted to meet a wide range of changing possibilities and circumstances, for example, increasing digitalisation (cf. chapter 4).

3. Oral History

3.1. Designation, delimitation and definition of OH

There is no generally accepted definition of OH, and the term is therefore actually quite polysemous. According to the Core Principles of the Oral History Association,

> *Oral history refers to both the interview process and the products that result from a recorded spoken interview (whether audio, video, or other formats). In order to gather and preserve meaningful information about the past, oral historians might*

> *record interviews focused on narrators' life histories or topical interviews in which narrators are selected for their knowledge of a particular historical subject or event. Once completed, an interview, if it is placed in an archive, can be used beyond its initial purpose with the permission of both the interviewer and narrator.* (OHA 2018b)

For authors such as Wierling (2003: 83) or Yow (1994: 4), this dual sense of the process and the product renders the term OH imprecise. This imprecision is further increased if one takes into account that OH is sometimes presented as "a branch of (or a movement within) historical research" (McDonough Dolmaya 2015: 193); as a historical or interdisciplinary method or methodology; a type of historical source; a technique or a hermeneutic method in the historical disciplines for the production and processing of oral sources; or even a separate research field with specific content (cf. Geppert 1994, Yow 1994, Dunaway & Baum 1996, Ritchie 2003, Wierling 2003, Sommer & Quinlan 2009, Obertreis 2012, Yow 2015, Murken n.d.). One can see the extent of the problem as, even in the teaching of OH, some scholars refer to *OH as a method* (in the historical, social, etc. disciplines) (cf. Universität Leipzig n.d.) while others explain *the methods of OH* (cf. Freie Universität Berlin n.d.).

As there is no universal definition of OH, Geppert (1994: 312-313) attempts to determine the crucial elements of OH by comparing existing definitions. Here, he establishes four common features: OH is (1) described as a historical method in which (2) oral interviews are conducted in order to (3) obtain information about the past which (4) are recorded; additionally, he includes the role of the researcher/interviewer in the production of the source (cf. chapter 3.2.), a useful addition, since the potential co-responsibility of the interviewer has sparked many debates on the interviewer's influence on the outcome, and, at the same time, is an important factor in the analysis and evaluation phase (Ursinus 2015: 17).

Wierling (2003: 81) also perceives OH as having a differentiated structure, with the interview allowing for the production of the source, its editing, archiving, and, finally, analysis. Other authors add more explicit criteria, such as Sommer and Quinlan, who stipulate that the interviewed person be "a witness to or a participant in an event or a way of life" (Sommer & Quinlan 2009: 1).

On the other hand, there is also disagreement surrounding additional aspects, such as the storage of original recordings, the possibility of anonymising personal data, and the exact conduct and procedure of the interviews (cf. chapter 3.2.). In OH, the possibility of anonymisation does exist in principle, entailing restrictions regarding the accessibility of audio or visual material (cf. Leh 2000).

Some authors, such as Ritchie et al. (1991) and McDonough Dolmaya (2015: 195)—one of the few voices in translation studies on this topic—insist that it is only OH if the interviews have a retrospective perspective and are explicitly meant to create sources for historians that should not be produced for just one specific project (cf. infra). However, it can be agreed with the popular saying that "history begins today" and that, in fact, particularly in the early days of what now is called OH, the explicit

wish to create general sources was not in the foreground of most efforts (cf. chapter 3.2.)

Interestingly, Schiffrin's (2003) definition of OH reflects the *Höhenkamm* principle—albeit with regard to the events, not the witnesses. She expects that the events themselves be of importance, with her definition of OH including the restriction that the individual or communal memories "are collected during face-to-face interviews with people who were witnesses to events likely to have lasting legacies" (SCHIFFRIN 2003: 84).

The requirement that interviews be recorded—established within the Core Principles of the Oral History Association (OHA 2018b) through the specification "recorded spoken interview (whether audio, video, or other formats)"—is an aspect that requires closer examination.

On the one hand, not all studies that are attributed to OH in one form or another, either by the authors themselves or by others, consistently make use of interviews that have been recorded on audio or audiovisual storage media (cf. chapter 5.2. on OH in T&I research). On the other hand, the term *recorded* can itself be understood in essentially different ways. *Record* is, according to the first entry in Merriam-Webster (s.v. *record*, 1 a (1)), "to set down in writing : furnish written evidence of", and is only defined in the third entry as "to register permanently by mechanical means" (s.v. *record*, 1 c (1)). Since the definition of the Oral History Association (OHA 2018b) also mentions "other formats" beyond audio and video, it must be noted that, strictly speaking, this could also be interpreted as 'written record'. Though this is not the way in which most authors apparently interpret the term, this is, obviously, a problematic aspect with regard to the attribution of research to OH in a narrow sense (cf. chapter 5.2.2.).

In some disciplines, ethnology, for example, working with field notes is common and completely undisputed (cf. the comments on ORTNER (2003) in chapter 4).

Psychologists and sociologists also work with such methods of "recorded" interviews via notes or, more specifically, field notes. Cf., for example, the research of Martina Zschocke (2005, 2006, 2007), professor of leisure psychology and leisure sociology, on how the view on oneself, the view of home, etc. changes for people who live or travel abroad for a long period of time. Zschocke works with notes from conversations that are not mechanically recorded. However, her approach to these interviews and notes is similar to or the same as that taken in studies working with audio or video recordings or transcriptions of such, for example the use of Grounded Theory carried out on the basis of interviews.

In this respect, it is noteworthy that some academics strongly doubt that transcripts of conversations in the form of notes taken by consecutive interpreters could be sufficiently reliant as a corpus for investigation in T&I research. In an examination committee for a PhD on interpreting studies at the University of Leipzig, theoretical linguists, of all people, fundamentally questioned the creation of a corpus of the notes taken during interpreting jobs, while no one who knows anything about interpreting would doubt that these notes allow interpreters to reconstruct what was actually said

in great detail and accuracy when said interpreters convert their own notes into unabridged texts immediately after the interpreting job is completed.[2]

Closely linked to the question of the necessity of audio or video recordings is the question of the fundamental problem of doing OH interviews (or interviews in general) in which the interviewee sees the microphone or the camera "pointed" at them, since this can also influence the way in which the subject portrays an event, what they want to talk about or not talk about at all, or even how they express themselves (cf. Davy & Quirk 1969: 119, Niethammer 1985: 41, Ritchie 2003: 136, Sinner 2004a passim, Plato 2008: 84 on the role of the microphone in interviews and the impact on the formality of the interview situation which is manifested in the language itself, and possibly even in the length of the interview). Some explicitly say that a camera or recording device can ruin an interview because people are more likely to think about the impression they make and are aware that whatever they say can be linked to them afterwards, which may lead them to concentrating on what to leave out; what is more, persons who are not used to speaking in front of microphones or cameras may develop a sense of inferiority when exposed to such a situation (cf. Ortner 2003, Sinner 2004a: 150).

This begs the fundamental question of the extent to which interviews that are carried out without audio/audiovisual recordings or interview series that are done using a mixture of both techniques—audio/audiovisual recordings and field notes—can be counted as OH at all, and whether OH is also conceivable without audio or audiovisual recordings.

Even the designation OH itself is sometimes seen as problematic or is criticised without reservation (cf., for example, Plato 1991: 74-95). Geppert (1994: 308-309), for example, points out that the term is misleading because the final product of the interviews is in written form. Since the English term OH has also become established in the German-speaking world, it is used rather for practical reasons: as Geppert (1994: 309), for example, explicitly says, for the lack of a better term. Vorländer (1990: 7) considers it a *Verlegenheitsbegriff* 'a term that is actually not entirely appropriate but used for convenience', as he believes that OH only describes the external form of passing on information about the past, but leaves out characteristics such as the process of remembering and the particular structure of the communication, that is to say, the asymmetrical relationship between researcher and interviewee in terms of information background, motives and objectives (Vorländer 1990: 16).

The different definitions can certainly be attributed to the different priorities and objectives of research. As Ritchie (2003: 19) puts it: "[…] oral history is too dynamic and creative a field to be entirely captured by any single definition. For every rule, an exception has worked".

On the other hand, the influence of other disciplines on OH has led to the use of different terms in academic publications on the matter: the plurality of terms such as *interviewer* vs. *OH researcher* or *interviewee* vs. *narrator* vs. *informant* vs. *contemporary*

[2] Cf. Lung (2009: 214), who believes that interpreters have an essential role to play in China's historiography, as interpreters' notes are sometimes used as sources for official records.

witness vs. *eye witness*, for example, is already aggravating in terms of the uniform and cohesive terminology that academia strives for. This is an aspect which concerns the situation in some languages more than others (cf. SCHÜTZE 1983, NIETHAMMER 1986, PLATO 1991, GLINKA 1998).

Though this is not the place to take the much-heard debate about OH any further, some fundamental aspects regarding what is or is not to be considered OH do need to be examined closer. Some authors, such as McDonough Dolmaya (2015: 193), who explicitly refers to the Oral History Society and the Oral History Association in this context, argue that "unarchived interviews are not oral history", and that making interviews available to the public is frequently debated or demanded (RITCHIE 2003: 24, SHOPES 2002: 590, YOW 2005: 72, SAMUEL 2003: 392). These are positions that seem highly controversial, all the more so as the Oral History Association itself is apparently not as strict regarding the treatment of OH interviews as McDonough Dolmaya argues, as can be seen from the following quote: "Whenever possible, an oral history interview and its accompanying documentation should be preserved and made accessible to other users" (OHA 2018b).

This clearly shows that the *ideal* is to *preserve OH interviews* and make them accessible *whenever possible*, but that preservation and accessibility is not an *indispensable* condition, because then the Association would have said, less bluntly, that *interviews* needed to be *unconditionally* preserved and made accessible in order to *convert* them into *OH interviews*.

Furthermore, McDonough Dolmaya's (2015: 193) stance seems contradictory, as she opens her chapter on the history of OH with Thompson's famous quote—according to which oral history was the first kind of history (cf. THOMPSON & BORNAT 2017: 23, mentioned supra)—the truth of which cannot be denied, despite the general lack of recorded and archived interviews which have been done over the course of human history. Perhaps this is where the linguistic perspective should come into play because, from a linguistic point of view, an *unarchived source* cannot be equated with *not a historical source*. This can be demonstrated through a simple thought experiment: if the first written account of a certain event were to be found in the middle of a desert, we would probably say that a source that suggests this event actually happened has just been found, and we would not wait until the unearthed piece of evidence reaches an archive in order to call it a source. Furthermore, if the same written account of the event is later stolen from this very archive, we would not say "the written source just stopped being a source", just because we do not know where it is and if it still exists. Thus, by analogy, it is not plausible that an oral source should only be considered a piece of OH once it reaches *and stays* in an archive.[3]

Some believe, therefore, that it is necessary to differentiate between (mere) *interviews* and oral histories (as OH interviews); Holly Shulman, for example, explains that:

> *Interviews, to begin with, are not oral histories. Oral histories are generally quite formal arrangements often done for an institution, such as the Columbia Oral His-*

[3] The case of the ATA Translator Tales One illustrates this problem very well; cf. chapter 5.2.3.

> *tory Research Office. They are designed to go into a permanent archival collection. We as historians can then go and read these documents which often span a man or woman's life and run for hundreds or thousands of pages. Interviews by contrast are both more ad hoc and more focused affairs. The historian does them as a part of a specific historical research project, not in any way connected with any library or archive. Furthermore, interviewers ask questions that relate to their specific topics. Russell Page, for example, was famous as a landscape architect, but I did not want to know about his career as a landscape architect. I wanted to know about his nine months at the Voice of America. Our interviews, as a consequence, are designed to fit our particular needs.* (RITCHIE et al. 1991: 227)

Here, a rather artificial distinction is being made, as if there were no shades or nuances on the continuum between these two extremes. In particular, by definition it excludes all interviews that were conducted (and archived) in the early days of OH, in the times of the emergence of OH, which were done by individuals or small groups with thematically clearly limited research interests that, nonetheless, are included in any history of OH (cf. chapter 2). There are many OH projects that have been carried out by single researchers, but many researchers, and even authors such as McDonough Dolmaya (2015: 194), admit that OH is not necessarily as institutionalised as Shulman suggests.

Regarding Shulman's distinction between interviews that are carried out for specific purposes and focussed on certain topics, and oral histories that ask for the life story of an individual and are meant to be archived (cf. supra), another aspect demands consideration in this context. Today, the majority of researchers are dependent on third-party funding. This usually requires applying for projects where the research line is both clearly stated and prominent. Many institutions, for example national funding agencies like the German DFG, do not allocate funds for mere material collection in most of their programmes. With the exception of a few projects aimed at securing existing sources, digitising sources, etc., it is common to have to specify a research objective for the sources that are being collected within a project. What is more, this objective usually has to be achieved within the duration of the project—which seldom spans more than five years. The same problem affects other areas: the translation of texts to make knowledge accessible is not covered by most research funding programmes and, accordingly, many national institutions which evaluate their researchers, such as the Spanish ANECA, do not acknowledge translations or the collection of sources as academic achievements. The consequence for OH is that projects do not fulfil the strict OH criteria because, potentially for these rather material reasons, they have to start as small projects with very concrete objectives that can lead to preliminary results in a short period of time, even if the actual objective is much more comprehensive (cf. chapter 6.1.).

The nature of the interview topic itself, and whether individual aspects or life histories are dealt with, should not be a deciding criterion for the attribution of an interview to OH or for its identification as such. In this respect, it can be agreed with the OHA (2018b) that both interviews which focus on narrators' life histories and topical

interviews in which narrators are selected for their knowledge of a particular historical subject or event should count as OH.
With regard to the description of OH, methodological problems, etc., it should be pointed out that some aspects dealt with in this chapter will be looked into again, in more detail, over the course of this contribution, e.g., the issue of interview techniques will be raised again (cf. chapter 3.2., chapter 6 on OH and interdisciplinarity and chapter 6.2. on the project outline, for example). Due to the nature of the matter, such repetitions are inevitable and, in many ways, will be helpful in presenting the various facets of OH.

3.2. Methodological or general aspects and problems associated with OH

Since its early days, OH has been the subject of controversial discussion within the various disciplines in which, over time, it came to be used for historical research. This controversy lost some of its intensity in the 1990s (cf. GEPPERT 1994: 303).
Nevertheless, there are some aspects that continue to be controversial or that lead to studies that chose slightly or considerably different approaches and/or techniques not being accepted as OH studies by some authors.
As could already be seen (cf. chapter 3.1.), there is no generally accepted definition of OH and the criteria differ considerably. Accordingly, a certain diversity can also be observed with regard to the techniques and manner of the individual processes, which entails a number of aspects that are to be explained in more detail here, including a series of problems or difficulties that arise, for example, when trying to use interviews or compare the results from different OH projects for the same purpose.
One aspect that has to be addressed is the question of the "right" interview technique and the structure and format of the interviews. Based on the methodological principles of qualitative social research, OH has developed its own procedures for conducting and documenting interviews (cf. BRECKNER 1994: 131, OBERTREIS 2012: 20). Although OH benefits from an interdisciplinary approach in relation to its methods (cf. chapter 4), the choice of the appropriate technique(s) is not without controversy, despite the widely accepted principles of the OHA and other OH associations. Of course, sociology, for example, enriches the methodological and analytical approach with regard to the preparation, execution and evaluation of OH interviews, the research instrument of OH. In contrast to quantitative social research, which is concerned with verifying a hypothesis, qualitative social research is characterised by the principle of openness (cf. infra) and often seeks answers to rather vague research questions. Above all, the narrative interview as a (semi)open, non-standardised procedure meets these requirements, as it offers the interview partners great flexibility in freely developing their narrative (ROSENTHAL 2005: 13, 126-127). The aforementioned controversies might be due to the fact that, for pragmatic reasons, several of the possible interview types and techniques are often combined or adapted to meet the special needs of a study (for example, when certain aspects are repeatedly asked about, thus lending them more emphasis in the narrative than would have been the case in the "natural" flow of the narrative).

There is even difference of opinion concerning the different types of interviews that count as OH interviews; in some overviews, autobiographical interviews, supplementary interviews, topical interviews, process interviews and unstructured narrative are mentioned, and the fact that the different types overlap is usually indicated (cf., for example, Royal United Services Institute of Vancouver n.d.). Three different types of interviews are mentioned most frequently: the expert interview, the topic or thematic interview, and the (auto)biographical interview. Preferences may vary somewhat in different countries with different research traditions. In OH research in German-speaking countries, the term *Erinnerungsinterview* 'memory/remembrance interview' is often used to refer to OH interviews, with such interviews often carried out on the basis of these techniques developed by the German sociologist Fritz Schütze (cf. OBERTREIS 2012: 18).

Vorländer (1990: 14) and Wierling (2003) distinguish three types of OH interviews, specifically the three types mentioned above: the expert interview, the thematic interview, and the biographical interview. Obviously, the choice of the interview influences the selection of interviewees and questions.

In an expert interview, the person being interviewed is, as a witness and participant, supposed to provide information on a very specific aspect of the object of investigation; they are also supposed to contribute additional information, background knowledge, clarify contradictions, etc. (cf. WIERLING 2003: 109), usually in reference to a specific aspect of the subject of the study (cf. BOGNER et al. 2009). These interviews are structured by specific factual questions which require particularly thorough preparation (cf. WIERLING 2003: 109). The thematic interview has a more open structure and is more narrative, even if it is also restricted to certain episodes or aspects from the life story of the interviewee (cf. WIERLING 2003: 110). The (auto)biographical interview refers to the interviewee's entire life story, but can still be used for projects with a limited thematic scope, for example, when the objective is to understand connections and continuity (cf. WIERLING 2003: 110).

