

The formalisation of professional development amongst translators and interpreters: Practices in five predominantly Anglophone countries with a focus on Australia

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Professional development has become standard practice for many occupational groups. While for some it may be a matter of individual choice, there are often a number of factors and entities that have a stake in the provision of or need for professional development, e.g. professional associations, industry regulatory bodies, training providers, consumer groups, employer representative groups and even governmental authorities. This paper employs the term 'player' as a generic term to encompass these different interest groups. This paper then examines the place that professional development has amongst organisations that certify, credential or register interpreters and/or translators to practise professionally. Based on a sample of 12 organisations, we find that five of them have professional development as a requirement for continuing practice, for four organisations it is voluntary and for three there is insufficient information. Comparison shows that the player role of professional association is supportive of professional development, but the most decisive factors were non-involvement as a provider and specific country. Further, we focus on Australia where the major player recently introduced mandatory professional development.

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Here, we report high rates of uptake not only amongst those who are certified, but also amongst those who are not. (Monash University, Australia; Swinburne University, Australia)

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1. Introduction

Over the past 50 years or so, in nearly all professions - including that of translation and interpreting - the need for training prior to professional practice has become widespread and, in most cases, mandatory. The need for (further) training *after* commencing professional practice is less widespread and mandated, but it appears that in the last 20 years or so, professional development has become widespread. A commonly accepted definition of professional education is the following:

The systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of knowledge and skills, and the development of personal qualities necessary for the execution of professional and technical duties through the individual's working life. (Friedman 2012: 9)

The above definition identifies both the gain that a professional can achieve from further training as well as the gain that a profession or industry can enjoy through the augmentation of practitioners' knowledge sets and skills.

The term 'professional development' is used interchangeably with other designations such as 'continuing (or 'continuous') professional development' (CPD), 'professional learning' (PL), and 'continuing education' (CE), the field of post-qualification training in general, as well as in relation to a particular industry or profession. We employ the term 'professional development' and its acronym 'PD' in this paper.

Axiomatic to all discussions on PD is that the effects of it on the practitioner, and, by

implication, on others and on their profession as a whole, are beneficial. For example, PD can be employed to counter the atrophy of professional knowledge (Neimeyer et al. 2010), to fulfil ethical stipulations (Wise 2008), to facilitate the delivery of effective services to the public (VandeCreek *et al.* 1990) and to satisfy profession-specific mandates for licence renewal/recertification (Daniels and Walter 2002).

In the following section of this paper we provide a review of the emergence of professional development as an attribute of post-qualification training and the research questions that we address. Section 3 has a description of the methodological tools employed with details of the two data samples collected. Section 4 contains a presentation of the results and our discussion of the data from the cross-national comparison of predominantly Anglophone countries, while Section 5 presents findings from this comparison. Section 6 contains the results and discussion of the data from the sample of Australia-based practitioners. Our conclusion and overall findings are presented in Section 7.

2. Professional development: general features and its status amongst translator and interpreter practitioners

The role of PD as a component and positive attribute of the professional profile of some occupational groups has been reasonably well studied. For example, there are several studies that demonstrate the positive effects of PD in the teaching (e.g. Mundry 2015), legal (e.g. Levin 2001), and healthcare professions (e.g. Curran et al. 2007) to name but a few. In relation to translators and interpreters, there are few studies that have PD as their sole focus, e.g. Gonzalez (2019). Instead, where the topic of PD is touched on, it is often mentioned as a byline or in passing as an activity that is desirable to achieve improvements in areas that are otherwise the main focus. For example, in relation to interpreting, both Hild (2014) and Stern and Liu (2019) list the positive effects that practitioners are likely to gain from engaging in PD. Katan (2011) and Agafonova et al. (2019) do the same in relation to translation. Overall though, the tone of these studies is appellative and suggestive only. That is, PD is seen as an advantageous and welcome

part of professionals' skill-sets but still as something that many or most practitioners do not engage in or see the need to engage in. A similar message comes from a supra-national and more authoritative source. The global organisation that represents the interests of translators and interpreters, the International Federation of Translators (FIT) issued its first ever position paper on PD in 2022. This document, the first statement from FIT on this topic, clearly sees PD as an emerging but not yet established feature of the profession: '[i]n the field of translation, terminology and interpreting, CPD is generally voluntary, but in some countries it is required by law or by translator accreditation/certification schemes. In various other professions, CPD is more likely to be mandatory'. The document contains a further brief list of professional attributes that PD promises to offer. The purpose of the FIT document appears to be a call for translators and interpreters to engage in PD in a way that is commonplace in other professions and where there are multiple positive effects that will result from this: upskilling of practitioners; potential enlargement of client base; an image of a profession that is responsive to and knowledgeable of contemporary developments.

