

Investigating the implementation of ISO standards for interpreting in the UK language services industry: Drivers and challenges

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A dissertation submitted to the School of Languages, Cultures, Art History & Music of the University of Birmingham for the degree of MA in Translation Studies

Word count: 14874

Translation and Intercultural Studies Section
Department of Modern Languages
The University of Birmingham
2023-24

Abstract

This study investigates the prevalence of ISO standards for interpreting (ISOI) implementation within the UK language services industry. It also explores the underlying motivations driving ISOI adoption by language services companies (LSCs), identifies the challenges encountered during the implementation and certification processes, and proposes potential solutions to address these challenges. Using a qualitative methodology following desk research, the study involved interviews with five participants conducted between June and August. The desk research findings reveal that at least 14 companies in the UK have obtained ISOI certifications, although its overall implementation remains relatively uncommon. Additionally, participant transcripts indicate that among the six identified motivations, differentiating from competitors is a primary factor; meeting client requirements, establishing a compliance framework, and demonstrating adherence are also key drivers. Other motivations include achieving operational improvements, increasing customer trust, and collaborating with ATC Certification. The study also highlights the primary challenge of the time-consuming certification process, alongside other notable obstacles such as complex implementation procedures, demanding compliance requirements, high costs and budget constraints, staffing limitations, and technological shortcomings. To address these challenges, eight solutions are proposed and employed. Based on these findings, it is recommended that LSCs considering ISOI certifications conduct thorough assessments to determine whether it aligns with their needs before starting the certification process. Additionally, LSCs aiming to achieve and implement ISOI certifications are advised to consider the eight strategies as a foundational framework, adapting them to their unique circumstances for optimal results.

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Acknowledgment

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, I have been fortunate to receive the help and encouragement of many people, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to them.

I am sincerely grateful to my academic supervisor, Jenny Wong, and my industry supervisor, Raisa McNab, for their unwavering support, insightful advice, patience, and encouragement. Without their invaluable guidance and assistance, this dissertation would not have been possible.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the participants for their kindness in taking part in this research. Their cooperation, trust, and understanding throughout the entire research process have been greatly appreciated. In particular, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Lynn Everson, who was the first to agree to participate in this project. Her willingness to provide detailed feedback and assistance in verifying the transcripts was invaluable and greatly contributed to the quality and success of this research. Furthermore, my sincere thanks also go to Kaidee Clark and Sandra Foster for their assistance in recruiting participants through email.

Finally, my gratitude goes to my family and friends for their unwavering support and understanding throughout this research journey. Their encouragement and patience have been a constant source of strength and inspiration.

1. Introduction

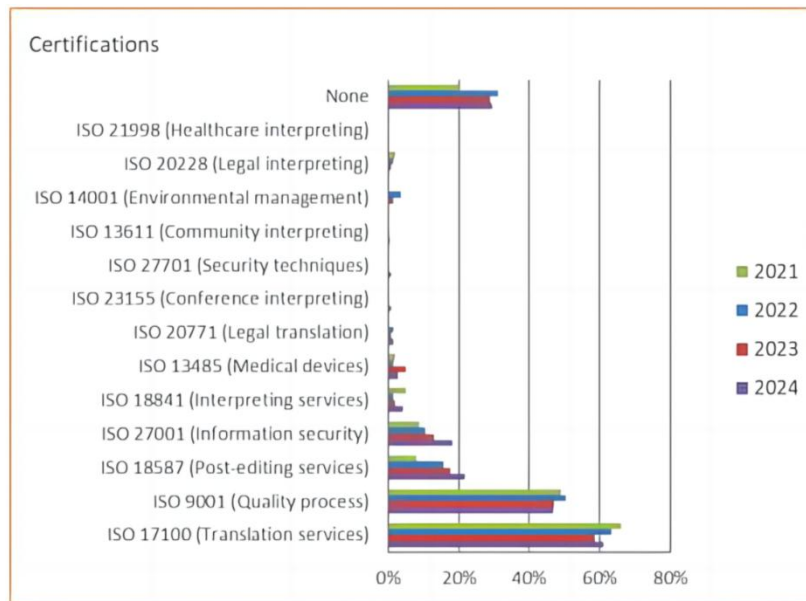
1.1 Research context

The topic of this dissertation is to investigate the implementation of ISO standards for interpreting (ISOI) in the UK language services industry: Drivers and challenges. These standards include *ISO 18841:2018* for interpreting services, *ISO 20228:2019* for legal interpreting, and *ISO 21998:2020* for healthcare interpreting. The research is contextualized within an environment where a growing number of companies offering both spoken and non-spoken interpreting services are seeking certification to interpreting standards from the Association of Translation Companies (ATC) Certification (Admin, 2021). Although there is a growing interest in obtaining these certifications, the certification process for these standards remains in its early stages, with the earliest standard being published only six years ago and the most recent one just four years ago. Additionally, this research is one of several collaborative MA projects with the ATC, which proposes project topics related to the language services industry and provides support to partner universities and interested students.

1.2 Research rationale

The choice of topic for this research stems from the recognition of the significance of ISO standards in the context of globalization, as they serve as a foundational framework for international trade (Elizabeth, 2017). Moreover, LSCs certified by ISO standards and display an ISO label on their website stand to enhance their reputation and credibility among stakeholders (MasterWord, 2024) through improved performance and efficiency. This can ultimately lead to clients' willingness to pay a premium for their high-quality services (See, 2021). Hence, in my view, companies and organizations engaged in global business or providing translation and interpretation services to facilitate cross-cultural communication should prioritize obtaining the relevant ISOI certifications.

Figure 1: Certifications of language companies



Source: From *ELIS* (2024, p. 10)

However, according to Figure 1 from the *European Language Industry Survey 2024* (*ELIS*) (2024), the number of LSCs certified by ISO 18841 does not exceed 10% of all LSCs. Similarly, certifications for ISO 20228 and ISO 21998 have not exceeded 5% respectively. The obtaining of these ISOI certifications is far less prioritized compared to ISO 17100 for translation services, which exceeds 60% of the total LSCs. Given that the results from *ELIS* may not accurately reflect the real situation, as it did not involve LSCs from every country (e.g., Georgia, Kosovo, Iceland, etc.) (2024), it is necessary to study a specific country to understand the implementation of ISOI certifications comprehensively.