The principle of openness (cf. supra) is particularly important and considered one of the major advantages of OH interviews (cf. MAYRING 2002: 72). Openness refers both to the capacity of the researcher to get involved in an investigation (cf. ROSENTHAL 2005: 50) and to the flexibility of the research plan, for example, regarding the duration of the interviews, which may need to be adjusted, or the nature of the target group, which may be adapted according to the results obtained in the course of the research project (cf. ROSENTHAL 2005: 48-49). This is evident if one considers that results or hints from an interview on a group which was not previously considered might lead to the extension of the categories applied for determining the social group that is to be studied (cf. chapters 6.2. and 6.3.4.), or that specific aspects of interviewees' biographies might lead to the extension of the catalogue of questions to be asked in the interviews.

There are certain differences of opinion with regard to the dialogic character of OH interviews. While the necessity and special importance of the narrative component of the interviewees' memories is usually pointed out, it is also said that the interview is in fact a dialogical process in which the interviewer makes a contribution towards

shaping and structuring the interview (cf. PLATO 1991: 85). According to Grele (1985), oral histories can only be understood as conversational narratives, and "[t]he most singular characteristic of an oral history, and by far its most significant for the historian as both creator and user, is its creation through the active intervention of the historian" (GRELE 1985: 246); cf. chapter 5.2.2.

As McMahan (1987: 186, 2015: 5) repeatedly states (always in the same words), "contrary to Hans Jonas's [1971] claim that historical understanding is aided only by the 'one-sided speech of the past', oral history, like present understanding, is constituted of and therefore aided speech and counterspeech". Her opinion on the role of dialogue in interviews in order to be able to classify them as OH is clear:

> *Only a few of this massive number of interviews [which are done every year] can rightly be called oral history interviews—interview sessions in which both interviewer and interviewee sit down consciously to collect a memoir of the history of some lived event.* (MCMAHAN 2015: ix)

The formulation "of some lived event" is remarkable here, because other authors see the restriction to a certain thematic aspect as a reason for their exclusion from categorisation as OH (cf. chapter 3.1.).

The role of the interviewer is also critical in the recruitment of interviewees. In research projects based on communities or collectives, it is usually seen as advantageous if the researcher is an insider of this community, as this allows for direct access to its members and allegedly gives the researcher "an experience-based reflection on the object of study" (ESTÉVEZ GROSSI 2017a: 160). When the researcher is a community outsider, it is usually recommended that they seek the contact of the so-called *community gatekeepers*, prestigious individuals who could be key in locating other community members, telling them about the research project, and even convincing them to collaborate (cf. RITCHIE 2003: 88, ESTÉVEZ GROSSI 2017a: 160, 2018: 124). In OH, it is usually recommended that this be combined with snowball sampling, i.e. asking the interviewee to provide contact to further potential interviewees (cf. YOW 2005: 80-81, THOMPSON & BORNAT [1978] 2017: passim, ESTÉVEZ GROSSI 2018: 124) which, as Estévez Grossi (2017a: 160) claims with reference to Hale and Napier (2013: 73), "seems to be a typical technique used in Interpreting research".

However, this approach might also result in interviews only being carried out with members of certain networks inside the community, or with members of one specific group within the community taking precedence, something which might put their perspective (and only their perspective) into the foreground. On the other hand, using the OH in T&I project as an example, this could result in other graduates not being given due consideration: graduates who tended to be outsiders, individuals that where isolated by the majority, e.g., due to ideological positioning, or persons who had a different study programme (cf. chapters 6.2. and 6.3.4.) or who, for other reasons, did not study continuously with the same peers (in one *Studiengruppe* 'study group', i.e. *class* or *cohort where students studied continuously together*), etc.

Over the years, critical voices have continued to accuse OH of producing questionable results, of reproducing subjective positions and thus creating worthless material,

etc. (cf. WIERLING 2003: 88). Other criticisms concern the alleged lack of truthfulness of the statements and the limited credibility and legitimacy of orally produced sources (cf. OBERTREIS 2012: 7).

Some of the aspects which are seen as problematic may indeed be specific to OH, others, however, certainly apply just as equally to other historical sources.

To pose an example of the former, there is the possible influence exercised by researchers upon the source itself, as they are actively involved in its production—a problem that is often highlighted by researchers themselves (cf. NIETHAMMER 1986: 11 in this regard). In fact, the same may apply to research with written sources: one example being translation analysis which is based on the researcher's own translations, as in the case of the analysis of the Spanish translation of Thomas Mann's *Die Buddenbrooks*, translated by the researcher herself (cf. the critical account in SINNER 2019: 166-168).

Vorländer (1990: 18) criticises the possible shift of the conversation to the meta-level, e.g. when the respective position of an interlocutor is verified by the interviewer. However, this is a problem that can at least be minimised by ensuring the interviewers have received good training, enabling them to identify misconduct and errors as well as to follow up when there is doubt or ambiguity question dubious aspects (cf. RITCHIE 2003: 27).

The influence of certain formal traditions on 'private', individual narratives is also regarded as problematic, since they are pre-structured by these traditions (VORLÄNDER 1990: 18). Schiffrin recalls that, as "[m]any of the stories have been told many times, in many settings, and to many people […] [s]ome scholars worry that they no longer represent an authentic and unmediated voice" (SCHIFFRIN 2003: 85). In view of what is known about the important role of discourse traditions (in the sense of conventionalised models or patterns which function as norms and which underlie both the production and reception of texts) in *all* types of communication and the importance of reference texts for both structure and content (cf. SCHLIEBEN-LANGE 1983, OESTERREICHER 1994, HAßLER 2000, SINNER 2012a: 44-47), this kind of objection does not seem entirely reasonable: the same applies to written texts, which also follow a tradition of what to say in which way, and what not to say at all. It bears remembering that oral tradition is the raw material of all transmission of history, and that the supposedly greater reliability of written sources is based on the denial of the fact that these often represent the subsequent transcription of oral speech (cf. WIERLING 2003: 81).

In the context of OH projects on significant historical events such as the Holocaust, which has been dealt with in media and, increasingly, in education, the concerns mentioned by Schiffrin might be very appropriate. However, this is something which cannot be generalised, for the question must be asked of how much this might apply to OH projects on subjects that are less spectacular or entirely undramatic in character, and, in particular, those which have received virtually no media coverage (such as the role of Albanian in foreign language teaching at GDR universities or the training and employment of interpreters or translators in the GDR). Of course, there are also reference texts and text traditions in T&I training that are mentioned in interviews

with translators, be these fundamental scholarly texts (cf. Zequeira García 2012) or certain anecdotes told time and time again in translation class for didactic purposes. As examples of such, there is a story (apparently quite popular among T&I trainers) about bridges collapsing in Russia due to a translation error in a product description for building cement and there are anecdotes about "untranslatable" Goethe quotes, the interpreter not being able to eat because clients keep talking during dinner, or an EU interpreter stumbling over the homophony of *semen* and *seamen*; these are all aspects that several interpreters spoken to mentioned. Those stories were never told as something that happened to the interviewees themselves and they apparently do not illustrate an "intertextuality problem" intrinsic to OH, but rather can be understood as important hints on discourse traditions, reference texts and stereotypes linked to the T&I profession that might be found thanks to this method.

Critical voices often lament an alleged lack of representativeness and question the academic nature of the OH method itself (cf. Plato 1991: 73, 84). In view of the advantages of the approach, which certainly outweigh its disadvantages, the objection regarding the scientific character shall not be dealt with here again. Regarding the lack of representativeness, it should be noted that, in many of these instances of criticism, it remains unclear whether they insinuate other problems beyond purely statistical representativeness and whether the criticism is really specific to problems that are unique to OH. As Geppert (1994: 316) points out, OH does not claim to be statistically representative and interview partners are selected according to whether they could exemplify certain historical processes as individuals. However, it shall be highlighted here that statistical representativeness is indeed possible, not only in studies on groups that per se are numerically very small with regard to the total population—like the aforementioned study aimed at elucidating the role of Albanian in foreign language teaching at GDR universities—, but also, when the target population is larger, in larger-scale studies.

It goes without saying that statistical representativeness clearly depends on the number of sources and the criteria applied when choosing the interviewees: basically, it depends exclusively on whether all social groups involved in the facet of history to be investigated are sufficiently taken into account. It must be emphasised here that this problem also, if not more so, concerns research on the basis of written records. The *Höhenkamm* principle seems to be paramount, particularly in the case of written sources and especially with regard to the question of who actually produced the sources that dominate in terms of frequency at a certain place in a certain period of history. Using a written document that was produced at a specific time to analyse a specific research question gives the privileged parts of society the floor and leaves out the others, and this is probably the ultimate lack of representativeness.

I will use an example from the area of T&I to illustrate this. In recent years, the memoirs and autobiographies of interpreters have often been used as a source with which to investigate the history of interpreting (cf. Bowen 1994, Andres 2012a). However, leaving aside the issue of the fundamental value of this type of memoir literature for research and the still controversial problem of the violation of confidenti-

ality, this also raises questions with regard to the authors' representativeness for the profession as a whole (cf. THIÉRY 1985; cf. chapter 6.2.). Bowen (1994: 172) states:

> *It is true that the published biographies deal almost exclusively with the highest level of the job. The authors of these autobiographies had direct access to chiefs of state, generals, and cabinet members, but what applies to the famous and powerful often has a general validity. The place in the hierarchy of an organization is important for a profession's image.*

The questionable nature of the statement "what applies to the famous and powerful often has a general validity" certainly does not need further explanation. As Sander (2015: 17) firmly states, the supposed representativeness of the published memoirs of interpreters must be doubted. In her review of a long list of memoirs published by interpreters, some of which have been taken into account in research on interpreting, Sander (2015: 17) points out that most of these interpreters-memoirists were serving at the highest political level or at significant political events, such as the Nuremberg Trials or the negotiations in Panmunjom, and that, with the exception of the Nuremberg Trials, almost all of the German interpreters on the list worked for the Federal Foreign Office, either permanently or freelance, while the Russian interpreters worked for the political establishment of the Soviet Union.

Regarding the alleged lack of truthfulness of statements and the limited credibility and legitimacy of orally produced sources, it should be highlighted that this is not a problem exclusive to OH: the very claim that orally produced sources are subjective and accidental also applies to written sources (VORLÄNDER 1990: 15) and the problem of credibility should be seen as a general problem in history.

OH scholars have admitted that this frequently criticised subjectivity (or, as mentioned in chapter 2, "lack of objectivity") can pose a problem; Niethammer (1986: 11), for example, acknowledges that the change of perspective contained within the exploration of subjective experiences through interview might certainly entail problems. One frequently encounters positions such as Rohe's criticism "that the sources produced with the methods of OH seem to offer less resistance to the interpretations made [by the researcher] and therefore do not function as a control instrument to the same extent as 'normal' historical sources" (1985: 486, my translation); primarily, this rather opaque statement apparently points at the problem of the subjectivity of the researcher.

According to Friedrich von Schlegel (1967 [1798]: 176), the historian is a reversed prophet. History as we read it is a reconstruction—and, for the British physician Julian Barbour, nothing but a hypothesis—, and even popular history points out that even our own belief in our past is only conjecture (cf. SAYENGA 2011). To put it very boldly: do we really remember that jumper that can be seen in the photo which was taken when we were just two years old and could hardly speak? As Scholtz (1982: 312-313, my translation) points out,

> *[Arthur C.] Danto has described in detail (thus confirming the opinion of hermeneutics) how events acquire a richness of meaning only in retrospect, through their*

> *subsequent history, which they did not have at the time of their occurrence. In a narrative context, it is not the actors of history but the retrospective historian alone who determines what an event was and what significance is to be attributed to it.*

Plato (2000: 8) attributes the critique of subjectivity of personal experiences to a crucial misunderstanding of OH itself, as it is wrongly assumed that OH is primarily aimed at precise memories of events and that OH sources were used in the belief that they are consistently "correct". Indeed, as Niethammer (2012: 42, cf. NIETHAMMER 1985), Plato (2000: 8) and Leary (2011: 21) point out, the subjective view of individuals on events, historical processes and change, their understanding of things, even their expectations, are deliberately the focus of interest. After all, as Wierling (2003: 88-89) notes, it is this subjectivity that enables history to be written from the people's point of view. What is more, as in the case of formal traditions, this kind of objection does not seem too reasonable as the same applies to written texts, which can themselves be inaccurate, subjective, incomplete (RITCHIE 2003: 26) or even completely wrong; OH can in fact allow for a comparison with written sources and lead to their completion or a better understanding thereof (RITCHIE 2003: 27), and thus OH can even be considered indispensable when it comes to making of a study of a historical aspect as comprehensive as possible (PLATO 2000: 25). The same problems can be found in almost all kinds of written testimonies that represent a personal standpoint, and written sources of the many and on daily life encounter the same downplay.

Like the soldiers' tales mentioned in Thucydides, newspaper reports about an event that has just taken place may be untrue or not entirely true due to favouritism or hidden agendas (cf. Sinner 2020b on inaccuracies or deliberate misrepresentations in Spanish media coverage of events in Catalonia). In personal letters, one can lie, exaggerate, manipulate or, for whatever reason, make the decision not to mention important facts; soldiers could, for example, against all evidence to the contrary, tell their families in letters that everything was fine so that they would not worry. Written reports from employers to superiors might be full of inaccuracies (as an attempt to gloss things over). How many letters from inhabitants of the young state of Israel analysed by Segev (2007) for his history of the Six Day War of 1967 featured exaggeration regarding prosperity? If Spanish and Turkish emigrants concealed their difficult situation in West Germany with borrowed cars when they went on holiday to their home towns, and migrants in Kenya happen to lie even to their own parents about their income, naming smaller sums than they actually earn (cf. BASELER 2020), how many Israelis would feel compelled to exaggerate their stories about buying electrical appliances like fridges or TV sets when writing to friends abroad? What is more, due to errors, typos, etc., even official documents such as immigration documents, birth certificates and certificates of enrolment can be inaccurate, or, due to intentional acts, even be completely false despite being "legally" issued by a government agency or state authority (such as the documented issuing of Aryan certificates for Jewish persons by employees of the resident's registration office who opposed the German Nazi regime).

The constant criticism regarding a possibly intentional distortion of reality by witnesses out of vanity or bragging, or unintentional misrepresentation due to memory gaps or an overlapping of one's own memories with representations in the media is just as much a problem in OH as it is in any other form of account in which a person depicts something for others. And even ego-documents (that is, sources in which the self-perception and representation of the historical subject in their environment are expressed) such as diaries, autobiographies, letters, or travel literature, are not immune to this same lack of accuracy (or truth). Especially in the case of diaries of rather prominent persons (which obviously enjoy a privileged role in memoir-based historiography) one must reckon with the fact that they might have expected or at least hoped for publication of their written legacy (and the same holds true for their correspondence). And yet, texts in which the authors are the writing and descriptive subject and possibly also make involuntary or voluntary statements of the self (SCHULZE 1996: 28) have long since become established within historiography since they were introduced as *egodocumenten* in 1958 by Jacob Presser in Dutch social historiography.

All these aspects relativise the criticism of OH to such an extent that, from the point of view of the historiography of T&I (as a sub-discipline which has not yet seen significant advancement), its advantages should be seen, first and foremost, as outweighing its disadvantages.

The problem of the public availability of the interviews has already been mentioned (cf. chapter 3.1.); the criterion appears essential, but also controversial, as some of the existing OH studies on T&I show (cf. chapter 5.2.).

Another problematic aspect is the demand some authors have of sending the interviewees a preliminary version of the transcript in order to get their approval (YOW 2005: 143; cf. chapter 5.2.9.). This is something which is not entirely desirable, because it can lead to the deletion of aspects that are actually relevant, including a loss of important content and of narrative coherence. For example, deletions can be particularly problematic if reference is made again to the deleted passage in the later course of the interview and knowledge of the content contained there is essential for understanding other parts of the narration. Deletions and changes make the whole transcription process much more time-consuming because they require the manuscript to be processed at least one additional time.

As could be shown here, the fact is that there are very different views on what OH is or which criteria are (more) relevant in order for research to count as such; this is also due to the disciplines or sub-disciplines in which an author embeds their study or which disciplines they consider to have a larger share in their study or in OH in general. This makes it seem appropriate to take a closer look at the topic of interdisciplinarity, which will be dealt with in the following section.

4. OH and interdisciplinarity

The relationships and interdependences of OH with manifold disciplines, such as anthropology, educational studies, ethnology and ethnohistory, psychology, sociology,

community studies, media studies, museology, regional studies and folklore, women and gender studies, linguistics, literary studies, legal studies, or even gerontology, are manifold and intense (cf. DUNAWAY 1996, DUNAWAY & BAUM 1996, WIERLING 2003: 86, SCHIFFRIN 2003, LEAVY 2011, ESTÉVEZ GROSSI 2017b, 2018). However, not all authors agree that OH is also or primarily associated with historical studies (cf. ESTÉVEZ GROSSI 2017b, 2018; cf. chapter 5.2.9.). This is despite the fact that, in the case of OH in the field of historiography of disciplines, interdisciplinarity is almost certainly given, in the sense that methods and points of view from different fields come together purposefully.

What is more, T&I per se is interdisciplinary, in the sense that different approaches, methods and cognitive objectives from different disciplines such as linguistics, cultural studies, literary studies, etc. are combined and merge together.[4]

Therefore, from our point of view, OH in the field of T&I is, undoubtedly, extremely interdisciplinary in terms of the approaches involved and the methodology provided by T&I and OH.

Some authors make very specific demands for interdisciplinarity—not only with regard to the application of perspectives, views and results from another discipline B (or other disciplines B, C, etc.) in discipline A, but also regarding *mutual* influence and cross-application of perspectives, views and results (i.e. also of disciplines B, C, etc. in discipline A)—while others base interdisciplinarity on the fact that the people involved in a publication are institutionally affiliated with different disciplines or even require that the authors of different disciplines quote each other (cf. MILLER 1982, HUUTONIEMI et al. 2010, GRBIĆ & PÖLLABAUER 2008, PÖLLABAUER 2008, THOMPSON KLEIN 2010).