In Australia, PD became compulsory for all translators and interpreters in Australia who wished to retain or gain a credential from the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). This requirement was introduced in 2019. Prior to the introduction of this requirement, NAATI had made PD compulsory for newly credentialed practitioners from 2007 onwards and had advocated PD as recommended practice for those credentialed before 2007 who were also encouraged to transition to a new system of credentials where the term 'accreditation' was abandoned in favour of 'certification'. The introduction of compulsory PD for newly-credentialed translation and interpreting (hereafter 'T&I') practitioners and later for all practitioners over the last 16 years reflected a move across many occupational groups in Australia for PD to become standard practice, whether as a compulsory or aspirational activity for continuing practice (Mitchell, Hayes and Mills 2009). The phasing in of PD as a feature of practice for people working across a broad number of occupations has been identified as a way to address work-related learning needs since the start of this century (OECD 2017).

In 2016, before the introduction of compulsory PD for all, NAATI canvassed

credentialed practitioners' views on PD and received 2,883 responses to a nation-wide survey. The survey found that approximately 90% of respondents (regardless of type of credential) had completed at least one PD activity (NAATI 2016: 15). Gonzalez's (2019) study, based on responses (n=793) gained via a questionnaire distributed by the professional association in Australia, AUSIT, represents another snapshot of practitioners' experiences and attitudes towards PD. In relation to the position of PD across the T&I sector, Sela-Sheffy (2020: 165) sees professional associations as having a key role in being 'dedicated to the professional development of their members' while McDonough Dolmaya (2020: 200) is more forthright, stating that 'professionals [...] seek associations that can offer interaction with peers, up-to-date information, professional development and access to clients'.

While both professional associations and credentialing authorities support the maintenance and advancement of practitioners' skill levels and knowledge bases, they may not necessarily be the protagonist bodies who conduct or supply the PD. This brings up the question of *who* provides PD, monitors it and is responsible for recording that practitioners have undertaken it, especially where PD may be a feature or even condition of continuing practice. Friedman (2012: 29-35) employs the term *players* to refer to entities who have a stake in the provision, uptake and recognition of PD. We employ the term *players* in the same way, i.e. as a generic term to encompass any T&I entity that has an interest or stake in PD: professional associations that are made up of and that represent practitioners; creators of PD policies; creators and suppliers of PD activities; industry regulatory authorities; formal bodies that assess whether activities can be considered to be PD and that record the completion of PD activities by practitioners; practitioners themselves as consumers (and beneficiaries) of PD; and, where they exist, unions or organisations responsible for the work conditions of translators and interpreters. Within Translation and Interpreting Studies, the term 'players' is also now used by Boéri (2015) to refer to stakeholders from within (e.g. professional associations, training institutions).

Other groups that are usually not directly involved as key players in PD but who have an interest in the achievement and maintenance of professional standards are: clients and/or consumers of practitioners' services; employers/hiring agencies of practitioners

(Ozolins 2007); employer representative bodies; trainers in post-secondary vocational institutions and university academics (particularly pedagogy-focused ones); governments; and the general public whose perceptions of practitioners' level of competence may be determined by personal experiences and/or the general standing that a profession has in society. We allocate to these groups as well the role of *player*, noting that this term has been used by other T&I researchers (e.g. García-Beyaert 2015) to refer to bodies outside the language services sector, e.g. Deaf communities, court administration bodies.

The number of possible players listed above shows that there are many different roles or perspectives that have an interest in PD. As a general principle, it is advantageous if each role is enacted by a separate or different body. When a body takes on multiple roles this can create misunderstanding amongst others as to what that body's (primary, secondary etc.) roles are, and it can result in conflicts of interest, e.g. a professional association that mandates PD for its members that is also a provider of PD has a conflict of interest as practitioners may feel that only PD provided by that organisation will be recognised by that same organisation. The issue of relationships of dependency and players' power to influence each other is one that is relevant where resources or overall numbers of practitioners are modest. This can result in some players taking on multiple roles (cf. Friedman 2012: 40-52).

Although professional translation and interpreting services worldwide are, indeed, a multi-billion-dollar industry, the level of T&I infrastructure in most countries, even large and affluent ones, is not extensive and regulatory bodies, professional associations and training institutions often have only modest or limited resources. A cross-national survey of certification procedures in 21 countries by Hlavac (2013) reported substantial variation between countries in regard to pre-credential training, pre-requisites to apply to certify, examination and procedures and requirements for certification maintenance, with only two countries reporting PD as a component of post-certification practice. Both of these countries were predominantly Anglophone ones, but four other English-speaking countries listed did not record information on PD. This paper focuses on five predominantly Anglophone countries: Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom and United States, together with Australia. These five countries were chosen as there

are some similarities amongst them in relation to their respective language services sectors. These include interpreting services for English-speakers interacting with speakers of languages many of which have been transposed to those countries via immigration (Hale 2007; Corsellis 2008) and translation services that encompass community and commercially focused translation (Taibi and Ozolins 2016). Given that PD appears to still be an emerging rather than established feature of post-qualification practice, our first research question seeks to investigate how widespread, in a cross-national sense, PD is for T&I practitioners:

RQ1: In five predominantly Anglophone countries is PD a requirement or an optional activity for interpreters and translators to practise professionally?