Table 1: Language companies in *ELIS*

Region	Countries	Companies	Countries	Companies
Central & Eastern	Albania	0	Poland	11
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	0	Romania	3
	Bulgaria	4	Russia	6
	Croatia	4	Serbia	1

Europe (66)	Czech Republic	10	Slovakia	4
	Georgia	0	Slovenia	7
	Hungary	11	Turkey	1
	Kosovo	0	Ukraine	3
	North Macedonia	1		
Northern Europe & Baltics (22)	Denmark	3	Latvia	2
	Estonia	4	Lithuania	8
	Finland	2	Norway	0
	Iceland	0	Sweden	3
Western & Southern Europe (154)	Austria	8	Luxembourg	5
	Belgium	10	Malta	0
	France	15	Netherlands	10
	Germany	17	Portugal	12
	Greece	9	Spain	17
	Ireland	1	Switzerland	2
	Italy	25	United Kingdom	23
Americas (8)	Argentina	1	Mexico	0
	Brazil	1	Paraguay	0
	Canada	1	USA	5
Africa, Asia & Oceania (7)	Algeria	0	India	5
	Australia	0	South Africa	1
	Cameroon	0	Togo/ Nigeria	0
	China	0	United Arab Emirates	0
	Egypt	0	Vietnam	7

Source: Adapted from *ELIS* (2024)

Among the 55 countries summarized in Table 1 above, participants from the UK are chosen for this study, despite the fact that the number of participants from both the UK (23) and Italy (25) exceeds 20. The UK group is selected because it provides a comparatively large sample for meaningful analysis and reliable statistical conclusions. Additionally, since this is a collaborative project with ATC, they are also interested in understanding the prevalence of ISOI certifications in the UK. With their assistance, and given my current presence in the UK for study, I could have more access to data and information. Therefore, this study will focus on the UK language service industry.

Considering that only 23 UK LSCs participated in the *ELIS*, the certification rate of ISOI could vary slightly or dramatically. When searching for companies using the Standard Industrial Classification code related to translation and interpretation activities on Companies House, the results show 7,525 companies (GOV.UK, 2024). This significant discrepancy between the number of companies participating in the *ELIS* survey and the total number of translation and interpretation companies in the UK indicates a potential underrepresentation in the survey data. Additionally, previous research has primarily focused on ISO standards for translation (Duro Moreno, 2020; Vandepitte, 2017), with few studies examining ISO standards for interpreting. Consequently, it becomes crucial to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the actual state of ISOI certification among UK LSCs.

1.3 Research purposes and questions

The primary purpose of this study is to evaluate the degree to which LSCs in the UK have integrated and attained certifications for ISOI. Furthermore, the research aims to delve into the underlying motivations driving the adoption of ISOI within these LSCs, identify the challenges encountered during the implementation and certification processes, and propose possible solutions. To achieve these objectives, the study identifies eligible companies using data from Companies House and the ATC Certification websites. It gathers information on the motivations for seeking ISOI certifications and the challenges encountered during the certification process through questionnaires and explores potential solutions via follow-up interviews. Based on the purposes, the research questions (RQs) will be:

RQ1: What is the prevalence of ISOI implementation and certification among LSCs in the UK?

RQ2: What are the motivations for these LSCs in the UK to adopt ISOI certifications?

RQ3: What challenges do these LSCs face when certifying ISOI?

By addressing the aforementioned RQs, the study is expected to contribute to the broader body of literature on ISO standards within the field of interpreting. Practically, the findings of this research are expected to offer valuable insights into the current adoption and implementation of ISOI among LSCs in the UK. Furthermore, the study's findings will provide LSCs seeking to attain and implement ISOI certifications with practical ideas and suggestions to overcome potential challenges that may hinder the adoption of these standards.

1.4 Outline of the dissertation

The dissertation is structured into five chapters. The initial chapter introduces the context and rationale for investigating the implementation of ISOI in the UK language service industry, along with the research objectives and questions. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the development of ISO standards and the significance of certification, and provides an overview of ISOI. It also explores the specific motivations for obtaining ISOI certifications, its impacts, and the challenges encountered during implementation. Chapter 3 outlines the study's underlying paradigm, explains the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach, and details the data collection and analysis processes, while also addressing research ethics and limitations. Moving forward, Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings on the prevalence of ISOI certifications among 14 LSCs and explores six motivations, six challenges, and eight effective direct and indirect strategies identified from the in-depth analysis of five ISOI-certified LSCs. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the research, offers practical implications, outlines its limitations, and proposes potential directions for future research related to the implementation and certifications of ISOI.

2. Literature Review

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section introduces the concept of ISO, detailing its historical development, the impact of its standards, and the significance of its certifications. It also discusses the obstacles companies face in obtaining these certifications. The second section provides an overview of ISOI, exploring the motivations, impacts, and challenges associated with obtaining these standards. The final section summarizes the findings from the literature review.

Despite the growing number of LSCs seeking certifications to ISOI from ATC Certification, there remains a notable gap in the academic literature on this subject. The increasing demand for ISOI certifications suggests that this topic could be of significant interest; however, a comprehensive ProQuest search using the syntax “summary(ISO 18841) OR summary(ISO 20228) OR summary(ISO 21998) AND summary(certification)” across 45 databases revealed no relevant studies. In addition, a search in Google Scholar with the Boolean operators “‘ISO 18841’ OR ‘ISO 20228’ OR ‘ISO 21998’ AND ‘certification’” also failed to uncover any accessible and relevant studies. These searches specifically targeted certifications to ISOI, including the certifications to *ISO 18841* for interpreting services, *ISO 20228* for legal interpreting, and *ISO 21998* for healthcare interpreting. Consequently, much of the evidence cited in this chapter draws primarily from websites and other non-academic sources.

2.1 International Organization for Standardization

2.1.1 Development of ISO standards

ISO, established as a non-governmental international organization (Loshin, 2021), is dedicated to developing and disseminating standards that ensure quality, safety, sustainability, and more (ISO, 2019e). As stated by ISO (n.d., cited in Katschinka, 2016), standards are documents outlining requirements, specifications, guidelines, or characteristics that ensure the consistent suitability of materials, products, processes, and services for their intended purposes. The primary aim of ISO is to facilitate standardization across a wide range of technical and non-technical domains (Britannica, 2024). Notably, ISO does not cover standards for electrical and electronic engineering, which are managed by the International

Electrotechnical Commission (Britannica, 2024). Although ISO was officially founded in Geneva in 1947, its efforts to promote global trade and cooperation among individuals and businesses began in 1946 (ISO, 2019a).

In 1951, ISO published its inaugural standard initially known as Recommendations, which underwent multiple updates and evolved into *ISO 1:2022 Geometrical Product Specifications - Standard reference temperature for geometrical product specification* (ISO, 2019a). Subsequently, in 1968, ISO released its pioneering standard concerning freight containers (ISO, 2019a). As time progressed, ISO continued to expand its scope and publish new standards across various fields. For instance, in 2015, ISO published *ISO 17100:2015*, which was the first standard for language services, specifying requirements for delivering quality translation services (ISO, 2015c). Two years later, ISO introduced *ISO 18587:2017*, which outlines requirements for the post-editing of machine translation output (ISO, 2017). In 2020, ISO further addressed the need for accurate legal translation by publishing *ISO 20771:2020*, which sets requirements for legal translation to avoid serious legal issues and other consequences (ISO, 2020a).