However, as Thompson Klein (1996: 153) explains, multiple interdisciplinarities exist, from simple borrowings and methodological thickening to theoretical enrichment, converging sites, or a general shift towards new ('cross-', 'counter-', or 'anti-disciplinary') positions that confront the problem of how meaning is produced, maintained, and deconstructed. As has been underlined by different authors, interdisciplinarity is best understood not as one specifically defined way of doing research, but as a variety of different ways of linking, bridging and/or confronting the prevailing disciplinary approaches. Of all the existing definitions, the distinction between multi-disciplinarity, understood as being a conglomeration of disciplinary components, and inter-disciplinarity, a more synthetic attempt of *mutual* interaction, has been the most influential (HUUTONIEMI et al. 2010: 80). As Huutoniemi et al. point out,

> *while "interdisciplinarity" has this specific meaning, it also remains "the generic all-encompassing concept and includes all activities which juxtapose, apply, combine, synthesize, integrate or transcend parts of two or more disciplines" (Miller, 1982).* (HUUTONIEMI et al. 2010: 80)

[4] Not all authors who comment on T&I, and especially on translation studies, see it this way; for example, translation studies are continuously categorised within applied linguistics, although this orientation represents only one of the manifold approaches of modern translation studies.

Therefore, there do not seem to be any impediments to speak of with regard to interdisciplinarity of OH.

This interdisciplinarity led to the establishment of interview techniques taken mainly from the social sciences, as well as to a rich diversity in the perception and understanding of sources and their use in the interpretation of data (cf. PLATO 1998: 71). Due to their particular importance for OH, qualitative research methods had a strong impact, especially on the way in which data are processed. Qualitative social research was and continues to be particularly influential for OH. Some techniques and approaches can be emphasised in this context: *Grounded Theory*, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is based on the idea that the theory must be based on the data, i.e. it is more of an inductive than a deductive method (STRAUSS & CORBIN 1990); *Objective Hermeneutics*, derived essentially from the work of Ulrich Oevermann, consists of conceiving and fixing the social action in question as a text, in order to subsequently interpret it hermeneutically with regard to action-generating latent structures of meaning (cf. REICHERTZ / JENNER 2004: 570).

Approaches and methods that, on closer inspection, seem to be inspired by the experiences of OH, and, at the same time, testify to the interdisciplinarity of OH, can be found in many scientific disciplines, especially in history, but also in areas such as sociology.

What is more, time and again, researchers who belong to various disciplines other than history work with interviews that could actually be seen as pieces of OH, without the authors presenting it that way (perhaps because they themselves do not recognise it as such). One example is the study by ethnologist Sherry B. Ortner (2003), *New Jersey Dreaming. Capital, Culture, and the Class of '58*, on how social class evolves and is lived out in the United States, based on the social development of the graduates of her own high school class, i.e., within her own peer group. The techniques that are used quite clearly overlap with OH or are, in part, nothing other than OH. However, she mixes OH with telephone and questionnaire interviews and makes use of field notes after said interviews, an approach on which she comments as follows:

> […] *248 people were subjected to questionnaires and/or interviews. In the end I got at least basic demographic and personal data for virtually all of them. For example, I have current occupations for 244 classmates,*
> *I then interviewed about 100 of the found people in depth (and spoke to most of the rest on the phone).* […] *The fieldwork consisted of interviewing people wherever they happened to be, at any site of their choosing. The interviews took the form of life histories: "So, tell me about your life since Weequahic [school]." Most of them were taped, although there were occasional technological failures and ethnographer's errors along the way. Untaped interviews were written up as soon afterwards as possible. All interviews, whether taped or not, were also summarized in field notes.*
> *Interview-based (or interview-driven) fieldwork is becoming increasingly common in anthropology* […]. (ORTNER 2003: 14)

Interview-based and *interview-driven* (which are *not* the same) are expressions that often alternate in specialised publications with explicit mention of OH and related techniques. From a linguistic and translatological point of view (for example, with regard to corpus linguistics and its requirements), it is unusual that she speaks of "about 100" instead of indicating an exact number. Furthermore, the way in which Ortner (2003) made her sources anonymous is also remarkable (cf. the remarks on anonymisation of OH interviews in chapter 3.1.).
However, the author has no doubts about her approach, and working with memory protocols—the aforementioned field notes are exactly this—is not unusual in anthropology:

> *Quotations from verbatim transcripts of interviews are always marked with quotation marks. Quotations from my field notes (my own observations, summaries of what others have said, etc.) are not marked with quotation marks and are always preceded or ended with [from the field notes].* (Ortner 2003: xvi; the square brackets appear in the original)

The issue of the role of notes from interviews or conversations that were not taped for research in OH and other disciplines and used in addition to or instead of recordings has already been addressed above (cf. chapter 3.1.).
What Ortner does is, at least in part, OH, but she does so as part of a blend of different techniques. Her ethnographical study clearly overlaps with the practices and aims of OH in general. The interesting aspect is that her study is an ethnographic analysis of one graduate class at one school in one place of the USA, which leads her to draw conclusions about social developments in the USA as a whole.
Similar overlaps and examples of studies which are situated on the borderline between OH and other disciplines, or which can be classified differently according to the criteria applied, are numerous (cf. chapter 5.2.9.).

5. History, T&I, and OH

5.1. History and T&I

When analysing the accounts regarding T&I over time and in different languages, it becomes clear that, from a historical perspective, it is not often possible to distinguish between the different activities that, together, can be summarised as linguistic mediation (Jäger 1975: 30, 1986: 5-10, Kade 1980: 7, 75, Neubert 2007), nor is it even always possible to distinguish between the "central" activities of (oral) interpreting and (written) translation. Not only have the differentiations of said mediation activities changed over time—cf. Schleiermacher (1818) who distinguished between (artistically valuable) *translation* and that which he calls *interpreting* which only serves trade and profit and which he considers a "lower" activity than the former—, there are also huge differences in the way different languages distinguish, terminologically, between the existing types of mediation activities. There are also glaring differences in the way experts or laypeople use expressions, and how these expressions were or are in turn transmitted by (more or less proficient) translators. A particularly meaningful and

striking example of this can be seen when comparing the two linguistic versions, German and French, of the personal details displayed on-screen in the documentary *Berlin 1945. Tagebuch einer Großstadt* ('Berlin 1945. Diary of a metropolis') by Volker Heise. In the German version, there are several verbatim quotes from "Jelena Rschewskaja, 25. Sowjetische Übersetzerin" ('Soviet translator'), while the French version states "Elena M. Rjevskaïa, 25 ans. Interprète de l'État-major soviétique" as the author of the quotes. As a matter of fact, Elena Rzhevskaya, as she is known in English, was an interpreter during World War II, and is best known outside her country thanks to her autobiography, published as *Memoirs of a Wartime Interpreter: From the Battle of Rzhev to Hitler's Bunker* in English (translated by Arch Tait).

To highlight the special significance of OH for the historiography of T&I, in the following we will concentrate on the history of interpreting as a representative of the history of all types of linguistic mediation, which, as could be shown, can partly merge into each other and therefore are not always clearly distinguishable in the accounts of historians. Instead of exploring the history of all different types of linguistic mediation, it shall be dealt with the history of interpreting in particular, as this is especially interesting, complex and complicated, and far more revealing with regard to the importance of OH for T&I historiography, since, for obvious reasons, there are many more sources on the history of translation than on the history of interpreting. Cf. Bowen's (2006: 45) statement that the sentence *verba volantis* also applies to interpreting. This is made clear when one considers that, on the one hand, there are the translations themselves, which are often augmented by introductions and comments from translators on their translations from which conclusions can be drawn about practice, decision-making, etc., whereas, on the other hand, there are far fewer written sources in the field of interpreting.

Interpreting is an activity that has taken place since time immemorial; it is mentioned in some of the oldest known texts, including, for example, inscriptions from ancient Egypt, Rome, and Greece, or in the Old Testament. However, interpreters are usually only mentioned in passing, sometimes almost rather by chance, and are often portrayed in a negative way (cf. GEHMAN 1914: 18, HERMANN 1956: 38, 42-43, KURZ 1985: 215-216, 1986a, 1986b, RAWSON 1995, EDWARDS 1999, ADAMS 2002, 2003: 267-277, SELDEN 2014). As Andres states, "[l]ocating historical accounts of interpreters is arduous, since accounts are few and far between and most interpreters are only mentioned in passing" (2012a: n. p.), and the reconstruction of the history of interpreters is not an easy endeavour due to the fact that, among other things, many historical documents neglect to mention interpreters or to discuss their roles in society. In historical accounts, especially everyday aspects which were considered not worth mentioning for contemporaries are often neglected in favour of facts, causes and results which were at the centre of interest. Everyday history, such as trade and commerce—and therefore, also the presence of interpreters in this area—remains mostly unconsidered (cf. GEHMAN 1914: 68-69, KURZ 1986b: 218, ROLAND 1999: 7-8).

In contrast, the use of linguistic mediators in international conflicts or wars, even in antiquity, is well known (and is actually now considered to be one of the more thoroughly studied areas of interpreting, at least for the period of the 20th century, cf. An-

dres (2012a: 7)). This might be because the communication problems were obvious and hard to overlook, especially when a war or a certain battle was against people regarded as barbarians who, as a defining characteristic, did not speak the language of the army on which the historian reported.[5] Hermann (1956: 44-45) reports on corresponding mentions of interpreters, i.e. Livius.

In contrast, we have less insight into the use of interpreters during the Middle Ages, while written documentation indicates flourishing translation activities during this period (KUTZ 2010: 33). Noteworthy, also with regard to the genre, are the hints on the presence of interpreters in the military and for the aristocracy at their courts found by Glässer (1956: 69-70) in his analysis of the medieval *Chansons de geste*. More recently, for example, the presence of interpreters in the warlike conflicts between the Spanish colonial power and the Mapuche people in colonial Chile has been investigated on the basis of historical documents (cf. PAYÀS & ZAVALA 2012, for example).

Therefore, with regard to the role and presence of interpreters in past eras, it is often necessary to speculate, read between the lines or deduce the possible need for interpreters from information about the situation or the education of those present. With regard to the Romans' attitude to foreign languages, for example, it is regularly said that the learning of foreign languages was rather exceptional, which suggests that interpreters or translators were *usually* foreigners who had learned Latin (cf. the comments on this issue in Sinner 2020a). Despite the large numbers of texts about Rome, for example, we know practically as little about the communication which took place by means of translation or interpreting with Greeks (who are portrayed with respect because of their incomparable prestige) as we do about the communication which took place with speakers of other languages.

Historians are rarely aware of the importance of interpreting and translation for the course of history and of the role played by translators and interpreters in the relations between nations throughout history (cf. ROLAND 1999 in this sense), while, in T&I research, an increasing interest in history and questions regarding the historiography of the discipline can be observed. The importance of interpreting for history has been increasingly recognised in recent years, although this comes primarily from T&I scholars and is closely linked to the growing interest in the history of the discipline itself. As Bowen (2006: 46) states, it is thanks to the efforts of professional organisations and, increasingly, institutions that train interpreters, that the huge task of making the history of interpreting a reality has been intensified and a repertory of interpreting historians has been created. Skalweit (2018: 10-11) believes that now, in the 21st century, historical translation studies have developed into a full-fledged subdisci-

[5] See Sinner (2004b) on the origin and development of the term *barbarian*, which, in Greek, was first applied to people who did not know this language, in Latin—which took it from Greek—denominated people who did not speak Latin or Greek, and in Spanish, for example, meant anybody not capable of speaking Spanish, Latin or Greek, that is to say, the respective language of the individual using the term or a language considered as lingua franca in the sense of an international language suitable for communication.

pline (2018: 10). What's more, there is also increased awareness about the importance of understanding the role of T&I for a better insight into historical texts and facts (cf. GAIBA 1998: 20). Some researchers in T&I historiography even explicitly state that their studies represent or shall represent an interesting enhancement of previous perspectives on history (cf. BAIGORRI-JALÓN / MIKKELSON & SLAUGTHER OLSEN 2014: 13).

Although interest in the history of interpreting has been increasing slowly since the 1980s, this interest has focused primarily on the recent history of interpreting in Western countries or considers the sub-discipline from a purely Western perspective; cf. Driesen (2008: 163) on a lack of consideration of (or information on) Russian interpreters at the Nuremberg trials (which implies, obviously, a lack of consideration of their view). Skalweit (2018: 10-11), however, also mentions the increase in research on interpreting in Asian countries, especially China (cf. also ANDRES 2012a in this sense), and important contributions have been made to the history of interpreters in China, such as Lung (2011).

There is a disproportionately large amount of studies on T&I in the 20th century, which is undoubtedly related to the establishment of language mediation as professions with institutionalised professional training, as well as to the existence of more extensive and more easily accessible sources (KUTZ 2010: 46-49). But here, too, we find a concentration on the present that was already deplored in the 1990s, as Koch, for example, noted in 1992 that retrospective research perspectives seem to be rather unpopular, probably also because of the need to combine translation studies with methods of historical studies. As a matter of fact, research on the 20th century focuses mainly on the period which starts with the end of the Second World War; as Skalweit (2018: 12) points out, the period between the Golden Age of the Dragomans and the Second World War, which includes colonisation, is poorly studied.

Obtaining even 20th-century sources for the study of interpreting is considered difficult or problematic, as noted by Gaiba (1998: 20-22), or by Herz (2011: 7) who states that the information regarding interpreting at the Nuremberg trials stems largely from secondary sources (in which T&I are hardly ever mentioned or only in relation to technical problems).

The work and the role of interpreters in international tribunals and international organisations and institutions, above all in the 20th century, is the focus of attention of historically- or historiographically-oriented studies on interpreting (cf. KOCH 1992; GAIBA 1998; BEHR & CORPATAUX 2006, HAJDU 2006, KALVERKÄMPER & SCHIPPEL 2008, ANDRES 2011, HERZ 2011, MILICEVIC 2011, SKALWEIT 2018); cf. Skalweit (2018: 10-11) for a condensed overview of work in historical interpreting studies.

A comprehensive history of interpreting is a clear desideratum, that is to say: a history that transcends time and space, that does not start with the Nuremberg trials or the beginning of simultaneous or conference interpreting, that does not limit the field of research on the basis of a "modern" understanding of the profession, and, in particular, that does not narrow it down to conference interpreting (cf. CRONIN 2002: 49-51), that does not focus mainly on the 20th century (which is clearly more accessible in terms of the available sources (cf. WILSS 1999/2005, KUTZ 2010: 46, SKALWEIT

2018: 11-12)), and that takes into account not only the "Western", European and European-colonised American view, but also Africa, Asia, Australia, South America, and pre-colonial realities.

With regard to the history of interpreting in the context of colonisation in particular, it is remarkable that some of the existing publications were actually based on their representations in literary fiction—a questionable practice, despite the fact that said literary works are sometimes based on real historical documentation; cf. Garane's study on Amadou of Hampâté Bâ and the invisibility of African interpreters (2013, 2015), based on the writings of Hampâté Bâ. It is even more remarkable that this is not carried out with the explicit aim of looking at the representation of interpreting in literary works, but rather to derive statements about interpreting in the "real world". It is also noteworthy that even literary interpreting scenes are apparently taken at face value, despite the existence of now quite extensive knowledge surrounding the great distance between literary ("feigned") orality and oral communication in real life (cf. the critical overview in SINNER 2012b), and that such approaches are not questioned by the authors themselves or by other experts in Translation Studies—in this example, by translation scholars such as Bandia (2018) or Skalweit (2018: 12). As these depictions can obviously have an important impact on the image of interpreting in lay audiences, literary representations of interpreting are, of course, an interesting, necessary, and definitely not inappropriate object of study in T&I research, and are worth considering for this reason alone; however, they cannot and should not be understood as a direct reflection of reality.

A noteworthy aspect in this context is the fact that, to this day, some individuals who have also worked as interpreters or translators throughout their lives and have gained experience in the field are often not taken into consideration in T&I history, as they are not usually seen or presented as interpreters or translators, but primarily as representatives of other professional groups, or are only mentioned with regard to their social role in other contexts. Reasons for this might be aspects such as the late differentiation between translation and interpreting, the late perception of interpreting as a profession, the fact that, in general, the educated classes were less dependent on linguistic mediation due to their own language skills, and the generally lower social status of interpreters (which, in turn, was linked to the fact that many interpreters were born or had lived abroad and therefore were often perceived as strangers, as foreigners with a lower social status, or even as people who could not necessarily be trusted) (cf. BOWEN 2006, KUTZ 2010: 15).

This means that important information about the biographical background and the circumstances that led to activity in this field is not taken into account, which is a great loss for T&I research, particularly with regard to professional orientation prior to the existence of institutionalised T&I training. For example, Henry de La Falaise, Marquis de la Coudraye (*1898, †1972), is mentioned above all when it comes to his high-profile marriages with Gloria Swanson and Constance Bennett, major Hollywood stars at the time, beyond this he is usually only presented as a hero of World War I and as a (at best moderately successful) film director and producer. At most, his activity as a translator or interpreter is acknowledged when it is mentioned how

he first met Gloria Swanson, working as her interpreter during the shooting of a film in Paris.[6]

All this suggests that taking into account the view of interpreters on their work—i.e. from their own first-hand accounts and not from other sources which only mention interpreting or describe it from their (lay) point of view—is of particular importance for research into at least the recent history of interpreting (and, of course, its current situation).

In fact, the views of those involved have been increasingly taken into account in recent times, and it has been repeatedly pointed out that this consideration of their memory is indeed a desideratum. In works on the history of interpreting, reference is now made more frequently to testimonies from temporary witnesses. Often, these accounts take the form of memoirs or correspondence, as is the case with Gaiba's 1998 investigation into simultaneous interpreting at the Nuremberg Trials, where she corresponded with interpreters who were there at the time. Some of the sources used are the memoirs of diplomats, politicians or interpreters, but it is obvious that a certain degree of fame or prominence of the authors (in the case of politicians or diplomats) or of the events and persons dealt with in the memoirs (in the case of interpreters who can otherwise hardly be described as well-known or prominent) is, so to speak, a prerequisite in order to get published, and thus the aforementioned *Höhenkamm principle* also has an effect here (cf. also GAIBA 1998, ROLAND 1999 and RUMPRECHT 2008 regarding the particularly exposed role of "famous" interpreters and of interpreters who have interpreted in occasions considered historically significant, respectively).