As reported by Hlavac (2013), in some countries there may be a paucity of formal and government-sanctioned (and funded) regulatory bodies that could support (or require) PD for T&I practitioners. The same source also identified that national T&I professional associations are often reliant on volunteer labour only with limited resources and that there may be limited numbers of PD providers and limited opportunities for PD. We consider it instructive for our understanding of translators and interpreters undertaking PD that the different structures and roles at play (at the level of national, regional or mode-specific professional associations) are made apparent. In addressing this area, this study sets itself the second research question:

RQ2: Which *player* role(s) do T&I-related organisations have and what is their position in regard to PD for practitioners who are associated with those organisations?

As stated in the title, this article has a focus on Australia. Section 2 above outlined that Australia is a country that introduced mandatory PD for all NAATI-credentialed practitioners in 2019. Australia is a country that has witnessed a major expansion of translation and interpreting training programs at both university and polytechnic ('TAFE', i.e. technical and further education) institutions from the 1980s onwards, compelling Taibi et al. (2022: 91) to label this growth a 'proliferation of providers', a small number of which are also providers of PD. The expansion of training courses at

these levels was a precursor to a rule introduced in 2007 that training be a pre-requisite for applicants to apply to sit an examination for NAATI certification. Prior to the introduction of this rule, there was often heated debate whether training should be an aspirational or a mandatory feature prior to sitting an examination. Letters and opinion pieces published in *InTouch*, the magazine of the professional association AUSIT, in the early 2000s are evidence for the varying positions held by practising (and some ‘would-be’) T&Is. (See AUSIT 2014 for an overview of practitioners’ opinions and positions.) Thus, resistance to mandatory training was a feature of this debate. Some individual players, e.g. some cohorts of AUSIT members, held divided or ambivalent positions, while other players such as others cohorts of AUSIT members, AUSIT’s governing body, the national certification authority NAATI, as well as educational institutions had clearly supportive positions. Practitioners’ and players’ views on the issue of compulsory (pre-examination) training usually resembled those in relation to the issue of (post-examination) further training (Gonzalez 2019; Wakabayashi 2022). Those in favour of PD usually cited the need for practitioners to keep abreast of contemporary developments, especially those relation to technology (e.g. CAT tools, voice-recognition software), regulations and liability (e.g. guidelines on use of digital credentials, professional indemnity insurance), ethics and interactional management (e.g. practitioners’ social media profiles, video-link interpreting and turn-taking and connectivity issues) as well as field-specific developments (e.g. introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, guidelines for judicial officers and courtroom staff on working with interpreters). The ability for PD to enable knowledge acquisition and skill augmentation in a way that goes beyond what is possible in day-to-day practice was identified by Gonzalez (2019) as a reason for practitioners’ support for it. To ascertain the level of engagement that T&I practitioners (whether NAATI-credentialed or not) have with PD, we pose the following third research question:

RQ3: In Australia where PD was phased in as a requirement for newly NAATI-certified interpreters and translators in 2007, and for all NAATI-certified interpreters and translators by the end of 2019, what is the uptake level of PD amongst all practitioners, regardless of credential or possession of a credential?

3. Methodology

Our research questions encompass the situation of PD for translators and interpreters in predominantly Anglophone countries, and in relation to Australia in particular. The purpose of presenting the situation in various countries is to provide a cross-national comparison of conventions relating to PD for practising translators and interpreters.

A sample of players relevant to PD provision in the five, predominantly Anglophone countries were selected. Selection was not random but guided by our desire that the sample encompass spoken and sign language interpreting and translation either as players specific to these fields or as players that encompass them all. The number of T&I players identified was guided by the population size of the respective countries. For the three countries with smaller populations - Canada, New Zealand and Australia - one player from each was selected. For the United Kingdom three players were identified and for the United States, six were identified. The results and discussion of this paper therefore relate to these Anglophone countries only and we make no claim that these can or should relate to other predominantly Anglophone countries (e.g. Ireland) or non-Anglophone countries in the same way. Information presented in Table 1 and in Section 4 relates to whether the player engages with PD or not only. An examination of the explanatory factors that background PD engagement (or not) goes beyond the bounds of this paper. Table 1 shows the players selected in our first sample and the fields that they encompass.

The presentation of data gained from these players is given in Section 4. Our remaining research questions relate to Australia and reported uptake of PD. In order for us to address these questions in relation to the T&I sector in Australia, we sought to gain a large-scale sample that contained recent, qualitative data from currently practising translators and interpreters who are likely to have encountered the requirements for PD recertification. (NAATI recertification includes not only PD as a compulsory requirement; evidence of continuing practice is also required.) All *practising* translators and interpreters could be potential informants, not only those with NAATI certification, as our RQ2 deals with uptake level of PD in general and encompasses those with as well as those lacking NAATI certification.

