

Abstract

The topic of the present thesis is professional ethics in interpreting. The thesis consists of two main parts – a theoretical part and empirical research.

The theoretical part first defines ethics in terms of philosophy and introduces some key subject-related concepts. Subsequently, it focuses on professional ethics and characterizes the main documents that set out desirable standards of conduct within a certain profession – codes of ethics and codes of conduct. This general introduction is then followed by an overview of research into ethics in interpreting studies, and a brief outline of the history of codes of ethics for interpreters. The following chapters discuss ethical challenges in different interpreting settings and briefly introduce major Czech and foreign professional organizations of interpreters. The core of the theoretical part compares ten selected codes of ethics of different Czech and international professional interpreters organizations; based on this comparison, basic rights and obligations of interpreters are identified and further analysed in the empirical part.

The empirical part of the thesis presents and discusses the results of a questionnaire survey focusing on selected topics of interpreting ethics discussed in the theoretical part. The aim of the survey, which was conducted among 54 interpreters, was to find out if interpreters comply with the principles prescribed by the codes, and if variables such as the number of years of interpreting practice or the affiliation with a professional organization have an influence on their performance of the profession in terms of adherence to ethical standards. The survey also included some ethically-challenging interpreting scenarios, the aim of which was to analyse how interpreters address moral dilemmas, and outline the main ethical considerations guiding their reasoning and course of action.

Key words

interpreting, ethics, professional deontology, code of ethics, professional organizations, ethical principles, ethical dilemma, confidentiality, impartiality, neutrality, competences, professional development