In their treatise on the history of interpreting during the Cold War, Baigorri-Jalón and Fernández Sánchez (2010) use the numerous historical documents on this subject as source material: documentation in archives, press texts, scientific publications on the matter, etc., but explicitly also make use of the accounts of contemporary witnesses or eyewitnesses—among them, memoirs of diplomats, politicians, and interpreters. Taking advantage of the short time that has elapsed since the Cold War, they also make use of interviews. Significantly, the authors highlight that they restricted themselves to those interpreting activities which took place at the highest levels (for important politicians, etc.) in order to keep the paper short (BAIGORRI-JALÓN & FERNÁNDEZ SÁNCHEZ 2010: 3). Thus, once again a decision is being made based on the *Höhenkamm principle* which shapes and characterises historical research.

[6] Another example is the famous actor, mime artist, and clown Marcel Marceau, a Holocaust survivor who, making use of his perfect mastery of French, English, and German, actually worked as a liaison officer for General George S. Patton after the war, an aspect often mentioned in media reports on Marceau (cf. GOLDFARB 2020, for example). When it comes to the descriptions of both jobs, the boundaries between interpreter and liaison officer are actually very fluid, and this was even more so before the post-war creation of interpreter training programmes, as, to fulfil their duties, liaison officers had to, in effect, interpret as well.

If the accessible written documentation does not help or contains ambiguities, inconsistencies or contradictions, recourse to written or oral enquiries is the first step towards the comprehensive use of oral sources.
In Gaiba's case, these are concrete requests in the form of correspondence by letter or telephone conversations with interpreters (1998: 22), actually presented, in the jacket blurb of her book, as "interviews with interpreters". In the book itself, Gaiba briefly explains that she

> *was in touch with three Nuremberg interpreters, Peter Uiberall, Siegfried Ramler and Alfred Steer, who in turn gave me the names of other still living interpreters. They answered my numerous questions about the material I had found, which was often unclear or contradictory. […] I later contacted other interpreters: Elisabeth Heyward, Edith Coliver, Frederick Treidell, Marie-France Skuncke, Patricia Varder Elst and Stefan Horn.* (GAIBA 1998: 21-22)

For Baigorri-Jalón (1999: 514), this is sufficient to warrant praise for the importance of these oral sources, even if, actually, these primarily take the form of written correspondence:

> *The author has used original sources, both written (from various archives) and oral. The latter component is particularly important for obvious reasons. Interpreters and monitors who worked in Nuremberg and who are still alive are now in their late 70s or in their 80s. It was vital, then, to register their* voices from the past *while they were still able to recount their experiences.*

Recently, interviews with interpreters as a source for historiographical studies in interpreting have been used more frequently, either with their suitability as a material basis for such studies being more or less self-evident, or with such interviews having been conducted explicitly for this purpose, for example that carried out by Baigorri-Jalón (2004) in his study on interpreting at the UN, or by Wilss (1999/2005) in his book on the history of interpreting and translating in German-speaking countries in the 20th century. In many publications on the history of T&I, it is apparent that the authors place great value on the personal memories of those involved as sources. In any case, in the current state of research into the history of T&I, it hardly seems justifiable to do without such authentic documents or pieces of information such as eyewitness accounts. According to some T&I scholars, "secondary sources" and hearsay are no longer sufficient for serious academic research (on this view, cf. the corresponding statements in BAIGORRI-JALÓN / MIKKELSON & SLAUGTHER OLSEN 2014: 2).
Finally, it should be mentioned that the translation of OH has also been a subject of debate in connection with the topic of translation in the field of history itself. For example, Andrews (1995), Reeves-Ellington (1999), and Temple (2013) mention some of the particular challenges of T&I in the context of OH (but usually use the term *translation* for both). Andrews (1995) is aware of the difficulties posed if a historian does not speak the language of the people they interview, but, remarkably, seems totally unaware of the importance of working with trained interpreters; when describing a friend who had agreed to "act as translator for the project" (1995: 84), she states:

"That she acted as (unpaid) translator in this setting was far from ideal, but just tolerable, simply because it was something which she wanted to do". The fact that she was unpaid seems to her more problematic than the role of translation competence and professionalism, but the very fact that she does not even distinguish between translation and interpreting speaks volumes. More surprising is that, despite the fact she is unfamiliar with T&I, she decides to write an article on translation and T&I. Even more astonishing is the fact that this contribution was then published in an OH journal—but this is, again, evidence of the low level of attention and knowledge regarding T&I in this discipline. Reeves-Ellington (1999), who attempts to develop model translation strategies for OH narratives (using the textual approach put forward by Albrecht Neubert and Gregory M. Shreve) is rather an exception in this regard.

Yet, in this context it is noteworthy that, while historians pay a great deal of attention to the issue of methodology of collecting OH sources, they give practically no thought to the fact that the translation of these very interviews can have very specific implications for later analysis (cf. McDonough Dolmaya 2015: 196). For example, as part of its process, translation already involves interpretations or clarifications of ambiguities that may be not taken into account later in the historians' analysis. Clearly, the translation of OH sources represents a very significant methodological challenge which remains largely ignored by historians.

5.2. OH in T&I research

5.2.1. Recourse to OH

Although OH is one of several sources that have been used in the historiography of both T&I and the discipline of T&I studies itself, recourse to OH is still rather an exception. As Estévez Grossi (2017a: 158) puts it, perhaps a bit more drastically, "the adoption of this methodology has still only been testimonial within Interpreting research". However, it cannot be agreed with McDonough Dolmaya (2015) when she writes that "translation studies has not adopted oral history methods, despite the advantages offered for historical research in translation studies" (2015: 196). It may be that she has a different understanding of the idea of *adoption*, but, due to the fact that a number of OH studies have been carried out in the field of historiography of T&I, her statement seems invalid.[7]

Recourse to supplementary, personal written and oral sources when the accessible written documents are insufficient; contain ambiguities, inconsistencies or contradictions; or are of no help at all has been a common practice for quite some time in T&I research. This was, for example, the route taken in Gaiba's study on the Nuremberg war crimes trials, for instance through concrete enquiries in correspondence by letter or telephone conversations with interpreters who had been involved in the trials (cf. Gaiba 1998: 22). As stated on the jacket blurb of the book, this study

[7] An explanation for her drastic position that OH has not yet been applied to T&I might be the exclusion of smaller, individual projects with clearly defined objectives and, therefore, concrete interview topics, from OH; cf. chapter 3.1..

> *offers the first complete analysis of the emergence of simultaneous interpretation at the Nuremburg Trial and the individuals who made the process possible. Francesca Gaiba offers new insight into this monumental event based on extensive archival research and interviews with interpreters, who worked at the trial. This work provides an overview of the specific linguistic needs of the trial, and examines the recruiting of interpreters and the technical support available to them.*

Such examples make it clear that recourse to verbally formulated recollections of contemporary witnesses also takes place outside approaches that can be classified as strictly OH. In view of the fact that some authors interpret the criteria for OH more strictly than others when dealing with oral sources in T&I research, it makes sense to assume a continuum of work with orally reconstructed memories that ranges from answers to individual, very concrete questions that are given from memory, to interviews conducted according to the strictest version of OH guidelines. This is certainly one of the reasons why it is so difficult to make OH clearly tangible as a technique, a method, etc. in T&I research.

In addition, there are also studies that do not produce OH sources themselves, but exclusively make use of existing sources, thus falling outside some definitions of OH. However, a distinction should be made between OH-based studies that produce at least some of their OH sources themselves, and OH-based studies that merely rely on already existing OH archives, that is, without an individual contribution to the production of sources. One example of the latter form of OH-based studies is the project carried out by Fernández Sánchez (2013), who studied the personal and professional careers of three interpreters who worked at the highest level of political communication in the first decades of the Cold War. As the author indicates, her sources were, in principle, oral. Although they were converted into written sources, they remain memories of non-recent events, and were documented after an invitation was extended to these interpreters precisely because of their role as witnesses to history (2013: 95)—once again, this is a case of the *Höhenkamm* principle. For the sake of completeness, it should also be mentioned that publications are sometimes identified as OH-based in cases when this is not justified by even the most generous interpretation of the criteria. For example, Estévez Grossi (2018: 96) counts Kurz's (2014) contribution among OH-based studies that were conducted on the basis of archive material rather than on the basis of own data. However, this overlooks the fact that Kurz's analysis is based on "snippets from books and films [in order to show] fictional interpreters violating the principle of fidelity" (Kurz 2014: 206).

A number of research projects have already been carried out in T&I research—especially with regard to the history of interpreting—which, depending on the point of view, can be regarded as research on the grounds of OH or as studies which, according to a stricter interpretation of criteria, do not methodologically qualify as real OH research. They all share an interest in the viewpoint of the individuals involved themselves, but they pursue very different objectives, and, in some of these, the different aspects of T&I practice play a secondary role. In order to illustrate the different presence and role of OH in T&I research projects over time, the particularly relevant

studies that have been carried out with OH, as well as some studies in which OH actually plays a rather peripheral role, will be briefly presented and discussed in the following section.

5.2.2. Interpreters at the United Nations—La voz de los intérpretes: ecos del pasado

Baigorri Jalón's study on interpreters at the United Nations (also presented as "La voz de los intérpretes: ecos del pasado" 'The voice of the interpreters: echoes of the past') (Baigorri Jalón 2004, 2008) is based on a collection of oral testimonies, by means of interviews, from interpreters who worked or were still working in the United Nations and other related organisations at the time of the interviews—interpreters belonging to different generations and seen by the author as repositories of different life experiences and of very varied career paths that ultimately led them to their profession. After defining the aim of his study, the reconstruction of the history of the profession of conference interpreter, the author has conducted the interviews systematically since 1997. Baigorri Jalón prepared a very generic questionnaire for use within these interviews which he only followed strictly

> *for some details that were necessary for the historical framework and in order to give the resulting dialogue some validity as an oral history document, such as the date and place of birth of the interviewee, the key data on their family background, as well as their life and professional journey* (Baigorri Jalón 2008: [2]).

Furthermore, he took into consideration several factors in order to cover all available generations, interpreters of all official languages of the UN, and both contractual modalities, i.e. staff and freelance interpreters.

The length of the dialogues varied, depending on the circumstances of each interview, from several half hours between working sessions to long conversations, for example in the homes of the interviewees, at his own home, or in coffee shops and restaurants. It was not uncommon for Baigorri Jalón to have several meetings with the interviewees and, for many of the cases, he managed to gather several hours of recordings in total.

The interviews were conducted in the language common to both interview partners and that was most comfortable for the interviewee: 13 in English, 9 in French and 9 in Spanish; only in exceptional cases were two different languages used in the same interview.

While most of the interpreters that were interviewed have had or, at the time, still had a link to the United Nations, some of them also made their career in other international or national institutions. Some stand out for their involvement in high-level bilateral meetings. In sum, among the participants of the interview series, there are those who wrote memoirs or were active in academic research, were involved in the International Association of Conference Interpreters, or were also T&I teachers at some point in their lives. Baigorri Jalón (2008: [2]) rightly points out that this group of interviewees make up a varied kaleidoscope of cases.

However, it should be noted here that, according to the principle of the *Höhenkamm* principle, which has now been mentioned several times, the proportion of represent-

atives of the profession who have achieved some level of fame is not small. This, of course, also has to do with the chosen target group, the community of interpreters at the United Nations, where (given the high demands and the practice of selecting only the best) per se the presence of the professional elite can be expected.
With regard to the criteria of OH, the fact that Baigorri Jalón (2008: [2], cf. supra) speaks of a resulting *dialogue* clearly complies with the requirements of most OH experts in this respect (cf. chapter 3.2.).
It should also be highlighted that the interviews were only taped if the interviewees agreed to it; if an interview was not recorded, the author reconstructed it in the hours following its conclusion. Yet, as we have already seen (cf. chapter 3.1.), the recording itself is one of the core criteria for OH.

5.2.3. The ATA Translator Tales

The *ATA Translator Tales* project, mentioned above (in chapter 3.1.), is usually presented as an OH project. The project was set up by the translation agency McElroy Translation in order "to establish a public record of translators and interpreters talking about their lives as recorders of history" (McElroy Translation 2009). Though it was supported by the American Translators Associations (ATA), it was discontinued after only a short time.
As Laura Mendell explained in an e-mail to Anja Sander, ATA was working with this translation company that started recording people at the 2008 ATA Conference. ATA set up a recording area for participants at the 2009 ATA Conference, but

> *[j]ust before the audio tapes could be edited and prepared as a suitable file, the translation company was bought out by someone who had no interest in the recordings. Everyone at the company who had worked on the project with Mary David was let go. After that, there was less and less interest in the project, so it was eventually stopped.* (Mendell 2014)

The existing recordings and the only partially transcribed material are undoubtedly material which meet the requirements of OH, but which then, though not lost, were not edited and archived as intended. The database mentioned in the presentation of the *ATA Translator Tales* project ("They are now available on the websites of ATA and McElroy Translation", McElroy Translation 2009) could not be localised; though the edited test interviews from 2008 are available, the questions posed by the interviewers are not included in these edited recordings. As Sander (2015: 22) remarks, these can be reconstructed from the answers, but the circumstances make it hard to say anything about the methods employed during the interview. The interviews seem to follow an elaborated questionnaire, but there is hardly any narrative continuity, which could stem from the fact that there was not enough time for this during the congress. All interviews were conducted in English, which was not the native language of some of the interviewees. They mainly gave short summaries of their lives, interspersed with some anecdotes. Overall, the material is very limited and methodologically difficult to assess. However, it is also clear that this was not a historiographically sound project, and the methodological aspects we know about hardly

correspond to the stricter criteria of OH (SANDER 2015: 22). However, this enterprise certainly contributed towards raising awareness on OH in T&I research, as can be seen from the fact that it is referred to in relevant T&I studies.

5.2.4. Languages at War

The project *Languages at War: policies and practices of language contacts in conflict* (LaW), funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council, is carried out by the University of Reading, the University of Southampton, and the Imperial War Museum in London. It "seeks to test the theoretical frameworks set by language policies for war against the experiences of those at the sharp end of conflict". The project

> *takes a comparative approach to the task, analysing two related but contrasting case-studies, one on liberation/occupation (Western Europe, 1944-47), based at Reading, and one on peacekeeping (Bosnia, 1995-1998), based at Southampton.* (UNIVERSITY OF READING n.d. a)

The project uses a focussed approach to the accounts and memories of participants in conflict, encouraged precisely by the lack of systematic study of language experience in war (UNIVERSITY OF READING n.d. b). The LaW project does not explicitly focus on T&I, but undoubtedly constitutes an important contribution to the historiography of T&I.

A number of publications have emerged from the project, such as Baker (2010a, 2010b), Baker & Askew (2010), Footitt (2010a, 2010b), Footitt and Kelly (2012), Footitt and Tobia (2013), Tobia (2010a, 2010b). The book *Languages at War* by Footitt and Kelly (2012), which represents the most salient outcome of the project, aims at contributing "to a re-mapping of conflict in which foreign languages are seen to be central to our future understanding of war" (2012: x). In line with that (cf. chapter 5.1.), the authors note that the use of languages in military history is usually mentioned en passant at best, and that this mostly concerns diplomatic negotiations at the end of the war or in the post-war period. They also recognise that the role of translators and interpreters has been largely ignored by historians, while linguists and T&I scholars are increasingly addressing this. The book, like the project itself, aims at showing the extent to which foreign languages are an integral and essential aspect of war history. In their investigation of the role of languages and T&I in the context of war, the researchers draw on two case studies: the liberation and occupation of Europe after World War II and the peace operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s. The perspectives of translators and interpreters are complemented by those of the military in order to provide a more complete impression. The sources used comprise written material from archives and other historical documents in which translators and interpreters are mentioned—generally, they appear only as marginal figures, but implicit information contained within these texts clearly shows that they are present in every phase of the conflict. Since most documents on the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina have not yet been released to the public, the authors draw on more than 50 OH interviews with interpreters, translators, military personnel and employees of diverse NGOs. The interviews are integrated into the collection of the Imperial War

Museum, London, a key partner in the project which boasts an unrivalled coverage of international conflict dating back to 1914, including some 60,000 hours of sound recordings (UNIVERSITY OF READING n.d. b). As languages play a pivotal role in the lives of most of the interviewees, the interviews are largely biographical.

Although the project cannot be considered a project on T&I in the strict sense, important lessons for T&I history can be drawn from the results, with sources being used which had not been considered by T&I historians up to that point. For example, in the chapter on the Nuremberg Trials (FOOTITT & KELLY 2012: 171-174), an interview from the Imperial War Museum with the interpreter George H. Vassiltchikov, a Russian emigrant who had been in France working with the Resistance between 1942 and 1945, is analysed. In this interview, which, like the rest of the interviews archived at the Imperial War Museum, was not considered by any of the relevant publications on interpreting at the Nuremberg Trials from the perspective of T&I research (such as GAIBA 1998, KALVERKÄMPER & SCHIPPEL 2008, or HERZ 2011, cf. chapter 5.1.), Vassiltchikov speaks about the recruitment tests and the working conditions of the interpreters at the Nuremberg Trials.