The development of a standard usually takes about three years, from the initial proposal to final publication (ISO, 2019c). According to ISO (2019c), technical experts commence the process by developing a draft that addresses a market need within a specific area. This draft is then circulated for comments and further discussion. The voting process is crucial for achieving consensus; if consensus is reached, the draft progresses towards becoming an ISO standard. If agreement is not achieved, the draft is revised and subjected to additional rounds of voting. Each standard is reviewed at least every five years after publication to verify its validity and to determine whether it should be updated or withdrawn, ensuring that it remains current and globally relevant (ISO, 2019d).

Over the past eight decades, ISO has established 25,419 International Standards that set essential criteria for the functionality of products and services (ISO, n.d.). These standards offer numerous benefits, including ensuring reliability, building trust, and simplifying choices (ISO, 2019e). This is because they define what excellence looks like, establishing consistent benchmarks for both businesses and consumers (ISO, 2019e). In addition, these standards assist regulators and governments in developing better regulations, as they are grounded in a sound basis established through the involvement of globally-recognized experts (ISO, 2019b).

2.1.2 Certification to ISO standards

According to ISO (2015a), the certification of ISO standards is granted by an independent body, which issues a certificate verifying that a product, process, service, or system meets specific criteria. Certification is not a one-time event but an ongoing process ensuring continuous compliance with the selected standard (British Assessment Bureau, 2022). The certification remains valid for three years (Brand Compliance, 2022), after which a recertification audit is required (British Assessment Bureau, 2022). Although ISO itself does not engage in certification or issue certificates, this does not diminish the importance of certification to ISO standards.

In fact, in certain industries, certification is a legal or contractual necessity (ISO, 2015a). Furthermore, certification serves as a valuable tool for adding credibility by demonstrating that a product or service meets customer expectations (ISO, 2015a). For instance, certification to ISO 14001, available through ATC Certification—a specialist ISO certification body providing certification and training to the language services industry (ATC Certification, 2022)—offers companies opportunities to enhance their credentials with stakeholders (Camilleri, 2022). However, this is not always the case. Cabecinhas, Sampaio, and Casadesús (2021) find that not all certified companies achieve benefits or improve organizational performance through ISO 14001 certification. The impact of certification can also depend on the size of the company as Blyde (2021) notes that the positive effects of certification are predominantly seen among large firms in the export industry.

In addition to these limitations, the process of certifying ISO 14001 can also involve superficial adoption, high certification costs, time constraints, increased paperwork and red tape, and employee resistance to change or lack of capability to meet the standard's requirements (Camilleri, 2022). Similar limitations are observed with other ISO certifications as well. Sfakianaki and Kakouris (2018) found that bureaucracy, insufficient guidance from top management, demands on time and resources, and employee resistance commonly hinder ISO 9001 certification for small-to-medium enterprises in the Greek food and beverage industry. Additionally, other challenges include the failure to define personnel responsibilities and authorities, a lack of experience in establishing quality systems, and insufficient quality education and training (Aamer, Al-Awlaqi, & Mandahawi, 2020).

While ISO 14001 and ISO 9001 certifications share common challenges, it is essential for this dissertation to identify the specific obstacles faced by UK-based LSCs during the

implementation and certification of ISOI. This focus is particularly important due to the limited research in this area and the varying challenges that the same ISO standard can present across different countries and regions (Tayo Tene, Yuriev and Boiral, 2017). Therefore, the following section provides a detailed exploration of ISOI.

2.2 International Organization for Standardization standards for interpreting

Although ISO has established numerous standards related to the interpreting industry, this discussion will focus solely on *ISO 18841:2018*, *ISO 20228:2019*, and *ISO 21998:2020*. Since these standards all include sections on Introduction, Scope, Normative References, and Terms and Definitions, this section will begin by providing an overview of their specific and distinctive features.

2.2.1 Overview of ISOI

As one of the ISO standards specifically tailored to particular sectors, *ISO 18841* addresses interpreting services for both spoken and signed communication (ISO, 2018). Published in 2018, it establishes fundamental requirements for the qualifications and competencies of interpreters (ATC Certification, n.d.). Additionally, the standard covers critical issues such as confidentiality and privacy, offering guidance on proper and ethical practices for language service providers (ISO, 2018). *ISO 18841* serves as an overarching standard applicable to all types of interpreting services (Acutrans, 2021a). Under its umbrella, there are two sector-specific standards: *ISO 20228*, which pertains to legal interpreting, and *ISO 21998*, which focuses on healthcare interpreting (Admin, 2021).

Unlike *ISO 18841*, which sets the baseline for interpreting services (Admin, 2021), *ISO 20228*, issued in 2019, is specifically tailored for legal interpreting (ISO, 2019f). Beyond setting quality standards for interpreting services, it imposes additional requirements on interpreters in the legal sector and outlines critical best practices (Acutrans, 2021c). The standard also outlines various legal settings and offers recommendations for the appropriate interpreting modes (ATC Certification, n.d.). It applies to all parties involved in facilitating communication between users of legal services who use spoken or signed languages (ISO, 2024a). This includes legal practitioners, interpreters, clients, and other stakeholders involved

in legal proceedings requiring interpreting services (International Localization Industry Certification System, n.d.). This standard ensures that interpreters involved in legal proceedings are properly qualified, thereby guaranteeing the accuracy and confidentiality crucial in legal settings (International Localization Industry Certification System, 2024).

Complementing *ISO 18841* (Acutrans, 2021b), *ISO 21998*, published in 2020, specifically addresses healthcare interpreting. It provides explicit guidance for medical settings, healthcare data, and industry-specific concerns (ISO, 2020b). Furthermore, it specifies various required competencies within the healthcare domain, as well as the formal qualifications that interpreters must document and maintain (ATC Certification, n.d.). Given the complexity of medical terminology and the potential consequences of misinterpretation (Acutrans, 2021b), this standard also emphasizes the importance of accurately conveying medical information, understanding healthcare terminology, and navigating the cultural nuances of patient-provider interactions (International Localization Industry Certification System, 2024).

2.2.2 Reasons for obtaining ISOI certifications

Although ISOI certification is voluntary (ISO, n.d.), there are numerous reasons why a company or freelance interpreter might pursue them. One significant reason is the enhanced credibility and marketability these certifications provide. As an internationally recognized mark of quality, certification helps distinguish a business from its competitors (Certly Consulting, 2023). By obtaining ISO 18841 certification, interpreters and interpreting service providers can bolster their credibility and demonstrate their commitment to quality, aiding in attracting new clients and expanding their market reach (Certly Consulting, 2023).

Another compelling reason for seeking ISOI certification is to enhance customer satisfaction. By adhering to the requirements and recommendations of *ISO 18841*, interpreting service providers can consistently deliver high-quality services, thereby boosting customer satisfaction and loyalty (Certly Consulting, 2023). Additionally, *ISO 20228* and *ISO 21998* establish best practices for handling sensitive client information in legal and healthcare settings (Acutrans, 2021b). Certification to these standards provides clients with confidence that their sensitive information is handled securely and with appropriate sensitivity, further enhancing customer satisfaction. Satisfied clients are more likely to return and recommend

the service to others, contributing to business growth and profitability (Certly Consulting, 2023).