Table 1: Organisations, primary self-description and field of T&I

Country	Name of organisation	Primary self-description	T&I field(s)		
			Spoken interpreting	Sign interpreting	Translation
Canada	Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario	Professional association	✓		✓
New Zealand	New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters	Professional association	✓	✓	✓
United Kingdom	National Register of Public Service Interpreters	Register	✓		
	Association of Sign Language Interpreters	Professional association		✓	
	Chartered Institute of Linguists	Professional association	✓		✓
United States	Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf	Testing and credentialing authority		✓	
	Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters	Testing and credentialing authority	✓	✓	
	National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters.	Testing and credentialing authority	✓	✓	
	Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification	Testing and credentialing authority	✓		
	Federal Court Interpreter Certification Authority	Credentialing authority	✓		
	American Translators Association	Professional association	✓		✓
Australia	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters	Testing and credentialing authority	✓	✓	✓

With the aim of gaining a large sample of practitioners across Australia, an electronic survey was the most appropriate methodological tool to achieve this. The third author contacted a wide variety of T&I players: professional associations, regulatory bodies, training institutions, state/territory and national-level stakeholders, language services providers and former PD trainees¹). The survey was open for six weeks, from 30 October until 11 December 2019²). The invitation to participate in this survey attracted 3,591 submissions. Submissions from those who are not practising T&I professionals or who are located outside Australia were excluded, resulting in a final sample of 3,268 responses.

The sample includes responses relating to certification status and certification level, number of years' experience, level of training in general and in relation to T&I specifically, and uptake of PD in the previous two-year period. A presentation of practitioners' motivations and an evaluation of practitioners' positive or negative experiences of PD are not provided as such a discussion would go beyond the bounds of this paper.

The sample of 3,268 T&I Australia-based practitioners is over one-fifth of the total number of 15,621 NAATI-credentialed individuals.³) As of 30 June 2020, 20,683 NAATI credentials (51% in interpreting, 49% in translation) had been awarded to 15,621 individuals across 172 languages (170 in interpreting including 40 Indigenous languages and 52 in translation) (NAATI 2020).

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- 1) Disclaimer: The first, second, third and fifth authors are based in the Monash University Translation and Interpreting Studies Program, a provider of PD for translators and interpreters in the state of Victoria and across Australia since 2011. The first, second and the fifth authors have been either directly or indirectly involved in the teaching of PD to practising translators and interpreters over the last five years. In order to obviate the possible influence of bias or familiarity, all communications with potential and participating informants were made by the third author.
 - 2) Approval for the collection of responses from human informants was provided by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee: Project 'Translation and Interpreting Professional Development Opportunities', Project no. 22147, issued 15 October 2019.
 - 3) An unspecified but most probably insignificant number of NAATI-credentialed T&I practitioners reside outside Australia. As residence in Australia was a criterion for inclusion in the sample, the number of informants encompassed in this sample therefore constitutes an even higher proportion of those Australia-based practitioners.

4. Cross-national comparison of players in five predominantly Anglophone countries : Results and discussion

As stated in Section 3, our first sample consists of a selected group of organisations that are stakeholders in the upholding of professional standards in the translation and interpreting services sector. Selection of the organisations was not random and determined firstly by the desire to have all major fields represented (translation, spoken and sign language interpreting) and secondly by the organisations' capacity and/or authority to determine *who* can practise professionally as a translator or interpreter, and *whether* they can determine that that person can continue to practise professionally. When looking at these two questions, we looked further to see if either of these included PD.

4.1. Canada

In Canada, a national 'umbrella' organisation exists, the Canadian Translators, Terminologists and Interpreters Council (CTTIC), but the registration and maintenance of directories of credentialed translators and interpreters is controlled by provincial organisations. In Canada's most populous province, Ontario, the relevant organisation is the Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario (ATIO) and we draw on information from that organisation. To gain certification as a *translator*, *conference interpreter*, *court interpreter*, *community interpreter*, *medical interpreter* (here referring to spoken language interpreters only) or *terminologist* a person must apply for membership with the ATIO and meet certain entrance criteria. If these are met, the applicant is then re-classified as a *candidate for certification* which means that such a person has five years to pass a *certification exam* or, in some cases, assemble a dossier as evidence of work or performance. Once a candidate for certification has passed the *certification exam* (or *dossier* equivalent), that person is a *certified member* of the ATIO (ATIO n.d.(a)). For *certified members*, as well as for others, the ATIO organises professional development sessions, often in conjunction with public or private T&I

providers (ATIO, n.d. (b)). PD is a voluntary activity for certified T&Is and not a pre-requisite for retention of certification.

4.2. *New Zealand*

The New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI) is a professional association for spoken language and sign language interpreters and for translators that also maintains a registry of certified interpreters and translators. There are three categories of membership in the NZSTI: *full members*, *affiliates* and *observers*. The three varieties of membership reflect the level of training that a person has: full membership is available for applicants with a high level of training, NAATI certification at certified interpreter or translator level (or higher) and/or evidence of five years' full-time employment as a translator or interpreter with evidence of supervision and professional development; affiliate membership is for those with a medium or lower level of training, NAATI certification at provisional level, other forms of translation training and/or three years' full-time employment as a translator or interpreter including evidence of supervision and professional development; observer status membership is for those with an interest in the language services sector, but who lack any NZSTI-approved qualification and such as person cannot describe themselves as a 'translator' or 'interpreter' (NZSTI 2020a).