5.2.5. Voices of the Invisible Presence

Kumiko Torikai's *Voices of the Invisible Presence* (2009), based on the author's PhD thesis from 2006, examines the role of interpreters in the economic, political, and social context of post-war Japan and the development of the profession (cf. also TORIKAI 2010). It stems from the only truly comprehensive OH project that deals specifically with T&I (more precisely, with interpreting), and that can be identified without doubt as OH, even after a stricter interpretation of the criteria (cf. SANDER 2015: 25). As with other authors, the premise of her study is the insight that interpreters are usually invisible and that, although they lend their voice to others, their own voice is never heard (TORIKAI 2009: 1). Therefore, in order to bring them to the fore, Torikai wants to use her OH-based study "to listen to the voices of the invisible" (2009: 7). Although she states that the OH method allows us access not only to the viewpoints of individuals who act as leaders and decision-makers, but also to viewpoints from the unknown majority (TORIKAI 2009: 11), it should be critically noted that once again, the *Höhenkamm* principle is a key feature within this work. The five interpreters she selected for the OH interviews are actually interpreters who worked in rather prominent positions and should rather be identified as part of the elite of the profession. Torikai herself admits that they are not actually average interpreters (she calls them *pioneers*!), but nonetheless believes that their extraordinary stories, when read together, represent a valuable dimension of the overall picture of the Japanese society after World War II and provide a revealing insight into the interpreting profession (TORIKAI 2009: 16). The complete interview data, recorded on CDs, as well as the transcripts, are available in the Hartley Library at the University of Southampton, UK, where Torikai submitted her PhD thesis (TORIKAI 2014).

For Andres (2010: 271), Torikai's study of the perspectives of five Japanese interpreters fills a gap in the history of interpreting and constitutes a remarkable contribution both to the history of T&I in general as well as to that of Japanese T&I in particular;

therefore it also contributes towards overcoming the extensive restriction of T&I research to the Western world (cf. ANDRES 2010: 268).

5.2.6. Los traductores de árabe del Estado español

Los traductores de árabe del Estado español. Del protectorado a nuestros días 'The Arabic translators of the Spanish State. From the protectorate to the present day' by Arias Torres and Feria García (2012) is partially based on interviews that, taking a laxer approach to the criteria, can be seen as OH. The book includes eleven interviews with members of the Arabic and Berber Interpreting Corps, which have been analysed for the purpose of the study. The book traces and analyses the history of the Arabic translation and interpretation service in Spain from the beginning of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century. According to Cáceres Würsig (2013: 225), the volume is very innovative, not only because of the subject matter, but also because of the methodology used. In order to reconstruct the facts, the authors have drawn extensively on primary archive sources both public and personal, oral sources from contemporary eye witnesses, and photographs.

5.2.7. Recepción de las teorías traductológicas alemanas en Cuba y Colombia

Despite not being identified by the author as an OH project or an OH-based project, Sander Zequeira García's PhD project *Recepción de las teorías traductológicas alemanas en Cuba y Colombia* 'Reception of German theories on T&I in Cuba and Colombia' (ZEQUEIRA GARCÍA 2012, 2013), meets a wide range of the criteria specified for OH and shall therefore also be mentioned in this context. The starting point for the project was Zequeira García's conviction, based on his own experience in these three countries, that German translation theories were being received in Cuba and Colombia. In order to supplement the written documents collected to gather information about the cultural and scientific exchange between the aforementioned countries and, in particular, the impact of German T&I studies on T&I research, teaching and practice in the Caribbean, Zequeira García took elements from different types of interviews, at all times considering that his witnesses/informants came from different cultures and social backgrounds, with different working languages, positions, academic backgrounds and academic levels. In his semi-standardised interviews, later described and analysed, his aim was to gain an understanding of the knowledge that these persons had about T&I, that is, the centre of his focus was the content. As Zequeira García points out (2012: 41), the aim was to interfere with the statements of the interviewees as little as possible. The main selection criterion was that the interviewed persons had studied, worked or published in the field of T&I in Germany (GDR and FRG), Colombia or Cuba; furthermore, Zequeira García took into account the period in which they had studied, as well as their language combinations. He personally interviewed a total of 66 translators, interpreters, and teachers of T&I in Cuba (41) and Colombia (25) with six different language combinations (Arabic-Spanish, German-Spanish, English-Spanish, Italian-Spanish, Portuguese-Spanish and Russian-Spanish). Among other things, the study shows that the transmission of aspects of German translation theories to Cuba and Colombia was conditioned by

the individual interests of the persons and by the ideological orientation of the different countries, which determined the exchange in the academic field. Other factors of interest, such as political, economic, linguistic, and demographic criteria, had an impact on the extent of the influence of German theories in the two Latin American countries (cf. ZEQUEIRA GARCÍA 2012: 328). The interviews were transcribed, but only the parts contained in the PhD thesis are accessible.

5.2.8. The Professionalization of Medical Interpreting in the United States

In order to analyse the professionalisation process of medical interpreting in the United States and use the findings to provide suggestions for Japan, Takesako and Nakamura (2013) interviewed initial members of the world's oldest association of medical interpreters and analysed the transcripts through thematic analysis. Japan is a country that faces a rise in its foreign population and, as patients are currently being forced to use ad hoc interpreters, it has a strong need for medical interpreting services. Therefore, the authors intended to draw upon the experiences of some of the founding members of the International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA), originally the MMIA until 2007. The authors were able to recruit three founders who introduced them to another five initial group members: two refugees from Cambodia, one "resettler" from Tibet, three participants born in Mexico, Portugal, and Argentina, and two U.S.-born individuals (2013: 280). The participants ranged from 40 to 70 years of age; six of them worked as professional interpreters and trainers simultaneously. The interviews, which lasted an average of 60 minutes and were recorded between 2010 and 2012 and transcribed verbatim, were conducted in English. The participants signed written consent documents and authorised the authors to disclose their names upon explanation of the risk that former MMIA members could identify them. The participants of the study were asked the following questions: "How did you start and how did you overcome the challenges?" and "Who helped advance the profession?". Thus, from the point of view of some authors, this study could not be classified as OH in the narrower sense, as it was not based on biographical interviews, but rather on interviews in which participants answered only a few very concrete questions.[8]

5.2.9. Lingüística Migratoria e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos

A recent study in the field of T&I which makes use of OH is Marta Estévez Grossi's PhD project, published as *Lingüística Migratoria e Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos. La comunidad gallega en Alemania* 'Migratory Linguistics and Interpreting

[8] One of these two authors, Kazumi Takesumi, apparently completed a doctorate at Osaka University on this very subject (2014), but this study could not be found yet. Estévez Grossi mentions that she accessed the PhD thesis in 2017, but the link she provides leads to the online catalogue of the Osaka University Knowledge Archive; a search in the Osaka University Repository for the title given by Estévez Grossi (2018) yielded no results, and, in fact, an online search for the title brings practically no results, i.e. almost only hits for publications by Estévez Grossi herself, who mentions the PhD thesis on several occasions. This means that not only the data, but also the results, are probably no longer publicly accessible.

in Public Services. The Galician Community in Germany' (Estévez Grossi 2018). The book, published in 2018, presents Estévez Grossi's diachronic project on the communicative situation of migrant workers from Galicia (Spain) in Hanover (Germany) in the 1960s and 1970s and their need for community interpreting. 25 interviews with Galician immigrants in Hanover were conducted, of which 22 were included in the analysis. As in the case of Zequeira García's (2012) data, only the excerpts quoted in the published study are accessible. As the author explicitly states,

> *this project cannot be considered as an Oral History project in the strict sense. This is because some of the precepts of oral history have not been followed in this research, such as making interviews available to the public (Ritchie 2003: 24, Shopes 2002: 590, Yow 2005: 72, Samuel 2003: 392) or sending a preliminary version of the transcripts to the interviewees for their approval (Yow 2005: 143).* (Estévez Grossi 2018: 118, my translation)

The study identifies the cultural strategies followed by the Galician migrant community in Hanover and shows that the need for interpretation services was actually covered by individuals in a non-institutional way, i.e., without action by the German state.

Based on her project, Estévez Grossi (2017b) formulates a methodological proposal for empirical research into interpreting in public services without direct access to the object of study, i.e. encounters mediated by interpreters.

Estévez Grossi's study on community interpreting is an example of how OH in the broader understanding of the criteria is applied in T&I (which itself is often referred to as interdisciplinary because it uses the methods of various disciplines) in a study that per se is also interdisciplinary (cf. chapter 4). It is difficult to say whether T&I is using the OH method here to create a corpus (which is unpublished and thus only to be considered OH through generous interpretation) which then serves as the basis for an analysis from a translatological perspective, among others, or whether it is a study to be located between T&I, history, social sciences, and various other approaches or disciplines. Estévez Grossi herself refers to her project as an example of the interdisciplinary character of diachronic research on community interpreting (cf. Estévez Grossi 2017a, 2017b, 2018). It is noteworthy that she does not include historical studies in this context, but places OH exclusively in the social sciences (cf. chapter 4).

5.2.10. Problems of translation and interpreting in the context of Syrian refugees in Halle (Saale)

According to the UN Refugee Agency, more than one million Syrian war refugees came to Europe between 2011 and 2019, around 770,000 of whom now live in Germany. As a result, the importance of T&I with Arabic, including that practiced by non-professional translators and interpreters, has increased considerably. This ongoing PhD project by Malek Al Refaai at the IALT at Leipzig University examines the conditions and problems of T&I in the context of asylum procedures for Syrian refu-

gees in Halle (Saale), Germany. The project is based on OH interviews with both a large group of Syrian refugees who underwent the asylum process in Halle and the translators and interpreters involved. It aims to determine what experiences people had with T&I during the asylum process, for example, analysing the problems the Syrian refugees had because of alleged or genuinely poor T&I services, the reasons for alleged errors, and how the refugees themselves view the role of translators and interpreters in the asylum-seeking process. On the other hand, the project enquires into what qualified the translators and interpreters involved for this work, and if there were aspects that might make an interpreter or translator seem unsuitable for the process. The ultimate aim is to identify problems and possible solutions for research and those responsible in comparable situations.

According to strict criteria, this project can only partly be classified as OH, as the life stories of those involved are not surveyed as a whole; although the individuals' biographies naturally play an important role in the narratives, the asylum procedure is in the foreground. The interviews have been made anonymous, and are only preserved as such in the transcription.

5.2.11. Other OH interviews with interpreters and translators

The interviews conducted in the context of the projects presented so far are not the only existing OH interviews with interpreters and translators. Different OH archives actually also store this type of interviews, mostly biographical interviews. The University of South Florida, for example, provides access to hundreds of interviews from the Carlton-Anthony Tampa Oral History Project from 1977 to 2010 (University of South Florida n.d.); among them the 1996 interview with Werner von Rosenstiel, a former Wehrmacht soldier who defected to the American Army in World War II and served as an interpreter for Hermann Göhring during the Nuremberg War Crime Trials (Von Rosenstiel & Kleine 1996). Another example is the database of the Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training, which allows the general public online access to more than 2300 interviews with former participants in the US foreign affairs process, conducted since 1986 as part of the framework of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program; the interview collection spans over 80 years and around 60 new interviews are added annually (Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training n.d.). This database also contains interviews with interpreters but, as Sander (2015: 27) states, searching for such interviews is difficult both because of the lack of user-friendly search options, and because of the fact that, apparently, not all the interviews of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program are actually publicly available.

5.2.12. Synopsis

The preceding overview of OH in T&I research clearly shows that the studies are very diverse in terms of their alignment with the principles of OH, with some aligning more closely, and some less so. This strongly reflects the existence of a continuum that ranges from strictly OH to OH studies which are more peripheral (cf. chapter 5.2.1. on recourse to OH). This also becomes evident from the fact that various authors explicitly identify their studies as research projects that only partially conform

to the principles of OH, while others explicitly present their projects as OH studies. The existing studies or projects represent different approaches—for instance, there are OH-producing and OH-based approaches—and cover a wide range of topics, from conference interpreting to medical interpreting, court interpreting and community interpreting, knowledge transfer, and the training of translators and interpreters. They deal with both amateur and professional interpreters; look at a wide variety of settings from international institutions to national agencies, offices and courtrooms, war zones and hospitals; and they cover a large variety of languages, continents, and cultural areas.

Thus, in a great variety of forms, and contrary to the view of some authors who believe that OH has thus far played no role in T&I studies, OH has already gained an undeniable place in T&I research in recent decades.

Now that the background and the foundations of OH have been explained, the Oral History of Translation and Interpreting project carried out at the IALT shall be examined in closer detail.

6. The IALT Oral History of Translation and Interpreting project

6.1. Project history and objectives

The IALT Oral History of Translation and Interpreting project aims at tracing the history of training and professional activity in the field of T&I in (East) Germany on the basis of the protagonists, and to go beyond what 'a few prominent figures' have said about the practice from their own experience and point of view, what 'a few scientists' have written about the didactics and theory of T&I from an academic point of view, and what is documented in university archives.

In the course of our work on the positions and the history of the Leipzig School of Translation (cf. Wotjak et al. 2013, Jung et al. 2013, Batista et al. 2019, Sinner 2020c), questions have repeatedly arisen concerning the implementation of the manifold theoretical findings in T&I didactics and the development of T&I training, both at Leipzig University in particular and at the T&I institutes of the GDR in general.

Some of the persons involved in the project had themselves been trained in Leipzig. When looking at the views of individuals on the achievements of the Leipzig School, they repeatedly made additions to these, with the routines within the department also presenting a different perspective on certain aspects that were dealt with. Therefore, it soon became clear that a few individual opinions and recounts, especially those of individuals who were directly involved in research and T&I training, would have to be supplemented by the memories of "average" graduates that were not exceptional (in the sense of the *Höhenkamm* principle). In particular, this would allow for aspects which are difficult to assess but which may be problematic in the overall picture that we wished to draw, such as embellishments due to professional pride, explanations based on vanity, personal resentments, etc. to be balanced out as far as possible or relativised by other perspectives. It became clear that it was necessary to include many representations of the circumstances analysed in the project in order to bring together detailed information that would allow us to, for example, understand certain

developments such as the languages on offer, or to gain insight into the consequences of study reforms that were apparently implemented at some point (cf. in this sense RITCHIE 2003: 48).

Thus, the aim was to find a way to avoid a restriction to the standpoint and beliefs of rather privileged and prominent persons, as we feared a distortion of the perspective on this specific domain of T&I history were we only to speak to individuals with a high level of involvement in the development of the academic discipline of T&I research and didactics. These considerations led to OH as the obvious approach when it comes to gathering an insight into the views of "non-privileged", average persons.

By gathering as many instances as possible of individual memories and opinions of T&I training and practice, we wanted to avoid the limitation of unwillingly adopting a perspective that evokes the effects of the *Höhenkamm* principle as mentioned before and rather to aim towards outlining a picture of the collective memory and experience of a particular professional, that is to say, social group: translators and interpreters in the GDR.

With regard to the training of T&I, our concern was to supplement the written documentation available to us (such as ministerial decisions, documents on the study programmes, course catalogues, student statistics, staff plans, or material from postgraduate or continuing training programmes) with information from contemporary witnesses: students and teachers. The existing statistics, for example, were sometimes obviously or apparently incomplete or contradictory; many aspects could not be interpreted clearly. The programmatic information in the curricula or the titles and short descriptions in the preserved course catalogues did not always provide accurate information about the actual content covered in seminars or the techniques dealt with in practical courses.

The intention was to consider the experiences and thoughts of the graduates and, at the same time, gain more insight into the T&I profession in the GDR. The latter was of particular importance to us, as the little knowledge the members of the research group had about the different aspects of T&I practice in the GDR contrasted starkly with the excellent overview we had of the professional careers of post-GDR graduates of the institute, thanks to regular surveys (cf. KADZIMIRSZ 2005, WELZEL 2011, MÜLLER 2015) conducted, among other reasons, in order to be able to master the challenges of optimising training, adapting to the changing labour market and developing new teaching methods, especially with regard to meeting the requirements placed upon the institute as a member of CIUTI, "the world's oldest and most prestigious international association of university institutes with translation and interpretation programmes" (CIUTI 2020).

These are the main reasons for the decision to run a long-term project on the OH of T&I which is now being carried out at the Institute of Applied Linguistics and Translatology (IALT) at Leipzig University.

It is being conducted as a longitudinal study directed by the Chair of Ibero-Romance Linguistics and Translation Studies at the IALT, with the participation of the research assistants of the Chair. Students are involved via teaching projects as part of their studies in the field of T&I (B.A. Translation, M.A. Conference Interpreting, and M.A.

Translatology) or via final theses as part of the project. The project is budget-financed on the one hand and indirectly funded through research scholarships for project staff and students on the other. Since foundations or national institutions (in this case, the German Research Foundation DFG) (cf. chapter 3.1.) do not normally award research funding for data collection, but rather for the investigation of precisely defined research questions that are to be carried out in a limited period of time, corresponding grant applications will be submitted once sufficient data collection (OH interviews) has been carried out within the framework of the given infrastructure.

The project is intended as a contribution to the history of T&I in general, and to that in Germany and the GDR in particular. At the same time, since the interviews defined within the Core Principles of OH are basically biographic narrations, the existing OH interviews of different social groups on different periods of life in Germany are to be extended to include a more average view on events, one which is based on the individual and collective experiences of another professional group working in Germany: T&I experts.

The basic stock of national history is provided by victories and defeats, heroes and martyrs alike (GEWECKE 1996: 2020), but the construction and preservation of a series of collective experiences and leading figures of identification which, together, help to "establish and perpetuate national dignity and self-assertion, 'culture'" (GEWECKE 1996: 2020, my translation), is of prime importance. This is a task which would also, but not exclusively, fall to "national" historiography. The aim of the IALT project is to capture the collective experiences and memories of a specific professional group: experts in T&I practice, teaching, and research. In addition, the aim is not to search for and look at only the outstanding leading figures, but, at most, to use the narratives of the interviewees to establish which leading figures in the field of T&I exist from the collective perspective. This aim is thus also linked to the objectives of Zequeira García (2012), who was able to identify, among other things, the key figures in the training and practice of translation studies by analysing interviews with experts in T&I from Cuba and Colombia (cf. chapter 5.2.7.).

The IALT Oral History of Translation and Interpreting project follows the Core Principles of the Oral History Association, considering OH a method (which is applied in order to gather insight into the history of T&I), and the recorded and transcribed interviews are seen as a series of pieces of OH sources that altogether make up an archive of OH sources that can be used as such.