Enhancing efficiency and productivity is another rationale for pursuing ISOI certification. *ISO 18841* emphasizes the importance of clear and effective communication between interpreters and clients, as well as the need for effective project management and quality control measures (Certly Consulting, 2023). Additionally, *ISO 20228* and *ISO 21998* address sight translations, specifying the correct approach for interpreters to convey information from written documents that have not undergone formal translation into the participant's language (Acutrans, 2021b). By implementing these guidelines, interpreting service providers can enhance their operational efficiency and productivity, which can ultimately result in lower costs and higher profitability (Certly Consulting, 2023).

Furthermore, enhancing risk management can be a significant rationale for LSCs to pursue ISOI certification. *ISO 18841* requires interpreters and interpreting service providers to identify and address potential risks, such as language and cultural barriers or technical challenges (Certly Consulting, 2023). Similarly, *ISO 21998* emphasizes the importance of navigating cultural differences while bridging linguistic gaps in healthcare settings, ensuring interpreters are culturally sensitive and adaptable (Acutrans, 2021b). By implementing effective risk management strategies, businesses can mitigate the likelihood of these risks and minimize their impact when they arise (Certly Consulting, 2023).

In addition to reasons such as enhancing credibility, marketability, customer satisfaction, efficiency, and risk management, meeting “government demands, requirements, or pressures” (Aamer, Al-Awlaqi, & Mandahawi, 2020, p. 367) can also justify pursuing ISOI certification. Although Aamer, Al-Awlaqi, and Mandahawi's (2020) findings do not specifically address ISOI certification, they provide relevant evidence. That is because sometimes, as discussed in Section 2.1, certification is legally or contractually mandated in certain industries (ISO, 2015a). While these factors are significant reasons for pursuing ISOI certification, they are considered motivations in this study. According to Kanfer and Chen (2016), motivation functions as an overarching concept that encompasses both the underlying purposes and the reasons guiding decision-making processes and goal-setting.

2.2.3 Impacts of motivations on LSCs

The term “motivation” originates from the Latin word *motivus*, meaning “a driving force,” highlighting the energizing characteristics inherent in psychological motivation processes (Cofer & Petri, 2018). As Ekhsan et al. (2019) state, motivation is the driving force behind actions that lead individuals to engage in activities aimed at achieving specific goals. However, motivation is not only influential at the individual level; it is also a vital factor in a firm’s decision-making process (He, Ribeiro-Navarrete, and Botella-Carrubí, 2023).

Furthermore, the motivations mentioned above are also able to influence the development of LSCs. For instance, strengthening credibility can lead to increased customer retention (Oppong, Mensah, & Addae, 2021), enhanced long-term buyer-supplier relationships (Dang, Pham, & Wang, 2019), and boosted market competitiveness (Lorek, 2020). Similarly, improving customer satisfaction allows for greater client loyalty and retention (Rohmayati & Hidayat, 2022), generates positive referrals and recommendations (Díaz & Duque, 2021), and enhances competitive advantage (Awad & Mahmoud, 2024). Additionally, enhancing risk management can ensure service continuity (Silverman & Eisenhardt, 2023), optimize operational efficiency (Imran, Ratnayake, & Okdinawati, 2023), and strengthen competitive advantage (Kwak, Seo, & Mason, 2018).

Beyond these impacts, increasing marketability enables companies to grow earnings (Abbas et al., 2022) and expand market opportunities (Herdiana & Rusdiana, 2022). Meeting government requirements allows companies to qualify for opportunities in the public sector (Ducatel et al., 2020), build client trust (Hasani et al., 2023), and improve overall operational efficiency (Stratigaki et al., 2016) and consistency in service delivery (Rahmi and Wijaya, 2022). Enhancing efficiency and productivity can lower operational costs (Moon, 2024), increase capacity to manage higher workloads (Realyvásquez-Vargas et al., 2019), and improve client satisfaction (Liu et al., 2017).

2.2.4 Challenges in obtaining ISOI certifications

While the motivations for obtaining ISOI certifications and their impacts on companies are substantial and compelling, it is equally important to acknowledge the challenges that organizations may encounter in the certification process. These challenges can significantly impact the feasibility and practicality of achieving and maintaining ISOI certifications. Current literature reveals a scarcity of empirical studies directly investigating these

challenges and their solutions. Therefore, I will draw insights from *ISO 9001*, a globally recognized standard for quality management (ISO, 2015b) that has certified numerous LSCs, to infer potential challenges faced by organizations involved in ISOI certifications.

The possible challenges in obtaining ISOI certifications can be broadly classified into two main categories based on the nature and source of the obstacles encountered during the certification process: resource-related challenges and organizational challenges. Resource-related challenges include high certification cost (Ab Wahid, 2019), insufficient internal expertise (Bounabri et al., 2018) and time-consuming procedures (Sfakianaki and Kakouris, 2018). On the other hand, organizational challenges involve complex implementation process (Aamer, Al-Awlaqi and Mandahawi, 2020), poor communication (Ab Wahid, 2019) and organizational resistance to change (Bounabri et al., 2018).

The impact of these potential challenges extends beyond compromising LSCs' ability to achieve and maintain ISOI certifications; they can also have significant repercussions for the companies overall. Specifically, high certification cost has the potential to divert resources from other essential business areas and slow down other business activities or strategic initiatives (Liu, Liu, & Luo, 2016). Insufficient internal expertise can lead to inconsistent quality, defects, or service issues, as well as difficulties in maintaining consistent quality over time (Duma and Zavruta, 2021). Moreover, a time-consuming procedure is likely to reduce a company's operational efficiency (Skoff et al., 2023) and increase employee fatigue and pressure (Kumar et al., 2006).

In addition to these impacts, complex implementation processes are likely to increase employee workloads (Zhang et al., 2023). Poor communication risks undermining collaboration across departments (De Sisto and Handmer, 2020) and leading to increased conflict and misunderstandings among team members or departments (Li, 2024). Furthermore, organizational resistance to change can result in higher training and support costs (Milliken, 2012) to educate employees and facilitate their understanding and adoption of new standards.

2.3 Summary

In summary, while motivations such as increasing credibility and marketability, improving customer satisfaction, enhancing efficiency and productivity, managing risks, and meeting government requirements can drive LSCs to pursue ISOI certifications and yield

numerous positive impacts, they may also face challenges like high certification costs, insufficient internal expertise, time-consuming procedures, complex implementation processes, poor communication, and organizational resistance to change. These challenges not only affect the viability and maintenance of ISOI certification but also significantly impact the company's overall operational effectiveness. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to carefully consider these factors and develop strategic approaches to overcome them, ensuring the successful attainment and maintenance of ISOI certifications.

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used in this research. It commences with an explanation of the study's underlying paradigm and the rationale for adopting a qualitative approach. It then describes the sampling and recruitment processes. Finally, the chapter delves into research ethics and addresses limitations.