Professional development is not the sole criterion to fulfil the requirements of a membership application. Once membership has been gained, PD is not a criterion for the retention or revalidation of any category of NZSTI membership. At the same time, the NZSTI hosts PD workshops 'from time to time to help translators and interpreters improve their skills and prepare for accreditation exams e.g. NAATI' (NZSTI 2020b).

4.3. *United Kingdom*

The National Register of Public Service Interpreters is an 'independent, voluntary public interest body... [that seeks] to ensure that good standards within the profession

are consistently maintained for the benefit of the public and interpreters’ (NRPSI 2020). The register states that those who are listed as ‘full status registered public service interpreters’ should have a qualification (such as the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting) or should first provide evidence of 400 hours’ relevant experience. An exception to this are those interpreters working in ‘rare languages’ who, instead, are required to provide evidence of PD where there is no available training in their language combination (NRPSI 2020). But this is an entrance requirement only, not a requirement to remain registered on the NRPSI (NRPSI 2019).

In regard to sign language interpreting, i.e. English - British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting, the Association of Sign Language Interpreters hosts a register of members. There are three categories of membership: *full*, *associate* and *student* (ASLI 2020a). PD is offered and conducted by ASLI but is not a requirement for renewal of ASLI membership (ASLI 2020b).

The Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIoL) is also a professional association that encompasses spoken and sign language interpreters and translators. Grades of membership include three designations for those working as T&Is: *associate*, *member* or *fellow* (CIoL n.d.(a)). Admission to any of these grades can be via assessment of language qualifications, work experience, references and/or demonstrated contribution to the profession. For those who hold membership at any of these three levels ‘CPD is not mandatory for CIOL members, but strongly encouraged’ (CIOL n.d.(a)). Only those who apply for a higher level of membership, namely *registration* with the CIOL, so as to bear the title of *chartered linguist*, are required to show evidence of PD. For this group of *chartered* members, evidence of 30 hours PD in the two years previous to applying for registration is required. Those activities that can be counted towards PD include formal courses, workshops, seminars and lectures. But other self-directed activities such as reading, writing, listening, teaching, ‘getting involved’ in language-related activities or other skills associated with T&I work are countable (CIOL n.d.(b)).

4.4. United States

In the USA, there is a large number of organisations that train, examine, represent and

credential interpreters and translators. Six bodies are identified below that are national or representative bodies for a specific area of interpreting or translation.

For English-ASL (American Sign Language) interpreting, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) is an organisation with a public directory, a professional association (RID 2020a), a certifying authority (RID 2020b), and an organiser of PD (RID 2020c). In order to retain certification, and to stay on the RID registry of certified ASL-English interpreters, PD is compulsory. Over a 4-year cycle, a person must complete '8.0 total CEUs [Continuing Education Units] with at least 6.0 in PS [Professional Studies] CEUs', where 1 CEU is equal to 10 contact hours of participation, amounting to 80 hours (RID 2020d). The RID's requirement for PD for practitioners in order for them to retain registration is cited as a positive example of an 'internal player' enforcing standards that contribute to the 'development of the interpreting professional' (Boéri 2015: 37).

The Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters is a body that conducts testing, certifies practitioners onto the National Registry of Certified Interpreters and also provides PD (CCHI 2020). Certified Healthcare Interpreters must complete PD to maintain certification. The PD must consist of at least 32 hours of instructor-led activities over a 4-year cycle, with requirements that the areas covered in PD include performance-based training (consecutive or simultaneous interpreting, or sight translation).

In the USA, another national public body that certifies interpreters working in the healthcare sector is the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters. This body conducts examinations and those passing them may bear the title, *Certified Medical Interpreters*. PD is a condition of recertification with a minimum requirement of 30 contact hours of approved PD training over a 5-year period (National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters 2016).

In courts under the jurisdiction of the states, the National Center for State Courts (n.d.) credentials court interpreters through one of its sub-entities, the Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification. As an example, California liaises with the Consortium and its Court Interpreters Program conducts exams, confers certification, and hosts a registry of certified state court interpreters. However, there is no information

available on PD or that PD is a requirement of continuing certification (California Courts 2020).

Beyond the state level a separate form of certification exists for federal courts, Federal Court Interpreter Certification. This is gained through passing an examination, and then federal courts decide on a ‘case-by-case basis, whether the prospective interpreter is either professionally qualified or language skilled’ (Federal Judiciary, US Courts 2020). There is no information on PD on the Federal Judiciary, US Courts website and no indication that PD is a requirement for practitioners who have gained Federal Court Interpreter Certification.