In the project, interviews are carried out with persons who studied or taught T&I at a German university or worked as interpreters and translators in post-war East Germany (to be extended later to both German states and the reunified Germany)[9], in order to draw conclusions about T&I in the GDR (and later, in Germany in general). In doing so, aspects that concern interpreters and translators, their professional practice, the teaching of T&I, and the overall evolution of T&I over recent generations are

[9] In addition, interviews with people from other German-speaking areas are also being conducted when the opportunity arises.

explored. Some aspects may be transferable to groups of people with comparable social background, a comparable level of education, or to the population as a whole, exactly as has been done in ethnography and history (cf. the section on Ortner in chapter 4). Seen in this light, the OH study on the historiography of T&I presented here is, at the same time, a study that goes beyond the history of the discipline and the profession to provide material (and insight) for historiography in general.

A further objective that is conceivable at present is that, at a later stage of the OH project (once enough interviews have been collected in order to have a solid basis for such additional research), the accessible interviews from the T&I projects described in chapter 5.2. will be used for comparison and contrast regarding general or specific aspects, depending on the focus of future projects.

Previously unknown or unreported aspects of training and professional practice can also be uncovered. Therefore, in addition, it is important to address how the material gained from the interviews can be integrated and used in T&I training at the IALT or in T&I training in general, because

> *In other areas of research, too, mere information is not yet processed history, and it is not really clear why tape recordings should be an exception here. Therefore, the real question of what happens to oral history beyond tapes, how it is processed into representations of history or incorporated into them is becoming increasingly urgent*. (FRISCH & WATTS 1985: 222, my translation)

6.2. Project outline

Based on findings in the preliminary studies for an OH project that confirm that this method is suitable for the targeted objectives (cf. DUVE 2014), we first gained an overview of the history and status quo of OH which allowed to set the fundamental theoretical directions for further practice-oriented work, the outline of the project, the conducting of the interviews, the handling and archiving of the interview transcriptions, and the dissemination and use of the research results. Following the examination of the theoretical basis of OH—the concept, history, potential, and limits thereof—and the detailed analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of different interview types, the possibilities and limitations of transcriptions, different approaches to the interpretation of the interview content, the technical foundation of the study was developed (cf. URSINUS 2014, SANDER 2015, LIERSCH 2016, STEUDEL 2016, SINNER 2017, 2018, SCHOLZ 2020). In Ursinus (2014), methodological and technical aspects were analysed in detail.

For the evaluation and processing of the interviews, specific rules for transcription, indexing and archiving were developed and tested with an initial test interview (cf. SANDER 2015: 95-191), and further developed and fixed in later project studies.

Liersch (2016) conducted the first regular OH interview within the OH in T&I project, interviewing individuals who completed their T&I studies at the Karl Marx University Leipzig, which also served the purpose of reviewing the previously developed guidelines.

Steudel's study aims to relate the planning of the OH interviews with the situation of T&I training in Leipzig in particular. Therefore, she first describes language mediation training at the various institutions in Leipzig before 1945, during the post-war period and, finally, after reunification of the two German states, concentrating on the period of most interest for the project, i.e. 1956 (integration of T&I training at the Karl Marx University) to 1990 (cf. STEUDEL 2016: 15-38).

Sinner (2017, 2018) carries out a synoptic analysis of the research carried out in the project so far, particularly with regard to the advantages and disadvantages of certain methodological aspects, as well as any necessary changes or further regulations in the project guidelines.

Scholz (2020) presents a study on the use of university archives and, in particular, student statistics for planning OH interviews. She examines statistics for the entire period of T&I training at the Karl Marx University Leipzig from 1956 to 1990 in the predecessor institutions of the IALT, among them, the "Sektion" Theoretical and Applied Linguistics for Training in Foreign Language Philologies ("Sektion TAS") established in 1969, by bringing together several institutions, among them the former *Dolmetscher-Institut* 'Interpreting Institute'.

A closer look at the statistics makes it possible not only to consult the total number of students enrolled in T&I training in specific years; it also, for example, allows us to gain an impression of the effects of social changes on the planning of study programmes and development in T&I training on the basis of numbers for new enrolments and exmatriculations and the figures for the specific language combinations on offer. From the statistical overviews, many other aspects can also be deduced in addition to the enrolment figures: lists of students in the respective academic years, social composition, the number of foreign students, doctorates and habilitations, sometimes even the reasons for leaving the university or details such as marital status, the number of students with children, or year of birth (SCHOLZ 2020: 7-8).

The study shows that the data can be used to determine particular characteristics and to identify ambiguities, as well as to emphasise certain aspects that should be brought up in OH interviews or which have to be looked at more closely when analysing said interviews. As the GDR had a planned economy, the identified or anticipated need for translators and interpreters must have had an impact on study programmes and enrolments, and therefore statistics can be assumed to be an indicator, for example, of the impact of developments in foreign policy and diplomacy on the planning of university education, i.e. the study programmes, degrees and subjects taught. Links such as these are, consequently, the main focus of the statistics-based research.

In addition, Scholz (2020) conducts OH interviews, applying her results from the archive research to select interviewees who had the potential to provide important insights into further optimising the design of the for certain profiles, for example, regarding student status or the languages taught:

- To meet the demand for interpreters in the *Nationale Volksarmee* (NVA), the National People's Army of the GDR, persons studying as civilian students completed a normal T&I degree at the university on behalf of the NVA, followed by an officer's course, before being sent to the intended post in the NVA, i.e. as a military

interpreter or translator.[10] At least in some years, these students appear in the statistics of the Karl Marx University Leipzig (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 24-30, chapter 6.3.4.)

- There are very frequently studied languages (like Russian), that also usually appear in combination with other foreign languages (like Russian and English, or Russian and French), as well as languages that were usually only studied in smaller groups and were "on offer" only occasionally, only in certain periods (like Portuguese), or even exceptionally (such as Swahili).

The interviews themselves also led to an extension of the list of questions to be included in the interviews, some of them specific to certain sub-groups (cf. infra).

A strict distinction between the three main interview types—the expert interview which refers to a specific section of the subject of study, the thematic interview whose structure is more open and narrative, and the biographical interview, which refers to the interviewee's entire life story (cf. chapter 3.2.)—was deliberately dispensed with. At first glance, the IALT Oral History of Translation and Interpreting project is primarily concerned with the second type of interview, the thematic interview. However, the strict separation between the interview types appears artificial (cf. URSINUS 2014: 29) and not entirely convincing or even feasible in practice, and the differentiation therefore only served as a guide for the OH interviews conducted as part of the project.

It was decided on a combination of the interview types in consideration. On the one hand, the interviews focus on a specific topic, namely the experiences and memories of the interviewees that are relevant with regard to T&I training and practice. On the other hand, the entire life story of the interviewees can be relevant to the project, as this allows for attempts to be made to identify overlaps and differences in the lives of interpreters and translators by means of their individual life stories. The biographical orientation is important since individual biographies, for example, individual linguistic biographies—which language was learned for what reason in which context, etc.—, or how a person became involved in T&I activity and training, are paramount when it comes to creating an overall picture.

The target group and, thus, each individual interviewed, is selected according to their relation to T&I; criteria for the selection of the interview partners are age and availability (in terms of time and space: a place of residence or workplace that can be managed to access from Leipzig without a high expenditure of time and money; cf. RITCHIE 2003: 40). At the beginning of an OH project, it is advisable to first interview the oldest persons that are eligible for the research project (RITCHIE 2003: 48) and, thus, older candidates for the IALT Oral History of Translation and Interpreting project are interviewed with priority. The acquisition of interview partners is further achieved through a combination of the findings from the analysis of archive material (especially statistics), the use of the role of the interviewer or project director as insiders, and the use of gatekeepers and snowball sampling (cf. chapter 3.2.). Student statistics were used, for example, to determine which languages were represented to

[10] Information on this is provided in an eyewitness account (VOIGT 1997: n.p.), cf. Scholz (2020: 30).

what extent in order to be able to draw on a sufficient number of interviewees for the existing language combinations.

Care is always taken to allow sufficient time for the interviews so as not to have to interrupt the narrative flow and to avoid fatigue. Interviews should preferably not last longer than two hours, as the interviewee (or the interviewer himself) might otherwise become tired or impatient and more easily distracted, however flexibility in this regard is indispensable, as it is impossible to know beforehand how much someone will have to say (cf. RITCHIE 2003: 49, SINNER 2004a: 173-174). It is also possible to arrange two or more interview appointments, in which case additional notes are required during or after the interview sessions (cf. infra). With regard to time and place, the interviewer should adapt to the wishes of the interviewee, and while some authors recommend that the interviews be conducted in the interviewee's home, (STÖCKLE 1990: 136, WIERLING 2003: 112), the location should at least be a quiet place that allows for good sound and image, and minimises distractions.

The participants of the project are interviewed following an interview guideline (cf. infra), in half-open method, as the focus is not on a single experience, but on the entire experience relevant to T&I.

Some participants, in addition to being trained and working in T&I, are also involved in teaching or research in T&I, thus providing a different "degree of expertise" than other individuals that make up the group. People who were involved in teaching, responsible for course content, acted as programme directors, etc. have specific insights into the training, academic planning, and decision-making processes and are therefore experts in this realm.

There are cases in which, due to their individual history, and, for example, because of their present or past professional or social position—a political position, a role in a commission that oversaw the professional activity of interpreters and translators, selected them for assignments or helped determine criteria for selection for the profession—, the interviewees are able to judge certain aspects quite differently from their peers, especially if, in addition to their professional experience in T&I, they also had insights into the reasons for some processes.

As the professional translators and interpreters are, in turn, experts in the practice of T&I, all of these interviewees are, to a certain extent, also to be regarded as experts. And yet, we are not conducting purely expert interviews, but integrating this perspective into the interviews whenever necessary or suitable; here it is not distinguished between expert and biographical aspects. Therefore, all are interviewed according to the same pattern, however the questions may vary depending on the individual profile. This is because all interviewees have a biography and experiences, and their statements can show external influences and connections with other aspects, be they experts with respect to a particular aspect of the OH project or not. The personal or private sphere is of interest insofar as it has an impact on an individual's "access" to T&I and their perspective on it. Thus, due to their function in the project, the interviews with experts are, at the same time, thematic interviews. This does not mean, however, that individual interviewees cannot be interviewed separately in a further expert interview in addition to the actual OH interview. Nevertheless, in the event of

such an additional interview, the resulting material is not treated as an OH interview, but as further project material.

In this context, it should also be mentioned that additional interviews are carried out with persons who do not belong to the focus group in order to complement the OH interviews and cover further aspects. For example, interviews were conducted with some of the first Cuban interpreters in the GDR in the late 1950s and early 1960s, individuals who came to the GDR for reasons other than T&I training, like studying economics or engineering, and who then worked in T&I at some point and happened to meet German T&I experts, or other Cuban students who worked in T&I in the GDR or even became active in teaching (such as Óscar Tamayo, who came to the GDR as a student, later worked as an interpreter and translator, and finally taught interpreting and translation at Humboldt University, Berlin). As the interviewees had Spanish as their mother tongue, and some of them had not spoken German in decades, they were interviewed in Spanish (cf. infra regarding the language choice).

No standardised questionnaires are used for the OH interviews. An interview guideline with essential questions and possible additional questions was produced to provide orientation and direction for the interviewer and to ensure the comparability of the interviews in terms of the content or aspects dealt with (cf. SANDER 2015: 55-57, SCHOLZ 2020: 56-58). Such guidelines are recommended even if the project and overall context has been clarified in advance (cf. WIERLING 2003: 111-112).

The interviews start with the introduction of the interviewees, and the names of the participating individuals, the date, place, etc. and consent to the project are detailed. The interviewees are then asked to present themselves. If still necessary and, depending on the objectives of the project, more information is asked with regard to the family background or more details in the individual's own history (which is obviously usually closely interwoven with the family history). Furthermore, additional questions are asked during the interview surrounding the following topics:

- education
- language acquisition
- school
- if applicable, the procedure of the entrance exam(s) at the university
- language choice: were the languages studied at the university chosen freely (and for which reasons) or were they *gelenkt* or *delegiert* 'assigned'/'allocated'; was the individual asked to approve the language allocation, and were the reasons for this allocation explained or discussed?
- professional training and/or university study
- ideological aspects: was the university study perceived as being influenced by ideological aspects, i.e. did it have a "good" attitude towards the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei* 'Socialist Unity Party'; did this have a positive effect on the course of the study programme and on performance (i.e. grades)?
- final dissertation and, if applicable, PhD
- career entry, including the question of whether the training represented sufficient preparation for professional reality

- professional life
- customer acquisition
- preparation for assignments
- cooperation with colleagues
- significant events or experiences in practicing T&I, both positive and negative
- relationship between personal and professional life (for instance, if they are compatible or if they influence one another)
- presentation and discussion of documents, photographs, books, etc., the interviewees would like to share
- potential additional questions on the basis of student statistics (cf. infra)
- potentially as a closing question: has the profession changed, and how?

Depending on the specific profile of the interviewee, and also depending on the student statistics, certain other questions are also asked. In the case of interviewees who had lived abroad or were able (or allowed) to study abroad, there are questions about the why and how of the stay abroad itself and how it influenced their personal and professional life. Men, for example, will also be asked questions regarding the military or alternative (social) service.

The military apparently played an important role in training T&I specialists as it wanted its needs to be met. Therefore, this had an impact on T&I training; there were even men who studied T&I as part of their military career, that is, they attended training courses, also at the university, as soldiers with special student status (cf. supra, and chapter 6.3.4.). The professional questions also depended on whether a person was trained only as an interpreter or a translator, or if they were exclusively active in one field of activity.

The list of questions used in the interviews is not meant to serve as a literal template. It is mainly intended to orient the interviewers and to act as a support in order to be able to stimulate or maintain the narrative flow, if necessary. The actual form and order of the questions is determined by the course of the interview itself. The items on the interview guideline are ticked off like a checklist during the interview, in the course of the narration, in order to mark aspects that have been 'dealt with' as such and to avoid repetition. Another important purpose of the guideline is therefore to ensure that all questions are covered. The order of the questions does not matter, questions can be asked where it seems most appropriate, and aspects that have been sufficiently discussed by the interviewees do not need to be asked again. The aforementioned unnecessary repetitions can irritate the interviewees and even give them the impression that they are not being listened to, or that what they are saying is not relevant to the project, which could obviously impact their conversational behaviour and their willingness to talk.

During the interview itself, however, notes are made to ensure that certain aspects are addressed later on, at the end of the current narration, or at some other point during the interview. This is important if, for example, an aspect of the list has not been dealt with sufficiently, but should initially be avoided so as not to interrupt the narrative flow unnecessarily. The notes are also important because one session is sometimes

insufficient and several interview sessions need to be conducted (cf. supra). The interview partners should always be given the opportunity to be able to contact the interviewer at a later date in case they have anything to add or material to show, etc.
The interview guideline also reminds the interviewer to obtain consent to use the interview and the interviewee's contact details for scientific purposes. This can (also) be done at the beginning of the interview in the recording itself.
After an interview session, the interviewer is tasked with writing down their impressions of the interview, the interviewee, the situation, their own feelings, irritations, mistakes, any important content in the conversations which took place before and after the recording, as well as spontaneous ideas, for example regarding the interpretation of certain aspects. Such interview minutes or workshop diaries are a valuable tool or source of possibly important information, and they allow the interviewer to record invisible factors that determine an interview which could be useful, for example, if other project staff are involved in processing the interviews, as well as in order to provide other perspectives on the interview during the analysis (STÖCKLE 1990: 137, WIERLING 2003: 124-125, cf. ROSENTHAL 2005: 92). Fogerty (2007) believes that the circumstances surrounding the interview, i.e. its context, "are critical elements to the end user of oral history" (2007: 208) and "an important frame of reference" (2007: 208) (cf. also SANDER 2015: 60, 73-74).
As Ritchie (2003: 108) pointed out, it is difficult to "simply walk out the door with someone's life story", and "sometimes you need to spend some time to talk with the interviewee after the interview, without the recorder running"; Rosenthal (2005: 151) proposes allowing up to half an hour for these conversations. This is why additional notes are so relevant.
In this context, it should be also mentioned that notes from the preliminary conversations carried out with interviewees in the context of establishing first personal contacts for the acquisition of information are archived in the same way as the pre- and post-interview notes. During these conversations, in which the potential interviewees are given explanations regarding the aims of the project, relevant biographical and T&I-specific aspects are often mentioned spontaneously by these persons, which can be relevant both for the project in general and for the design of the interview(s) with these persons, if they happen to be conducted.
Questions are preferably asked in the two-sentence format proposed by Morrissey in 1967 (cf. MORRISSEY 1987) and often recommended by OH scholars and present in the standard guides to OH interviewing (cf. RITCHIE 2003: 92) as this "continually affirms essential elements in the relationship between interviewer and interviewee as co-creators of an oral history document—the questions and answers that constitute the product of this joint endeavor" (MORRISSEY 1987: 44-45). Morrissey (1987: 45) provides the following example given by Willa K. Baum (1977: 32)[11]: "I understand your grandfather came around the Horn to California. What did he tell you about the trip?". Such a format provides the interviewer with a recurring opportunity to explain, in the

[11] BAUM, Willa K. (1977): *Oral History for the Local Historical Society*. Second edition. Nashville, Tn.: American Association for State and Local History, apud Morrissey (1987: 45).

first sentence, why a particular question deserves an informative answer from the interviewee, and the second question usually ends with a question mark, posing a "how" question on top of an answered "what" question (Morrissey 1987: 46). The wording in the second sentence often closely resembles the wordage in the first sentence so as to leave no doubt in the interviewee's mind regarding the question being posed. The relevance of the question is, thus, explained before it is posed, making an average interviewee "understand why it is worth answering and accordingly contribute a more informative response" (Morrissey 1987: 48).