3.1 Research paradigm and approach

Given the importance of research paradigms in shaping an appropriate research framework (Ulz, 2023), this section begins by discussing my research paradigm. The paradigm position for this study was aligned with interpretivism, which includes a relativist ontology acknowledging multiple realities and ways of accessing them, and a constructivist epistemology viewing knowledge as constructed through social interactions and individual interpretations (Gray, 2021). Due to the lack of empirical studies on ISOI certifications, this study aimed to understand the underlying motivations driving the adoption of ISOI within UK-based LSCs, identify in-process challenges and propose possible solutions, rather than attempting to generalize findings to a larger population or predict and control outcomes. In fact, it explored the personal experiences and subjective explanations of LSCs' managers, which is consistent with the multiple realities posited by a relativist ontology (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015). Hence, this study was well-aligned with the interpretivism. Considering that interpretivism is commonly linked with qualitative approaches (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014), a qualitative methodology was consequently adopted.

3.2 Sampling and recruitment

The present study planned to enlist managers accountable for ISOI implementation and certification at LSCs who are eager to learn about and assist in integrating ISOI into the interpreting industry. Therefore, purposive sampling was employed to select participants based on principled criteria, ensuring that key aspects of the research question are covered (Gray, 2021). Due to the lack of a comprehensive list of UK-based companies that provide interpreting services and their ISOI certification status, desk research was conducted to identify suitable participants prior to recruiting participants. To ensure all the results (no more than 5,000) from the Companies House could be downloaded, the filter of Company status

“active” was utilized to narrow down the results. Eventually, 4,213 results were obtained. These results were imported into a spreadsheet for further screening.

Upon reviewing the data, it was noted that some entries under the “nature of business” column included not only 74300 (translation and interpretation activities) but also other business activities. To more accurately target relevant companies, only those with “nature of business” listed solely as 74300 were retained. This refinement resulted in a final list of 2,123 companies. Specific eligibility criteria presented in Table 2 below were then applied to this refined list to identify companies suitable for recruitment. Although eligible LSCs were required to have obtained at least one ISOI certification and display the corresponding label on their websites, this criterion was not strictly enforced in the screening. This decision was made because some certifications may be outdated, or LSCs may have obtained certifications without updating their websites to reflect this status.

Table 2: Eligibility criteria

Criterion	Description
Presence of Online Website	LSCs have publicly accessible and safe online websites.
Provision of Interpreting Services	LSCs offer interpreting services as part of their business operations.
Availability of Contact Information	LSCs have email addresses listed on their website for communication purposes.

Due to limited time and resources and the difficulty of locating companies’ websites by name, a random sample of 430 LSCs was studied from this final list of 2,123 companies. To ensure the accuracy of the companies’ websites, I used triangulation by first locating them through Google and then verifying the URLs via Endole. After screening their websites for business activities, email addresses, and ISOI certifications, 351 companies were excluded, leaving 79 companies to decide whether to send the invitation email with the Participant Information Sheet. The reasons for these exclusions included 292 companies that did not have publicly accessible and secure websites, 58 LSCs that did not offer interpreting services, and one that did not have an email address.

Apart from downloading results from Companies House to identify eligible LSCs, the list of All Certified Clients from the ATC Certification website was also used, as it records the ISOI certification status of these LSCs. This approach could significantly help in finding the desired participants. Furthermore, it was believed that seeking assistance from ATC Certification to send the emails would result in a higher response rate compared to sending them myself, as ATC Certification's clients are familiar with the organization but not with me. After an initial screening of the ISOI certifications for 129 LSCs in May and confirming their status as UK-based companies, 118 were excluded. This left 11 LSCs as eligible. At the same time, in an effort to comprehensively identify all eligible LSCs, attempts were made to find other UK-based certification companies that provide ISOI certification through Google and Bing searches, but none were found. To ensure the accuracy of the screening and to avoid missing any LSCs that might have obtained ISOI certifications after the initial review, a second screening of the list of all certified clients was conducted on July 10th. This second screening identified 14 eligible companies (11 from the initial screening plus three additional ones).

This study initially planned to recruit at least eight respondents from LSCs certified by ISOI for questionnaires and interviews, as 6-12 interviews are generally sufficient for a qualitative research project (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, 2006). However, after reviewing the relevant literature and considering the methods to approach eligible LSCs, I realized that one reason for the scarcity of sufficient literature could be the difficulty in recruiting participants on short notice. These individuals may be busy and not perceive direct benefits from participating in this type of research. Consequently, the target number of ISOI-certified respondents was reduced from eight to six.

At the beginning of June, invitations to participate in this study were sent to all 90 eligible LSCs. I personally sent the invitation email, which included a brief description of the research and the Participant Information Sheet, to 79 companies. Of the 79 companies contacted, one declined the invitation, indicating a lack of interest and requesting to be removed from further communications. Additionally, one company without ISO certification expressed interest in the project and inquired about the possibility of participation. The remaining companies have not yet responded.

Simultaneously, I sought assistance from ATC Certification to directly send invitation emails to its clients. However, the initial response rate was quite low, with only one company agreeing to participate. To recruit a sufficient number of participants, I followed up with phone calls, text messages, and additional emails. These communications were directed to the

remaining ten clients of ATC Certification using general contact information obtained from their websites, rather than through direct personal contacts. Fortunately, two of these companies agreed to participate in the study. However, this number still fell short of meeting my needs. After leaving messages on LinkedIn and seeking additional assistance from ATC Certification to directly send invitation emails to its 11 clients in July, a total of eight LSCs agreed to participate in the research. Despite this, due to participants' workloads and timelines, two expressed regret at being unable to continue participating, and one did not return the completed consent form or respond to follow-up attempts to schedule the interview. As a result, only five participants were ultimately recruited. The details of the participants were presented below in Table 3.

Table 3: Details of the participants

Pseudonym	Interview	Business type	Obtained ISOI (year)
240601	Agreed	Desktop publishing; Interpreting; Subtitling; Transcription; Translation; Voice over	ISO 188411 (1-3 years)
240603	Agreed	Interpreting; Localization; Subtitling; Translation;	ISO 188411 (More than 4 years) ISO 20228 (More than 4 years)
240604	Agreed	Interpreting; Translation	ISO 188411 (Less than 1 year)
240605	Agreed	Desktop publishing; Dubbing; Interpreting; Localization; Subtitling; Translation; Voice over	ISO 188411 (Less than 1 year)
240606	Agreed	Interpreting; Localization; Subtitling; Translation	ISO 188411 (Less than 1 year)

3.3 Data collection

Considering that the aims of this study are not only “to collect background information

on research participants; to collect data on facts, opinions, attitudes, behaviour” (p. 152) from LSCs that have integrated and attained certifications for ISOI, but also to gather explanatory data on managers’ opinions and personal experiences through more in-depth interviews (Saldanha and O’Brien, 2014), data were consequently collected through both questionnaires and interviews. Although Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggest that observation can also be employed in qualitative research, it was deemed impractical and discarded, as it does not provide the same access to a person’s thoughts and opinions as interviews do (Saldanha and O’Brien, 2014).