In regard to translation, the national professional association in America, the American Translators Association (ATA), has a certification system wherein those certified are required to engage in PD. Twenty points worth of CPD must be gained in each 3-year period. The activities that can contribute to the 20 points (\approx 20 hours of activities) include ethics training (at least for recently certified members), while other activities include: attending translation-related educational activities, conferences, independent study, writing or editing texts on translation, volunteering in translation-related activities (ATA 2022).

4.5. *Australia*

In Australia, NAATI is the national testing and credentialing organisation. NAATI also manages a publicly available directory of all credentialed translators and interpreters. NAATI credentials awarded for life were gradually phased out and by the end of 2019, *all* NAATI credential-holders were required to undertake and complete PD every three years in order to apply to re-certify. Along with evidence of active practice, PD undertaken for re-certification needs to encompass three different areas: general knowledge and skills development (including knowledge of ethics), engagement with the broader T&I field, maintenance/advancement of linguistic skills (Wakabayashi 2022). Depending on the type of activity, the time investment relating to PD for the purposes of re-certification can range between 40 to 80 hours (over a three-year period).

5. Cross-national comparison of players in five predominantly Anglophone countries: Findings

The description of 12 organisations across five countries given in sections 4.1 to 4.5 shows a variety of player roles that are fulfilled by these respective organisations. We can distinguish these into five distinct categories: professional association, testing authority, credentialing authority, directory manager and PD provider. Only one organisation occupies one role only, while three occupy all five. Averaged out over the whole sample, each organisation has 3.6 roles. We present in collated form these roles and which ones are fulfilled by each organisation in Table 2. In the far-right column, we provide information on the relationship of PD to a practitioner's status (whether they can continue to hold a credential or be registered on a directory). The contractions used in Table 2 are: 'COMP.' - compulsory; 'VOL.' - voluntary; and 'N./I.' - no information.

Some trends are ascertainable when we compare the roles that organisations occupy and the status of PD as a compulsory or voluntary activity, or where no mention of PD is made by the organisation leading us to assume that the organisation has no capacity or interest in recording PD as an attribute of credentialed/registered practitioners.

All six organisations whose role includes that of a professional association advocate PD, with four recommending PD and two requiring it. This confirms a general observation made above in Section 2 that professional associations commonly encourage or require their members to engage in PD. All six professional associations have a formal process of requiring training and/or occupational attributes of potential members for them to become credentialed, and five of the six even conduct formal examinations to ascertain skill level.

However, comparing the five organisations that have PD as a compulsory attribute of recertifying to the others, we see that three of those requiring PD are *not* professional associations. In some ways, a role that does not include the representation of professionals' interests may enable these three organisations to impose a compulsory requirement, whereas such a requirement may not always be so amenable to professional associations. We also note that three of the five organisations that require

Table 2. Cross-national comparison of T&I-related organisations

Country	Name of organisation	Player roles					Relationship of PD to continuation of credential / directory registration
		Professional association	Testing authority	Credentiaing authority	Directory manager	PD provider	
Canada	Association of Translators and Interpreters of Ontario	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	VOL.
New Zealand	New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters	✓		✓	✓	✓	VOL.
United Kingdom	National Register of Public Service Interpreters				✓		N./I.
	Association of Sign Language Interpreters	✓		✓	✓	✓	VOL.
	Chartered Institute of Linguists	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	VOL.
United States	Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf	✓	✓	✓	✓		COMP.
	Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters		✓	✓	✓	✓	COMP.
	National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters		✓	✓	✓		COMP.
	Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification		✓	✓	✓		N./I.
	Federal Court Interpreter Certification Authority		✓	✓			N./I.
	American Translators Association	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	COMP.
Australia	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters		✓	✓	✓		COMP.

PD are *not* providers of PD themselves. Thus, the findings here, to some extent, suggest that organisations that are neither professional associations nor PD providers are more likely to require compulsory PD.

There is no obvious difference between organisations involved with sign language interpreting compared to those that only deal with spoken language interpreting. In part, this is due to the fact that four of the six organisations to do with sign language

interpreting also deal with spoken language interpreting (and two of these with translation as well), so any differences between the two are perhaps not likely to become apparent where the same organisation encompasses different forms of inter-lingual transfer.

In reference to Australia, an observation made by some of the authors of this paper is that formalised PD training for Auslan-English interpreters is, in general, of longer standing than that offered to spoken language interpreters and translators (Bontempo and Levitzke-Gray 2007). We posited that this may be the case in other countries, and that there may be a higher likelihood that PD may be compulsory for sign language interpreters compared to T&I practitioners of other modes. But the data in Table 2 neither confirm nor contest this suspicion.

The starkest contrast between those organisations that require PD and those that do not is geography. The five organisations requiring it are located in the United States or Australia. None of the five organisations in the three other countries require it. When comparing the five countries, it appears that neither population size nor wealth of resources appear to be factors in PD being compulsory. It is possible that in the United States, there may be a higher degree of regulation relating to occupational practices (c.f. incidence of litigation based on workplace conditions, conventions of quality control and risk-minimisation) that could account for why four of the six US-based organisations require PD. But this assertion is speculative and we have no evidence for this.