Once the interview methods had been defined and the target group and the methods for analysis had been determined in line with the project objectives, test interviews were carried out (cf. Sander 2015). It is recommended to conduct test interviews before the actual OH survey, as this allows for the evaluation of the technical equipment—in our project, devices for video and audio recordings—and that of the conditions of the interview situation in general. Furthermore, questions, perspectives, and procedures can then be adapted on the basis of the first interviews to be transcribed and evaluated (cf. Rosenthal 2005: 86, Bauer 2006: 42). Technical aspects of the project, such as considerations regarding the right camera angle, etc. cannot be considered in this context (cf. Sander 2015: 67-70).

The language of the interviews carried out by now was usually German, the first language of most people that belong to the target group, but the possibility of choosing other languages was given. When it came to aspects of T&I training in particular, there were also persons with other native languages (and often, other nationalities) (for example, Chileans or Cubans, in the case of Spanish T&I training), and there are also people who were trained in Leipzig but who have not lived in Germany, or visited the country, in decades. In such cases, the language which is most convenient for the interviewee was used.

This rule for language use also applies to the context of any additional interviews which are to be carried out (cf. supra).

After an interview has taken place, it is to be transcribed and proofread several times according to the project guidelines. The pros and cons of the different systems have been discussed repeatedly and in great detail and shall not be dealt with again here.[12]

A transcription guideline is useful and indispensable to ensure that all transcripts are produced in a uniform manner (Sommer & Quinlan 2009: 71, Sander 2015: 81). Experience has shown that it is best to test, refine, and optimise the system while working with the initial interviews, and to then create a valid transcription guide afterwards. The system was tested and further improved (cf. Ursinus 2014, Liersch 2016, and especially Sander 2015: 95-191). A middle ground was struck between a transcription which was sufficiently accurate yet easily readable (cf. Ursinus 2014: 65, Sander 2015: 95). With regard to the adequacy of the observation, the maxims of

[12] Cf. Ehlich & Switalla 1976, Kallmeyer & Schütze 1976, Niethammer 1985, Breckner 1994, Glinka 1998, Mayring 2002, Ritchie 2003, Wierling 2003, Bauer 2006, Dittmar 2009, Sommer & Quinlan 2009, Leavy 2011; cf. Ursinus 2014, Sander 2015 in regard to the IALT Oral History of Translation and Interpreting project.

Dittmar (2009: 84-86), for example, with respect to the aforementioned readability of the transcripts, were taken into account, with partial exception of the usability requirements needed to be met for computer-aided analysis.

Overly detailed transcription is considered to be inappropriate; only facial expressions, gestures or emphasis that change the meaning of what is said should be considered. Although the question of "how" is also important, the question of "what" is in the foreground (cf. URSINUS 2014: 65). Glinka's simple statement "As precisely as necessary, but as consciously as possible" (1998: 23, my translation) applies here.

It seemed appropriate to transcribe the interviews into standard written German. The (phonetic) representation of dialectal peculiarities, for example, are to be avoided, unless, for instance, the particular meaning of a word or its pronunciation influences the meaning or was intended by the speaker; cf. Dittmar (2009: 84) on standard spelling modified according to the purposes of the study; for an authentic marking of the spoken language, this provides for deviations, incomprehensible speech, external interruptions and noise, unusual pauses and explanations from the transcriber to be noted in the script. Non-lexical vocables which occur in spoken language, fillers, etc., such as *äh* or *ähm*, were not transcribed.

Additional information is added for proper names, abbreviations, or terms that were not explained later on or that may not be generally known. This procedure seems necessary also in order to avoid the transience of meaningfulness (that is, to allow for easy accessibility without extensive enquiries) for later generations of researchers.

The transcriber is responsible for deciding whether and where supplementary information is to be added and, therefore, they should possess a degree of sensitivity that has been developed through previous training. One example is the case of *Mitropa-Kellnern* 'Mitropa waiters' in the interview with Dr Bernd Bendixen (BENDIXEN 2020a: 9/30), where the reference "Bewirtungsgesellschaft für Bahnhöfe und Raststätten" 'Catering company for railway stations and service areas' was added.

Transcriptions are made using transcription software (cf. the overview in Scholz 2020: 78-81). Speakers are marked at the beginning of each intervention and in finished transcripts, and lines are numbered (cf. GLINKA 1998: 19, KÜSTERS 2009: 73). The transcription signs used, based on the systems of Kallmeyer and Schütze (1976), Glinka (1998), and Bauer (2006) (cf. SANDER 2015: 95-97) are binding for the ongoing OH interviews, but at the same time are to be understood as a provisional work template, which can or must be changed or extended if necessary in the early course of the OH of T&I project.

The final step of the post-edit can involve indexation, that is, marking of the text regarding content, salient thematic aspects, topoi, etc., that can be linked to keywords (WIERLING 2003: 126). In the OH of T&I project, however, this indexing is carried out in the first analysis phase and corrected or improved in subsequent rounds of analysis in order to correspond to the chosen analysis method.

A form of *Grounded Theory Method* (cf. [A] OH and interdisciplinarity) that had been adapted to the project objectives was chosen as a method of analysis; in addition to the identification of the most relevant topoi, categories, relations, contexts, etc. (cf. GLASER & STRAUSS 1967, STRAUSS & CORBIN 1990, SINNER 2004a: 566-568), the focus

is on the continuous comparison of the oral statements with the available written material.

It was decided not to send the interviewees a preliminary version of the transcript in order to get their approval. This is not only because of the problems described in chapter 3.2, but also because some of the people interviewed are unable or unwilling to work through the manuscripts due to lack of time, their advanced age, partial blindness, etc. If only some of the manuscripts were checked by the interviewees, this would create an additional inequality of conditions—something that is to be avoided.

All interviews, transcriptions, and accompanying material are archived. An online portal providing access to the project data, interviews and research results is currently being designed.

Since not all interviewees are prepared to make the interview public, or some only agree to be interviewed if the recordings are made accessible to a limited extent—e.g. for research purposes only—, in exceptional cases, it had to be decided whether to exclude such informants from the project or to make concessions regarding the intended accessibility of the archived documents. The archive material is thus divided into documents that are freely accessible, those which are accessible only to researchers, and those which are not accessible until the death of the interviewee, and access to the project database is regulated accordingly. It did not seem helpful or purposeful to exclude these interviews completely, as they also contain or may contain valuable, even essential, information. This is particularly true, for example, of some interviews with people who, as political or institutional decision-makers, have important information and insights but are reluctant to have the interviews made accessible or published precisely because of who they are or because of the role they played in society. A similar situation applies to persons who are reluctant to talk about their own political activities or their role in the army, for example, if the content can be linked directly to their person, and there is also the case of people who know they will have to talk about other individuals in order to explain their own life experiences, and only wish to reveal their views in anonymous form.

For this very reason, it was decided to agree to anonymisation in specific cases for the benefit of contributing content to the project. So far, however, nobody has made use of this possibility. The anonymisation of some interviews does not call into question the OH character of this project. Strictly speaking, these interviews are then to be considered additional interviews that cannot be classified as OH in the stricter sense, but which, nevertheless, benefit the project.

In this context, the issue of professional secrecy and confidentiality, seen as the ethical heart of the (conference) interpreting profession (cf. Weiser / Smith 2018) and regarded a life-long obligation by Thiéry (1985, 2018), and the possible breach of professional ethics also plays a role. This is something which cannot not be dealt with here, especially as this topic has been considered or investigated several times in recent years, for example, in connection with interpreting memoirs (cf. chapter 3.2., cf. Bowen 1994: 172, Baigorri-Jalón 2007: 15, Andres 2012a, 2012b: 13, Sander 2015: 17-18); obviously, it is up to the interviewees to decide whether and how they comment on concrete assignments.

Data protection and copyrights are strictly observed, and all authors of studies done on the basis of the OH interviews adhere to ethical and legal guidelines (cf. SANDER 2015: 47-48).

With regard to these aspects, the Oral History Association offers some "General Principles" (cf. OHA 2018a, 2018b) that were adopted for the OH of T&I project, albeit with minor restrictions such as the aforementioned exceptional possibility to ask for anonymisation.

In summary, the OH of T&I project was initiated with the aim of supplementing the history of T&I from the perspective of prominent personalities and alleged "elites" with a more encompassing background picture that is currently non-existent in order to create a general view of T&I in Germany. For pragmatic reasons, the focus of attention will initially be on interpreters and translators trained at the Leipzig University (or its predecessor institution, Karl Marx University Leipzig) and on the German Democratic Republic in general.

The oral sources produced within the project will serve as primary sources that can be used both for the historiography of T&I and in the context of T&I didactics. The resulting interview corpus can also provide new perspectives on the development of T&I training, since it can reveal important aspects of the relation between training and later professional practice from the individual perspective of the graduates. Aspects of training and professional practice that were previously unknown or unreported can be uncovered, e.g. with regard to the reason for certain developments, and insights into historical developments with regard to T&I practice and training can also be provided (cf. RITCHIE 2003: 48).

6.3. First insights and results: some examples

In order to illustrate some of the relevant and meaningful aspects thereof, some of the insights and results obtained from the research that has been carried out so far within the framework of the OH of T&I project will be presented in the following section. Here, focus is placed on the relation to written sources, and to statistical data in the archives in particular.

6.3.1. Reading and interpreting statistics with the help of OH: how statistics orient OH interviews and how OH interviews make statistics readable

The relevance of statistics for determining the T&I population that is ideally to be interviewed has already been mentioned (cf. chapter 6.1.) and shall be dealt with in a more detailed manner here.

The founding of what was initially called the *Dolmetscher-Institut* 'Institute for Interpreting' led to the first instance of student statistics for the training of interpreters and translators in Leipzig being recorded (UAL3 1951-1958, cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 17). For the year 1958, figures are listed in detailed form for the first time, with subdivisions for different language combinations (mostly Russian and other languages of the so-called Eastern Bloc, the group of communist or socialist states in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Polish and Czech, English and French, and also Spanish and (Mandarin) Chinese (UAL2 (1946-1968: 18-24, cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 17)). In 1961,

further combinations with less widely taught languages, such as Arabic, Hindi, and Portuguese, in combination with English, are recorded, while these three languages appear for the last time in 1963. In accordance with the fact that the normal duration of the programme was four years (sometimes supplemented by a preparatory intensive language acquisition course of up to one year), it has to be concluded that the actual duration of the programmes was longer. Since there is no detailed subdivision for 1960 (UAL6 1960: n.p., cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 17), it can be assumed that the three languages were actually first offered in 1960. Interviews with persons who graduated with these languages in 1963 should help to shed light on this aspect and reconstruct how long these languages were taught as part of the programme in this period.

There is another similar case of apparently inexplicable figures in the statistics, i.e. where figures vary from year to year and seem inaccurate or contradictory: the development of the statistics for the combination English / Czech from 1967 to 1969. The combination appears in 1967 for the first time, with 13 students; in 1968 there are 69 new students, amounting to a total of 78 students in this combination (UAL14 1967: 2, UAL 15 1968: 2, cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 18). However, in 1969, 75 students are registered as having finished (or possibly having dropped out of?) the programme, leaving only five students with this language combination (UAL16 1969: n.p., cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 18). So far, there is no explanation for these developments. However, in the preliminary talk to establish contact for an OH interview, a T&I graduate with the combination Russian / Polish, who later became a university lecturer herself, reported on her own access to this combination (HAGENDORF 2020). She first studied Russian and history to become a teacher, but after she had spent a year in a Russian university, she was then "suddenly" reallocated to another study programme: T&I Russian / Polish. Apparently, there was an unexpected lack of Polish translators and interpreters. She believes the fact she spoke fluent Russian and, as part of an exchange programme, had spent a full year at an elite university in Russia, was the decisive factor in selecting her for a change of study programme. As a matter of fact, a full year at the Russian *Maurice Thorez* Institute of Foreign Languages in Moscow was a prerequisite for acceptance into a postgraduate study programme in interpreting for Russian at the Karl Marx University Leipzig; according to Salevsky & Müller (2015: 120), it was specifically compulsory to have passed the basic course in simultaneous interpreting Russian/German and German/Russian at the *Maurice Thorez* Institute (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 16-17). Thus, in this case, a comparable study period abroad may have been seen as an argument for this "reallocation" to another programme, and the relationship between Russian and Polish, both Slavic languages, might also have been a decisive factor when it came to "reorienting" this student. Since she was fluent in Russian and a beginner in Polish, it is clear that it was not possible to integrate her into a single study group. Apparently, the gap in Polish T&I was considered so urgent that someone was allocated to study this language in a year where statistics actually do not show any Polish students with the respective combination of languages and semesters.

Another example concerns the training of T&I for Portuguese in Leipzig. Portuguese appears in the student statistics for the first time in 1961, with six students who studied it in combination with English. However, the number drops to zero in 1963 with-

out any further explanation, with six dropouts recorded, i.e., there were no graduations (UAL7 1961: 37, UAL9 1963: n.p., cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 34). Here too, it is conceivable that students were diverted to other programmes, something that is in line with the functioning of a planned economy such as that of the GDR. The GDR had no direct diplomatic relations with Portuguese-speaking countries and, therefore, the demand for the language must have been much reduced. This changed in the mid-1970s, with the Carnation Revolution in Portugal and the subsequent cooperation agreements with former Portuguese colonies, Mozambique and Angola, which were now independent and under socialist rule. Consequently, enrolment for Portuguese at Leipzig University is resumed in this period.

During her OH interview, Endruschat (2020: 2/37) states that she was among *the first six* students to study Portuguese in Leipzig from 1976 onwards. As the other language Endruschat graduated in was French, and as Scholz (2020: 34) concludes in her analysis of the interview, it can be assumed that, here, she is referring to the language combination French with Portuguese. By providing this information about her studies, Endruschat completes the entries in the statistics because, according to the archives, it is only in 1978 that the first *five* students were enrolled in T&I for the combination French/Portuguese (UAL25 1977: 2, cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 34).

In fact, the interviewee only found out about her "allocation" to study Portuguese after her acceptance to Karl Marx Universität Leipzig, while attending a preparatory camp that brought together all students who were going to start their studies that year. When she was told she was to study Portuguese together with French (which she had applied for), she was surprised, but also relieved she did not have to study Russian. The reasons for this decision were never explained to her (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 34 in more detail).

There is a similar case of "allocation" to the study of Portuguese, this time in the field of language teaching, at Karl Marx University Leipzig, that was analysed for the project. Ines Rabe graduated as an adult education teacher for English and Portuguese in Leipzig (RABE 1991). On the very first day of her university studies, she was asked to report to the administration. There she was given a long speech on the significance of the development of socialism in Mozambique and Angola. She did not know that Portuguese was spoken in these countries but, as she had actually been accepted to study Russian and English, she only hoped she would be allowed to keep English and drop Russian for this other language. It seems that she owed her selection for training in Portuguese to the fact that, in the CV that formed part of her university application, she had mentioned her attendance of a Spanish course at an adult education centre. So again, it was this linguistic proximity that led to her being selected for "redirection".

In terms of student statistics, the interviews were also able to close a gap in these with regard to Swahili. Swahili was introduced as a new language to be included in the education of T&I specialists in Leipzig in 1977, a fact the team members became aware of through an interview with Petra Rennecke (2020). Through the interview, it became clear that the archive signature for the language combination English / Swahili may not be consistently listed in the statistics of T&I studies under the "Sektion" TAS

(Theoretical and Applied Linguistics for Training in Foreign Language Philologies), and that Swahili, which had been taught in only a few small groups over the years, was apparently at least temporarily taught at another "Sektion" of the university, the *Sektion 39 für Afrika- und Nahostwissenschaften* (ANW) 'African and Middle Eastern Studies' (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 75). What is more, Rennecke studied English and Swahili at the Karl Marx University Leipzig from 1977 to 1982, although the archive provides no records for this combination during these years, as Swahili is only registered in the statistics in 1986. The interview shows that Rennecke was one of only two students enrolled with this combination in the cohort that studied during the aforementioned period.

Once again, the circumstances surrounding access to this specific university programme are remarkable. Petra Rennecke passed an entrance exam in English; as her second language she had asked to be admitted to Arabic. In the exam, she also had to write an essay on one of three topics and chose the topic on "young nation states in Africa". During the short oral examination that followed, she was asked if she was willing to study English and Swahili instead of English and Arabic. As she had no knowledge of neither Arabic nor Swahili, she accepted, and was actually relieved that she did not have to learn a new writing system, as would have been the case with Arabic (cf. also SCHOLZ 2020: 18-19, 38).

In this case, her interest in young African states and the initial wish to study another language spoken on the same continent, Arabic, was probably the decisive factor for Rennecke's "reallocation" to study Swahili instead of the language initially chosen. Furthermore, the interview provides us with an insight into the role of the writing system as a factor for the student's decision as, with Arabic, she would have had to add a third writing system to the Latin and Cyrillic scripts she already knew.

The interview with Petra Rennecke is also of particular interest with regard to professional training in the field of a lesser taught language, as it shows that the curricula and way in which her studies were organised differ greatly from those at the "Sektion" TAS (cf. chapter 6.3.3.).

All these examples clearly show what might be behind numerical discrepancies in the statistics, and how OH interviews can help to solve questions regarding the study programmes and the selection of students, for which there are little or no written records. It is to be seen as an important approach through which to eliminate problems with inconsistencies in the statistics on the one hand, as well as an aspect that is to be borne in mind when selecting interviewees on the other hand.

Furthermore, these examples also provide us with insight into the range of different mechanisms and criteria that were applied when it came to selecting students for certain languages or language combinations.

6.3.2. Supplementary information on study programmes: practical assignments

Time and again, interviewees report that, during their years at the university, they were already given T&I assignments, some of which were very long, and could even last months, and that it was common practice to be given practical assignments instead of attending practice-based courses in T&I. This is of note because this recogni-

tion of T&I assignments as substitutes or equivalents for obligatory theoretical or practical courses cannot be surmised from the written documentation (study programmes, etc.). Endruschat (2020: 9-10) for example, reports that, in her case, the third and fourth years of her university studies consisted, to a considerable extent, of interpreting assignments. Many interpretation services were provided for events at the Leipzig Trade Fair, which took place twice every year, and during which time there were no activities in her study programme (cf. also Scholz 2020: 66-67): The students even ran a kind of reception desk in the seminar building, in Leipzig city centre, where visitors to the fair could find out about available interpreting services and book them directly. Furthermore, other students of Portuguese reported that they had to interpret even during their first and second year, for example, in international sport and sport training courses or during international exhibitions or friendly matches in football. A former student of English and Portuguese in adult education, Rabe, who was mentioned previously (cf. chapter 6.3.1.), reported that she sometimes interpreted more than she studied, and that she felt she was further ahead in oral practice than in grammar (RABE 1991).