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Answers to the questionnaire were collected through China’s largest online questionnaire distribution platform (Luo, Wang, and Wang, 2023), Wenjuanxing. Although SurveyMonkey is a global leader in survey software (SurveyMonkey, 2024) and could be more familiar to participants, it was not used due to the limitations of its free version, which restricts surveys to ten questions and 100 respondents (University of Birmingham, 2024). Since the number of questions exceeded ten and were logically linked, Wenjuanxing was chosen instead. The blank questionnaire was displayed in Appendix I.

The questionnaire consists of 17 questions. Questions 1-5 and 12-17 were applicable to all participants, regardless of whether their companies have been certified by ISOI. Question 6 was specifically for participants whose companies have not yet been certified by ISOI, and question 7 was for those who intend to seek certifications in the future. Questions 8-11 were designed for participants whose companies have already been certified by ISOI. Options C and D in question 5 included open-ended prompts, allowing participants to provide their responses (Gray, 2021) regarding reasons for pursuing other ISO standards. Additionally, option A in question 17 featured an open-ended query, asking participants to specify a suitable time for the follow-up interview. The remaining 15 questions were closed-ended, enabling the collection of “structured data that can be analyzed quantitatively” (p. 157) and saving time (Saldanha and O’Brien, 2014). To mitigate the risk of none of the provided categories being suitable for a participant (Saldanha and O’Brien, 2014) or to accommodate additional options, the “other” choice with a free-text box was included for multiple-choice questions.

3.3.2 Interview

The interviews were conducted via Zoom and recorded using a mobile recording application with the participants' consent. Although face-to-face interviews provide greater opportunities for rapport building (SublimePeople, 2023), which can give informants more scope to express themselves (Gray, 2021), online interviews were chosen due to the geographical distance between participants and myself, as well as their flexibility in scheduling. The interviews were semi-structured and lasted, on average, 35 minutes each. Unlike structured or unstructured formats, semi-structured interviews allow for in-depth probing of participants' views and opinions, encouraging them to elaborate on their responses (Gray, 2021), while minimizing the likelihood of leaving questions unanswered (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014). Consequently, the semi-structured interview format was selected.

In this study, the interviews detailed in Appendix II explored participants' motivations for pursuing ISOI certifications, the benefits and challenges associated with obtaining them, and potential solutions to these challenges. To enhance participant reflexivity, reduce interview anxiety, and elicit more thoughtful responses (Haukås and Tishakov, 2024), interviewees were provided with six fundamental questions at least one day before the interviews. Despite the potential risks of participant bias and predetermined answers (Haukås and Tishakov, 2024), this strategy was eventually employed due to the limited number of participants.

3.3.3 Piloting

A small-scale pilot study was conducted to evaluate the processes and refine the research questionnaires before implementing the large-scale survey (Gray, 2021). Given the specific knowledge required about ISOI certification, despite Gillham's (2008) recommendation to test the initial list of questions with individuals outside the target group, I had to seek feedback from both my supervisor and a participant from the target group to refine the questionnaires. For example, the second question: "What is the approximate number of interpreters employed by your company?" was revised to "What is the approximate number of interpreters your company works with (including both employees and freelancers)?" as most LSCs don't employ interpreters directly but work with numerous freelancers.

To ensure that the questions did not make assumptions, were not leading, and did not attempt to elicit more than one piece of information at a time (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014), a piloting interview was conducted with a friend who is studying ISO standards for Digital Product Passports. This was done prior to the main data collection phase, even though using just one interview as a pilot is not cost-effective when only a small number of participants are to be interviewed (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014). Drawing from my personal experience during the interview and the feedback from her, I revised one question to enhance its clarity and precision. Specifically, the complex question “Could you please rank these four aspects—client requirements, operational improvements, competitive advantage, and customer trust—in order of priority and explain the reasons behind your ranking?” was divided into two separate questions with added context. The first question asks, “When deciding whether to adopt ISO standards, which factors do you consider first? Please rank the following aspects in order of priority: client requirements, operational improvements, competitive advantage, and customer trust.” The second question seeks clarification: “Could you explain the reasons behind your ranking?”

3.4 Data analysis

The questionnaire data were automatically exported from the Wenjuanxing platform into an Excel spreadsheet. Upon export, the data were meticulously reviewed to ensure completeness and consistency, addressing any missing data appropriately. Subsequently, the data were manually reformatted and organized in accordance with the RQs, providing a foundation for further analysis and interpretation.

The interviews were transcribed into electronic files for the purpose of analyzing and identifying key themes. Participants were given the opportunity to review and verify their transcripts to ensure accuracy. The data then underwent thematic analysis, a method used to systematically extract and interpret significant ideas or themes from the raw data (Matthews and Ross, 2010). The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework: familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

Due to the limited amount of data, I opted not to use text analysis software such as NVivo, a crucial tool for qualitative data analysis (Gray, 2021). Instead, I personally

reviewed the notes I took during the interviews and the transcripts included in Appendix III to familiarize myself with the content during the initial phase. In the second phase, as I read through each transcript, I highlighted relevant sections pertaining to RQ2 and RQ3 in yellow and blue, respectively, and annotated them with concise labels that encapsulated the essence of the statements for these RQs. The summarized short codes for the RQs were presented in Table I (see Appendix IV).

Subsequently, I organized related codes into potential themes to identify overarching themes, which were illustrated in Table II (see Appendix IV). As the analysis progressed, these themes were reviewed, refined, renamed and separated to ensure their validity concerning both the coded extracts and the entire dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Subsequently, each theme was further refined and clearly defined in no more than two sentences, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), and reported in Chapter 4.

3.5 Ethical considerations

According to Saldanha and O'Brien (2014), translation research involves studying human behavior and society, as well as language and text, which necessitates careful consideration of ethical issues. Consequently, ethical considerations were prioritized throughout all stages of this study through two strategies. First, ethical approval was granted before data collection via questionnaires and interviews. Both methods were employed only after participants had read the Participant Information Form and signed the Consent Form, presented in Appendix V and Appendix VI, respectively. Interviewees were also informed that their interviews would be audio-recorded via the Zoom platform.

Second, pseudonymization was used to protect the participants' right to privacy (University College London, 2019). All participant names were replaced with artificial identifiers. Questionnaire data were stored on the online platform (<https://www.wjx.cn>) and protected by a password. The audio recordings of interviews were destroyed once transcribed, and the transcripts were stored on the researcher's password-protected laptop for up to one year. Participants were given opportunities to review the transcripts of their data and the researcher's interpretations throughout the data analysis process.

3.6 Limitations

Although the study employed several measures to establish credibility and warrantability, alternative parameters for assessing validity in qualitative research (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014), certain limitations could remain. A major limitation was the potential bias resulting from the lack of a second reviewer to cross-check the screening outcomes. This could inadvertently lead to the omission of eligible LSCs, thereby introducing a possible source of bias (Yuan & Hunt, 2009). Furthermore, interviewer bias may have influenced the study. As a novice researcher conducting semi-structured interviews, I ensured that the questions were asked consistently to a large extent. However, maintaining the same tone of voice with all respondents was not guaranteed, potentially affecting the study's credibility (Gray, 2021).