We also have no data on how long the PD requirement has been in place in the US-based organisations, and we recall that in Australia, compulsory PD for *all* practitioners was introduced as recently as 2019. It may be that in Australia and the US there is a general trend for PD to be compulsory to a greater degree than in other predominantly Anglophone countries, regardless of the profession. Friedman (2012: 133) makes such an observation in his cross-occupational comparison of four countries where he found that Australia tends to be a leader in requiring PD compared to Canada, Ireland and New Zealand.

6. Professional development amongst translators and interpreters in Australia: Results and discussion

The above section concluded with the observation that Australia was a leader in introducing PD as a compulsory attribute for continuing practice. In this section we present results relating to PD uptake amongst Australia-based T&I practitioners. Our collection tool did not specify to informants that the PD undertaken needed to conform to the forms of PD required for NAATI recertification; examples of PD outside these areas are also encompassed, although most PD completed is likely to address the skills sets and knowledge bases specified for NAATI recertification.

As mentioned in Section 3, the data presented in this and the following sections is based on responses provided by 3,268 T&I practitioner informants. Before presenting data on PD uptake, we first provide information on informants' mode(s) of practice and type(s) of credential. Table 3 gives details on the former category:

Table 3. Mode of informants' T&I practice in numbers (n=3,268) and percentage

Mode of T&I practice	Number (%)
Interpreter only	1,625 (49.7%)
Translator only	738 (22.6%)
Both interpreter and translator	905 (27.7%)

Nearly one half of the informants state that they work as 'interpreters only', with a further 27.7% stating that they work as both interpreter and translator. These statistics are not surprising and are in line with other studies on the T&I sector in Australia that record that a greater proportion are employed as interpreters than as translators (e.g. Gonzalez 2019; NAATI 2020). Table 4 shows the type of credential(s) that informants reported that they held:

Table 4. Type of NAATI T&I credential(s) held by informants

Type of credential	Number (%)
Certification (new system)	2,507 (76.7%)
Both certification (new system) and accreditation (old system)	569 (17.4%)
Accreditation (old system)	632 (19.3%)
Neither certification nor accreditation	131 (4%)
Total	3,708 (117.4%)

Multiple responses were allowed to this question. This accounts for the total percentage being over 117% and not 100%, In most cases, this was due to informants with both types of credentials selecting not the ‘both’ response but selecting ‘certification’ *and* ‘accreditation’.

We now come to the uptake rates. By uptake, we refer to attendance at or active engagement with any activity that serves to advance the knowledge, skill or ability base of already credentialed practitioners. Other activities were excluded even if they counted towards the recertification requirements (e.g. trips overseas for the purpose of language maintenance or networking events)⁴). There is also a timeframe requirement that we applied to informants’ PD uptake, namely that they had engaged with a PD offering in the 24 month-period prior to survey completion. Table 5 sets out uptake rates in general, and according to practitioners’ mode of practice.

Table 5. Mode(s) of practice and PD uptake in % (n=3,117)

	Uptake of PD	
	Yes	No
Interpreter only	82.9	17.1
Both interpreter and translator	82.0	18.0
Translator only	63.5	36.5
All informants	78.3	21.7

4) In the questionnaire, the following description was given: “PD’ refers to short courses/workshops/seminars (online or face-to-face) you have attended for PD purposes. It excludes other activities even if they may count towards PD for recertification. It also excludes longer translation/interpreting courses done to obtain a qualification, NAATI pre-certification courses, as well as social events solely for the purpose of networking.’

Table 5 shows that nearly 80% of all informants engaged in at least one T&I-related PD offering in the 24-month period from November 2017 to November 2019. Percentage rates are even higher for informants belonging to the ‘interpreter only’ category with participation rates progressively falling for the ‘both’ category and the ‘translator only’ category that records a PD uptake rate of 63.5%. A comprehensive presentation of further responses gained from informants about factors that facilitate involvement with PD as well as barriers to this goes beyond the scope of this paper (cf. Hlavac et al. forthcoming). Instead, we show below all informants’ reported number of PD activities engaged with in the 24 month period prior to data collection, grouping responses into five categories

Table 6. No. of PD activities attended from those informants who engaged with PD shown in percentage (n=2,209)

	No. of PD activities				
	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
Interpreter	50.6	29.2	5.2	4.4	10.6
Both interpreter and translator	56.1	31.6	3.6	3.3	5.5
Translator	65.9	23.7	3.8	1.5	5.1
Overall total	54.9	28.9	4.5	3.6	8.1

Table 6 shows that, in general, over half of all practitioners and of all practitioner types engaged in between one and five PD activities in the 24-month period from late 2017 to late 2019. Proportionately, those who work only as interpreters record higher rates of attending a greater number of PD events than those who reporting working as both interpreters and translators, and those who are translators only. We note that while Gonzalez’s (2019: 8-9) recent study on PD amongst T&I practitioners in Australia does not include data on PD uptake rates she does report that translators more so than interpreters complained of a lower availability of translation-specific PD offerings. Table 7 shows the three groups’ responses to the question, ‘Do you believe that over the last 24 months there have been suitable translation/interpreting PD opportunities available for you?’