6.3.3. Supplementary information on study programmes: studying minor languages

Petra Rennecke, the aforementioned Swahili and English T&I graduate who studied at Karl Marx Universität Leipzig from 1977 to 1982, was not enrolled in the "Sektion TAS", but in the "Sektion ANW" for African and Middle Eastern Studies (RENNECKE 2020, cf. chapter 6.3.1.). The focus of her training was on learning Swahili, which is apparently why her studies lasted five years instead of the usual four; the first two years consisted of a preparatory course which mainly served to learn the language. The interviewee remembers that, at the time, there were about 10 to 15 students in her language class. This was because students of Arabic who were enrolled in "African Economics" also had to learn Swahili. Thanks to a scientific exchange programme with the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, a native speaker of Swahili was available to teach the German students in Leipzig. Rennecke remembers that, although he spoke German, he only used Swahili to communicate with them, and that the students had to find a way to make themselves understood.[13] The language was taught through role plays and practical examples, while grammar was only taught by German teachers. From the third year onwards, there were just the two T&I students, and they benefitted from extremely intensive teaching. Translation and interpreting skills were trained exclusively at the "Sektion" TAS for foreign languages, among others, in the interpreting training laboratory. Later on, that which was learned at the "Sektion" TAS in English T&I training was simply "applied" to Swahili in the further course of the studies, while the focus of the Swahili training at the "Sektion" ANW remained the language skills. As was customary, the English programme lasted only four years and was concluded with a term paper and, in the fifth year, Rennecke went on studying only Swahili and preparing her final thesis.

[13] In this context it is interesting to compare with the techniques of language mediation used in modern foreign language teaching; cf. SINNER & WIELAND (2013).

It should be noted in this context that the focus on T&I training in one language, such as English in the case of Rennecke, in combination with another language for which there are fewer or no specific courses on T&I theory and methodology and only limited practical courses on T&I, such as Swahili in Rennecke's case, is still possible at Leipzig University. This is a practice which can even serve as a model for the inclusion of languages that are not even offered within the framework of philological studies, as is especially the case with minor or lesser taught languages.

The IALT has particular expertise in the field of T&I and minority and lesser taught languages as it has been working intensively on the development of T&I training programmes to promote and support T&I services for minor languages for over ten years. It has also included linguistic mediation in language acquisition for some lesser taught European languages through the integration of Galician and Catalan into the IALT curricula (cf. Bernaus i Griñó & Sinner 2016), thus, for further development in this aspect, past experiences in this area are of particular relevance for the present and the future.

This is all the more so as Rennecke (2020), for example, despite or perhaps precisely because of the remarkable way in which Swahili training was "linked" to T&I training in English, found her education to be very good (cf. Scholz 2020: 74). It is therefore of particular interest to see how this training was organised in Swahili and other lesser taught languages such as Hindi, Amharic, etc., which were usually offered sporadically and for which there was no or practically no T&I "infrastructure" in place to be able to offer specific T&I theory and methodology courses or practical courses in specialised translation, conference interpreting, etc., as were usually offered for the "major" languages included in the T&I programmes.

6.3.4. Supplementary information on study programmes: soldiers, secretaries, foreign correspondents, and flight attendants

In addition to translators and interpreters, people who required knowledge of foreign languages for their work were also trained at the IALT predecessor institutes such as the *Dolmetscher-Institut* 'Interpreting Institute' (cf. 6.2.); in German these different disciplines were summarised under the common generic term *Sprachmittlung* 'language mediation'.[14] The examination regulations from 14 May 1957 show the structure of the programme(s); basically, five different degrees were granted at the end of the training courses: flight attendant, secretary with foreign languages, foreign correspondents, and interpreter/translator with two different types of diploma, *I. Klasse* and *II. Klasse* 'first and second class' (UAL4 1956-1965: 3s). While the first semester was the same for all students, degree-specific features were brought in from the second semester onwards. After these two semesters, a first group branched off to become flight attendants or secretaries; after another year, future foreign correspondents were separated from the initial group. It was thus, in theory, not until the third

[14] In fact, this term has led to many misinterpretations in T&I studies, and, with the introduction of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, in the didactics of foreign languages as well (cf. Sinner & Wieland 2013, Sinner & Bahr 2015).

or fourth year of study that the professional training as an interpreter or translator began. After completing the state exams, these students were awarded a diploma as second-class translators and interpreters. Following this, the most competent students were given the opportunity to study abroad and achieve the diploma for first-class translators and interpreters (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 13-15). In 1964, the institute added a postgraduate study programme for the training of simultaneous interpreting to its curriculum (cf. STEUDEL 2016: 25, SCHOLZ 2020: 17).

Furthermore, certain special quotas seem to have existed for students of the National People's Army of the GDR (cf. 6.2.) and for members of the *Staatssicherheit* 'State Security Service' or the *Ministerium des Inneren* 'Interior Ministry' (cf. ENDRUSCHAT 2020, SCHOLZ 2020: 46).

However, from the written documentation, it is not possible to determine which students started in which degree programme and how many of them were "redirected" into other programmes on offer. As an example: if we look at the student numbers from 1956 to 1969, it is clear that the information on flight attendants, secretaries, and foreign correspondents is only rarely included. It is unclear whether there were no students in these programmes during these years (which is highly unlikely, given that there must have been a need for these professions), but it is assumed that the students in the respective years were counted in the language combination that they studied. The only concrete information that exists on the respective programmes covers the years 1958 to 1960 (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 15).

This could help explain the many unclarified drop-outs or sudden drastic reductions of student numbers in the statistics.

From 1968 onwards, the number of students in the National People's Army of the GDR are no longer listed separately, but integrated into the information on language combinations for all students (cf. UAL15 1968: 2).

The interviews can help clarify some of these aspects. The interview with Dr Bernd Bendixen (BENDIXEN 2020), for example, provides insight into the military interpreter training (cf. chapters 6.2. and 6.3.4.). With a few exceptions, military interpreter training appears to have proceeded in the same way as the training of the other language mediation students. The aptitude test focused on aspects relevant to the National People's Army of the GDR and interests of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and candidates were screened to determine whether they could pose a threat to the army or the state. Bendixen believes that this was also the reason he was called to order after having met several times with a French-speaking person in order to improve his French, a contact he then had to break off immediately. However, other interviews have brought to light similar events regarding persons who had no military affiliation at all, such as female students of Portuguese who studied in Mozambique or female students of Spanish who studied in Cuba in the 1970s. According to Bendixen, prospective NVA interpreters also had to attend some additional courses and study relevant content such as military terminology, and during semester breaks, the military students also had to take part in military training courses.

Bendixen's interview also shows another interesting and very relevant aspect: career planning could be overturned by non-university events and biographical aspects. In

his case, he was informed that it had been discovered that his father (whom he had never met) actually lived in West Germany and, thus, Bendixen was classified as a threat to the security of the GDR and would therefore be unable to work as a military interpreter! (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 59).

We can clearly see that the analysis of the statistics can guide the selection of interviewees (in this case, of certain student cohorts) and, vice-versa, that ambiguities or gaps in the statistics can be resolved through the interviews. It may, therefore, also be necessary to conduct further interviews with graduates of the other language mediation professions who were trained in Leipzig together with the T&I students.

6.3.5. Female and male students

Another aspect of the study that is further stimulated by the research in the archives is the proportion of men and women in the student body and, in particular, the distribution of men and women in specific study programmes and languages or language combinations. The high number of female students is not surprising per se, given the situation in philology in general. However, there are no written records that provide potential reasons for remarkable numbers in certain groups. During the early dates of the statistics, the figures are relatively balanced.

In 1961, 106 out of 214 students are female (UAL7 1961: 37), in 1966, 110 out of 213 students are female (UAL13 1966: n.p.), and from 1967, the number and proportion of female students begins to grow: in 1967, 131 out of 211 students are female (with 84 new admissions, 69 of them female) (UAL14 1967: 2), ten years later, 288 out of 356 students are women (UAL24 1977: 2f.), and in 1987, there are 182 women in a total of 245 students (UAL35 1987: 440s.) (SCHOLZ 2020: 21). In some combinations, the cohort is exclusively made up of women, for example, in Russian / Czech in 1969, with 10 female and 0 male students (UAL16 1969: n.p.). This is followed by a gap in the following years, where we lack this kind of information in the statistics. Other examples of female-only groups are Russian / Slovak from 1979 to 1983 (UAL26 to UAL31), French / Romanian from 1976 to 1987 (UAL23 to UAL35) or English / Czech from 1965 to 1969 (UAL12 to UAL16). Interestingly, with the exception of English / Arabic in 1988 (8 women among 24 students (UAL36 1988: 408), 1989 (one woman among 14 students, UAL37 1989: 402), and 1990 (one woman among 11 students, UAL38 1990: 48), there are no combinations of languages in which a strikingly high proportion of men is enrolled.

Some comments were made regarding this aspect in the interviews, such as that a man was said to be more easily accepted in a professional context than a woman in Arab countries (cf. BENDIXEN 2020: 13, for example). However, from other contexts, we know that there must have been some form of "control" regarding women's access to certain languages. There is one case, for example, where a woman was explicitly told that she could study Hungarian or Romanian, but not Arabic (which she had indicated as her language choice because she had a boyfriend from Jordan who happened to study in the GDR at that time), as letting her study Arabic would be "pla-

nungswirtschaftlicher Unsinn" 'absurd in terms of economic planning' because, as a woman, she could not be taken to assignments in Arabic countries (HUBERTY 2018). As the same interviewee explains, she was also told that Asian languages were not an option either because "one cannot send women there".

In connection with the army students, it does not come as a surprise that few or no women at all were trained for interpreting in the NVA: only four women were recorded: one woman for Russian / French and one woman for Russian / English in 1961 (UAL7 1961: 37), and another two were enrolled for Russian / Spanish in 1963 and 1964. However, this latter case seems to be due to an error which is corrected in 1965, as two students with exactly this combination are marked as male students in this year (UAL9 1963: n.p., UAL10 1964: 55, UAL12 1965: n.p.) (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 31-32).

7. Perspectives and conclusions

In the present paper, we have given an overview of OH and OH in T&I in general, and of the IALT Oral History of Translation and Interpreting project.

It was shown that OH has already been incorporated into T&I research. However, this presence of OH in T&I apparently receives only superficial consideration or is not sufficiently appreciated (cf. MCDONOUGH DOLMAYA 2015). We think that it is assessed with sometimes rather unjustified criticism, which is usually based on the exclusive use of certain criteria, criteria which represent a rather strict understanding of OH. Here, the overall picture, such as the role of research organisation, the "academic setting", is often underestimated or simply ignored. In our opinion, the great value of OH for T&I research and the undoubtedly important role of OH interviews as a historical source is undeniable.

The organisation of OH interviews on the basis of archive research has proven a valuable tool for our OH project. Initial insights and results from the work in progress show that it makes sense to do analysis in parallel while the interview process for the OH project is being carried out, readjusting, for example, selection criteria for the interview phases based on the findings from the contrast of written and oral sources. In perspective, it seems plausible to idealise an "open end" project, because, in theory, this OH project could be continued for as long as T&I is being taught and practiced and T&I research being done in Leipzig…

The interviewees' narrations will continue to provide inspiration for targeted archive research, and by determining dates and topoi on the basis of personal biographical interviews (in line with the procedures of the adapted Grounded Theory). Furthermore, it will also continue to allow for developments in teaching and practice to be related to historical developments, as illustrated by the case of diplomatic relations between the GDR and certain countries having a direct impact on T&I training, student numbers, and the reasons given to students for their redirection towards certain languages, etc.

In our view, and as has been shown, the focus on statistics is relevant, but must be undertaken with caution. As an example, in the project, given the important role it played in politics and in the economy of the GDR and, consequently, in education and professional training, Russian automatically plays a central role. This is also evident from the repeated mentions of Russian by graduates of all programmes, similar to aspects such as (obligatory) lessons in Marxism-Leninism, compulsory sport, various forms of military exercises, and the classes in *Geheimhaltungslehre* 'lessons in confidentiality and secrecy studies'; the latter was a particular popular source of anecdotes.

On the one hand, the selection of informants in the study should, of course, take the important role of Russian into account but, on the other hand, care also has to be taken to interview a sufficiently broad spectrum of graduates in order to get a complete picture of the training, that is to say, to also collect information regarding less widely taught languages, as well as information regarding the professional reality of the graduates with these (at least quantitatively) less "relevant" languages.

In addition to the issue of determining the individual languages themselves, and how they were dealt with in T&I training, the combinations of languages for which training was provided also appears to be essential. These must be reflected in the selection of the interview partners, as the graduates—and some of the interviews of the first series of interviewees have shown this—were integrated into different *Studiengruppen* 'study groups', and had or must have had very different study experiences. For example, while nine people were enrolled with Russian / French or Russian / Polish in 1963, only one student is registered with Polish and English (UAL9 1963: n.p.), and, in 1967, while 18 students had the combination Russian / English and nine Russian / French, there were only three students who took Russian / Czech, and one student was enrolled for just one language, English (UAL14 1967: 3) (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 30).

It is obvious that, for someone who studied only English, their view of the training must differ considerably from that of other former students. Moreover, it is precisely in such cases that the question arises as to how the usual requirement to be trained in two (and with Russian being obligatory for students of all languages, sometimes even three) languages led to someone being trained in only one. In such cases, interviews might be a valuable tool to explain the background of those enrolment figures.

Since the GDR was a planned economy, the language combinations were also redefined from year to year according to the perceived needs of the state (cf. UAL5 1957-1968: 11), and the same probably applies to the "delegation" of students chosen to study abroad, the planning of practical (job) assignments for students, etc. (cf. SCHOLZ 2020: 21). Here, the need to connect archive data and interviews to political and social developments becomes obvious.

At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that, in the attempt to take account of the exceptions (which first have to be recognised as such, which can only done by comparison), a relatively accurate sized group of representatives of the most widely and continuously taught languages from the different periods of the development of T&I in East Germany is interviewed as a guaranteed counterbalance.

It was able to be shown that particularities or apparent contradictions in the statistics can sometimes be explained by a lack of documentation of certain cohorts or errors regarding certain language combinations, and that these reflect a reality whose motives the interviews can help to clarify.

It was also demonstrated that the use of OH as a specific method and source for the historiography of T&I can make a significant contribution to research. At the same time, the relevance and important role of case studies was exhibited by means of examining individual narratives: the OH interviews. It should be emphasised that, when working with individual interviews, the question of transferability to the group as a whole is, in each case, an essential question, but not a methodological problem or impediment. Here, targeted planning of the different sub-groups to be interviewed can be used to help discover the extent to which individual views match the tendencies of larger groups, and to which they represent them, so to speak. For example, in all the interviews so far, there are (sometimes detailed) descriptions of particularly impressive, remarkable events or moments in professional practice that, in sum, allow for the unusual to be distinguished from the normal, and the same must be done with other aspects. Potentially essential aspects that might be generalised are obviously those that are repeatedly mentioned, and that can be identified in the topoi analysis of the adapted Grounded Theory.

To sum up, it was shown that previously unknown or unreported aspects of training and professional practice were able to be uncovered, e.g. with regard to the reason for certain developments, and that insights into historical developments could also be provided (other researchers have also identified these as some of the essential contributions made by OH projects; cf. Ritchie (2003: 48)).

Furthermore, it was shown, and illustrated by means of examples from the project research carried out so far, that the IALT Oral History of Translation and Interpreting project can help to uncover the causal relationship between historical, social, and political developments, and the development of T&I training, for example, regarding the languages offered and student numbers, aspects that are usually not made explicit or are not necessarily identifiable in the existing written documentation.

It is expected that further important insights will be gained through future OH interviews.

Information on the work of translators and interpreters is of interest not only for T&I studies but also for other disciplines, such as general and social history (cf. also DELISLE 1997-98: 22); T&I history, and with it, OH of T&I, constitutes an important complement to historiography (cf. ROLAND 1999: 8). OH provides important input in this sense.

In view of the research overview supplied in this paper and the analysis of the first series of interviews, it is obvious that other approaches, such as linking the materials to bibliography studies or considering fundamental methodological aspects such as the opportunities and limits of objectivity in historical and T&I-related historical research, will also lead to further expanded scientific use of the material. This, in turn, can further stimulate research in T&I.

The views provided in the OH interviews also represent a decisive contribution to the investigation of the history (or the reconstruction of the history) of the planning, organisation and practice of T&I training, and the content taught (cf., once again, Zequeira García 2012, 2013 in this regard). This is because apparently not everything that students experienced during their university education can be retraced in the study documents, programmes, etc. The value of the history of T&I (and thus also of its teaching) for T&I training is increasingly gaining recognition, but still only exceptionally appears as an important source for teaching itself, where it is often not taken into account (Baigorri-Jalón 2005: 65; Baigorri-Jalón 2006: 108). This type of research on the history of T&I can help students learn about the professional profile of translators and interpreters (cf. Baigorri-Jalón / Mikkelson & Slaugther Olsen 2014: 13), uncover methods of developing skills, see how decisions shape professional and personal life, etc. This is all the more so as the OH interviews themselves are thoroughly practice-based.

At IALT, the results of the project flow directly into the teaching of the history of T&I, where the Leipzig School of translation already plays an important role. Through its integration into student projects, such as research internships and final theses (cf. Duve 2014, Ursinus 2014, Sander 2015, Liersch 2016, Steudel 2016, Scholz 2020), students are already involved in the OH of T&I project, and this, per se, provides additional motivation for writing these final papers. The project is explicitly designed to involve students and young researchers.

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