In addition, I acknowledge that my own biases could influence the data analysis process. Having participated in the preparation for ISO 9001 certification, I might bring preconceived notions about the challenges involved. This could lead me to over-interpret participants' responses, potentially reading too much into their statements based on my own experiences. As a result, there is a risk of disproportionately emphasizing certain difficulties, which might not fully reflect the participants' intended meanings or the range of challenges they encountered.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter, structured into three sections based on the research questions, presents and discusses the findings from the desk research, questionnaire and thematic analysis. The first section addresses the initial research question regarding the prevalence of ISOI implementation and certification among LSCs in the UK. The second section, organized under the main themes identified in the analysis, explores the motivations driving these UK-based LSCs to adopt ISOI. The final section explores the challenges these LSCs faced during the ISOI implementation process and the solutions they employed to address them.

4.1 Prevalence of ISOI certification

As mentioned in Section 3.2, according to the information available on the ATC website, there are currently 14 LSCs in the UK that have obtained ISOI certifications. Although it is possible that additional LSCs may have received ISOI certifications from other authorities, in the absence of concrete evidence, this study assumes that at least 14 companies in the UK have obtained ISOI certifications. Table 4 below provided detailed information about these companies' ISOI certifications.

Table 4: ISOI-Certified LSCs

No.	Company Name	ISO 18841	ISO 20228	ISO 21998
1	Absolute Translations Ltd	√		
2	AA Global Language Services Ltd	√		
3	Cintra Language Services Group Ltd	√	√	
4	DA Languages Ltd	√		√
5	Eurasian Linguistic Services Ltd	√		
6	Language Line TI Ltd	√		
7	Lifeline Language Services Ltd	√		

8	Radical Thinking LTD (dba Accentus Language Services)	√		
9	Sign Language Interactions Ltd	√		
10	Sign Solutions (Sign Language Interpreting Agency) Ltd	√		
11	Silent Sounds Communications Ltd	√		
12	TJC Global Ltd	√		
13	Topp Language Solutions	√		
14	Translate UK Limited	√		

Source: From *ATC Certification* (2024)

Out of the 14 LSCs, although all have gained ISO 18841 certification for interpreting services, the prevalence of ISO 20228 and ISO 21998 certifications is quite low. Only one company, Cintra Language Services Group Ltd, has obtained ISO 20228 certification for legal interpreting, and one company, DA Languages Ltd, has obtained ISO 21998 certification for healthcare interpreting. These findings suggested that the implementation and certification of ISOI are limited among LSCs in the UK. While screening the websites of 430 LSCs randomly selected from the final list of 2,123 companies for business activities, 372 were identified as offering interpreting services, indicating that at least 372 companies provide such services. However, only 14 companies have been confirmed to have obtained one of the ISOI certifications. Therefore, it can be inferred that the implementation and certification of ISOI are relatively uncommon in the UK. To understand why these LSCs have still obtained ISOI certifications despite this rarity, the following sections will discuss the factors motivating these LSCs to adopt ISOI and the challenges they face in implementing the standards.

4.2 Motivations for adopting ISOI

As outlined in Section 3.3, questionnaires were employed to collect background information and fundamental data on facts, opinions, attitudes, and behaviors from managers responsible for ISOI certification. This initial data collection established a foundation for the subsequent in-depth interviews. Consequently, the analysis commenced with the results from the questionnaires, followed by a detailed examination of the findings from the interviews.

4.2.1 Preliminary findings from questionnaires

Considering that company characteristics significantly affect the decision-making process (Nadolna & Beyer, 2021), it is essential to understand the background of the six interviewed companies before analyzing the motivations behind their adoption of ISOI certifications. The following table presented the key characteristics of the LSCs.

Table 5: Key characteristics of the LSCs

Pseudonym	Number of employees	Number of interpreters (in-house & freelancer)	Years in operation
240601	1-50	51-250	More than 10 years
240603	1-50	250+	More than 10 years
240604	51-250	51-250	More than 10 years
240605	1-50	1-50	More than 10 years
240606	1-50	250+	More than 10 years

According to government statistics from GOV.UK (2023), company size is classified as small (0 to 49 employees), medium-sized (50 to 249 employees), and large (250 or more employees) based on the number of employees. However, for the purposes of this study, I redefined the categories: small companies as those with 1 to 50 employees, medium-sized companies as those with 51 to 250 employees, and large companies as those with more than 250 employees. This adjustment was made based on my preference for using whole numbers as boundaries, which I believe facilitates clearer categorization and simplifies statistical analysis.

Among the five LSCs in the study, most are small enterprises with over 10 years of operation, except for the company of Participant 240604, which is medium-sized. Despite the similarities in company size and experience, the motivations for obtaining ISOI certifications varied significantly among the companies. As shown in Table 6, only two companies pursued ISOI certifications for a single motivation, while others had multiple or different reasons for their certifications.

Table 6: Motivations for adopting ISOI certification

Motivations	240601	240603	240604	240605	240606
To meet the requirements of public sector clients	√	√			√
To achieve operational improvements		√			
To differentiate from competitors	√	√	√	√	
To increase customer trust	√	√		√	
Other					

The motivations for these companies to adopt ISOI included meeting the requirements of public sector clients, achieving operational improvements, differentiating from competitors, and increasing customer trust. This finding indicated that these four factors were the primary motivations for companies to pursue ISOI certifications, as no participants specified any other motivations. Furthermore, when participants were asked to evaluate the importance of client requirements, operational improvements, competitive advantage, and customer trust in their decision to adopt ISOI standards, as shown in Table 7, competitive advantage was the only factor regarded as important by all participants. This suggested that, among these four factors, competitive advantage may be the primary motivation for pursuing ISOI certifications. These findings were further supported by the motivation data, which frequently highlight competitive advantage as a major reason for ISOI adoption.

Table 7: Importance of the general factors

Pseudonym	Client requirements	Operational improvements	Competitive advantage	Customer trust
240601	Very important	Very important	Very important	Neutral
240603	Very important	Neutral	Important	Not very important
240604	Neutral	Neutral	Important	Neutral
240605	Important	Very important	Very important	Very important
240606	Very important	Very important	Very important	Very important

Given that the results of the questionnaire could not be freely altered by participants, especially when they identified new motivations, and considering the potential limitations of the questionnaire in capturing detailed and nuanced insights (Lindemann, 2023), data from the interviews were used to explore the motivations for pursuing ISOI certifications in more detail in the subsequent analysis.

4.2.2 Detailed motivations from interviews

As shown in Table 8, six overarching themes emerged from participants' responses regarding their motivations. Although these themes were closely related, to fully explore the motivations for obtaining ISOI certifications, each theme was analyzed and discussed separately, with the analysis organized according to the frequency with which participants mentioned each theme.