Table 7. Perceptions on the ready availability of PD in % (n=2,258)

	Yes	No	Not sure
Interpreter only	39.8	37.8	22.3
Both interpreter and translator	36.6	38.6	24.8
Translator only	28.0	44.9	27.0
All informants	36.7	39.3	23.9

There are mixed responses in relation to informants' level of satisfaction with the availability of PD offerings. A similar pattern to that of Table 6 emerges: higher positive response rates from interpreters only, followed by those who occupy both roles and lower response rates from translators only. But, even the 'interpreter-only' group record only a marginally higher level of affirmative responses compared to negative responses and overall, the reaction from the whole sample in relation to satisfactory availability of PD is ambivalent and varied. We conclude by presenting PD uptake rates according to credential which are shown in Table 8:

Table 8. Informants' credentials and PD uptake in % (n=3,824)

	Uptake of PD in %	
	Yes	No
Certification	81.8	18.2
Both certification and accreditation	75.8	24.2
Accreditation	71.4	28.6
Neither certification nor accreditation	62.1	37.9
All informants	78.3	21.7

Table 8 shows that informants who hold certification only record the highest rate of PD uptake. This is followed by those with a mixture of credential types, and then by those with accreditation only. Predictably, those with no credential record the lowest PD uptakes - those who lack a credential are not obliged to conform to the requirements of credential maintenance such as PD, and their involvement in PD is entirely voluntary. But, remarkably, there are relatively low levels of difference in the uptake rates of these four groups: those who hold accreditation only are also not obliged to attend PD, and

yet this group records an uptake rate of over 71%, just 10 percentage points lower than the percentage levels of those who hold certification. We expected a greater disparity between the groups in relation to PD uptake. Instead, the figures from Table 6 inform us that PD attendance has become a widespread and accepted practice for most T&I practitioners, regardless of whether they are bound by credential-related regulations to undertake it or not.

7. Conclusion and overall findings

This paper addressed three questions. The first related to the status of PD as a requirement or optional activity for T&I practitioners to practise professionally. Across twelve organisations, five have PD as a requirement; four have it as voluntary; for the remaining three there is no or insufficient information on PD. Statistically, this shows that PD is not yet a requirement in most organisations. There is no correlating pattern to show that organisations that focus on all three major areas or on one area of spoken language interpreting, sign language interpreting or translation are more or less likely to require PD. The small size of the sample restricts us from making more conclusive assertions on the likelihood that one area of T&I practice is more likely to place a stronger focus on PD than another. Cross-national differences for PD to be a requirement are ascertainable: the five organisations to which this applies are four of the six US-based organisations and the only Australian-based one. This trend is congruent to Friedman's (2012) observation made about the introduction of compulsory PD, at least in relation to Australia, that applies to other professions, as well as T&I.

With regard to the *player* roles that the respective T&I organisations have, three of the five organisations that require PD are not professional associations or PD providers. This indicates that organisations that do not have the *player* roles of representing T&I practitioners and being PD providers themselves are somewhat more likely to take on the *player* role of PD 'enforcer'. Again, our small sample prevents us from making any further assertions about the relationship between *player* role and PD.

In Australia, a country where practitioners credentialed by the national certification

authority, NAATI, are required to engage in PD if they hold the credential of ‘certification’, uptake rates are high, with over three-quarters of a sample of 3,268 practitioners reporting PD engagement with at least one formal training activity in the 24-month period from late 2017 to late 2019. To be sure, the primary cause for the high PD uptake rates has been the introduction of PD as a compulsory feature of (re-)credentialing as a T&I practitioner in Australia. This co-occurs with a secondary feature which is the preponderance of PD opportunities available to professionals across a wide span of professions and occupations, regardless of whether PD is compulsory or optional for that relevant area of work. In this respect, Australia appears to be at the forefront of those countries in which PD is now an accepted feature of almost all workplaces.

Further, uptake rates, in general, are higher amongst interpreters than among translators and attendance at a greater number of PD offerings is higher amongst interpreters compared to translators. Perceptions of a greater availability of PD offerings for interpreters compared to translators may play a role in this. Lastly, uptake rates are only slightly lower amongst those who are not obliged to undertake PD due to the type of their credential or lack of any credential requiring this. This suggests a broad acceptance of PD as an attribute of professional practice in general and to the desire amongst T&I practitioners to engage with opportunities to learn new skills and acquire knowledge in further areas where these are available. While the acceptance of PD may be broad across this large sample, it is instructive to elicit practitioners’ motivations for as well as obstacles to PD engagement as reported by them. Such data, together with data on the availability, cost and thematic content of PD offerings may allow a more multi-faceted description of the role that PD plays in practitioners’ professional lives. We look forward to studies that provide further insights.

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