Table 8: Driving motivations

No	Overarching themes	Frequency
1	Differentiating from competitors	4/5
2	Meeting client requirements	3/5
3	Establishing a framework for compliance and demonstrating adherence	3/5

4	Increasing customer trust	2/5
5	Achieving operational improvements	2/5
6	Cooperating with ATC Certification for mutual benefit	1/5

4.2.2.1 Differentiating from competitors

The first theme—differentiating from competitors—was mentioned by four participants, as indicated by terms and phrases such as “advantage,” “prestige,” and “distinguish from the competition.” Participant 240601 stated:

There’s not many of us for what I know in the profession who have achieved this accreditation or even sought to have it. So I wanted to distinguish us from the competition.

Participant 240601’s view was supported by three other participants, who suggested that ISOI certification was pursued primarily to differentiate from competitors. Participant 240603 stated, “The other reason why we did it is really simple: prestige,” while Participant 240604 noted, “It would be advantageous if we are tendering for work.” The findings revealed that ISOI certification is primarily pursued for its potential to differentiate a company from its competitors and to enhance its prestige, particularly in tendering processes.

One critical reason differentiating from competitors is a significant motivation is that it allows LSCs to stand out in crowded markets, making them more appealing to potential clients seeking reliable and high-quality partners (Vergara-Streinesberger, Aycardi-Vitola, & Mendoza-Merchán, 2020). Furthermore, standing out in a competitive market can enhance the marketability of ISOI-certified LSCs, leading to increased earnings (Abbas et al., 2022) and expanded market opportunities (Herdiana & Rusdiana, 2022). However, these advantages may diminish over time. As Participant 240605 noted, with the advent of automatic interpretation services, people may prefer them—even if they are not very accurate or compromise privacy—simply because they are free, very inexpensive, or immediate. As a result, customers might increasingly opt for these services, potentially undermining the current competitive edge provided by certifications.

4.2.2.2 Meeting client requirements

Three participants indicated that their motivation for pursuing ISOI certifications was to meet client requirements. Participants 240601 and 240606 specifically mentioned “asking for this accreditation” and “asked for ISO certifications” while Participant 240603 employed “client requirements” to describe this motivation for certifying ISOI certifications. Participant 240601 elaborated:

We’ve noticed with our French operation, particularly that European-based clients are asking for this in tenders. When they go for competitive tender, we’ve noticed that is one of the requirements to have. Before you can even bid for the tender, you must have evidence of the ISOI.

Echoing Participant 240601’s experiences, Participant 240606 noted that “with every sort of tender that we looked at, they’ve always asked for ISO certifications.” Additionally, these clients are present in both the private and public sectors. When asked about specific industries within the public sector, participants 240603 and 240606 mentioned the NHS, local councils, and the police. The findings suggested that meeting client requirements, whether from the public or private sector, can be a significant motivation for LSCs to pursue ISOI certifications. This was backed up by the research of Aamer, Al-Awlaqi, and Mandahawi (2020), which identifies government demands and requirements as one of the key motivating factors.

The importance of meeting client requirements can be explained by the fact that meeting client requirements enables companies to qualify for opportunities in the public sector (Ducatel et al., 2020). In industries such as interpreting services for the NHS, local councils, and the police, ISOI certification is often not just a preference but a legal or contractual necessity. Furthermore, by meeting client requirements, companies can enhance client satisfaction (Hsiao et al., 2021). This is achieved by ensuring that services align with client expectations, which is crucial for retaining clients and securing repeat business (Rohmayati & Hidayat, 2022).

4.2.2.3 Establishing a framework for compliance and demonstrating adherence

Among the five participants, three emphasized that their motivation for obtaining ISOI certifications was to establish a compliance framework and demonstrate adherence to standards. Participant 240601 stated, “We wanted to have a framework to work against, to ensure that our standards complied with international standards in the profession,” while Participant 240604 noted, “It would be nice to ... be able to show them that we meet the criteria required for accreditation.” Similarly, Participant 240606 highlighted that “it is also a good demonstration to all our clients that this organization, this company, is operating in line with ISO standards.” This indicated that, while establishing a compliance framework and demonstrating adherence are important motivations for pursuing ISOI certifications, they are less predominant compared to the motivation of differentiating from competitors.

The importance of establishing a compliance framework and demonstrating adherence is underscored by its ability to significantly enhance customer trust. Certification to ISOI standards visibly demonstrates a company’s commitment to internationally recognized benchmarks (ISO, 2015a), thereby strengthening its credibility (Certly Consulting, 2023). Additionally, the motivation to establish such a framework often leads to improved service quality, as it ensures that a company’s practices are systematically aligned with industry benchmarks and best practices (Lestal, 2024). This alignment not only helps maintain consistency in service delivery but also enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty. When interpreting service providers consistently deliver high-quality services, they are more likely to see increased customer retention and referrals, which in turn fosters business growth and enhances profitability (Certly Consulting, 2023).

4.2.2.4 Increasing customer trust

Two participants cited increasing customer trust as their motivation for pursuing ISOI certifications. Participant 240603 used the term “credibility,” while Participant 240606 referred to “customer assurance” to describe this motivation. According to Participant 240603, ISOI certification provides recognition to people unfamiliar with the company, demonstrating that the company has been audited and that all interpreters are compliant, which in turn enhances satisfaction and credibility. Consistent with this view, Participant 240606 believed that ISOI certification provides customers with assurance that the company has successfully undergone quality checks. The findings suggested that enhancing customer trust is a less common motivation for pursuing ISOI certifications.

Although enhancing customer trust is a less frequent motivation, it is crucial because it helps facilitate the establishment and maintenance of long-term relationships with clients (Dang, Pham, & Wang, 2019). By providing clients with the confidence to continually rely on the service provider, it fosters a stable and enduring partnership. Additionally, increased customer trust can lead to higher customer retention (Oppong, Mensah, & Addae, 2021), as customers who trust a company are more likely to stay loyal, continue using its interpreting services, and be less inclined to switch to competitors.

4.2.2.5 Achieving operational improvements

The motivation to achieve operational improvements was identified from the responses of two participants, as indicated by words like “extend,” “update” and “change”. Participant 240603 stated that the company upgraded or extended their CRM to include additional sections for interpreting assignments, such as the method of delivery, feedback, and breaks, because they wanted new IT systems and needed to change their project management approach. Similarly, Participant 240606 mentioned that, in response to the company’s growth and the influx of new employees, there was a need for consistent processes to maintain efficiency and ensure that everyone followed the same procedures within the standardized framework. This indicated that while operational improvements were not the primary motivation for the majority of participants, they nonetheless represent a significant motivation for some LSCs seeking ISOI certifications.

One reason that achieving operational improvements is a significant motivation for some LSCs pursuing ISOI certifications is its potential to increase efficiency and productivity. By refining workflows (Rinsche, 2007), enhancing operational processes, and reducing errors, companies can better manage a growing volume of assignments (Realyvásquez-Vargas et al., 2019) and respond more swiftly to client needs. Additionally, the drive for operational improvement can lead to lower operational costs (Moon, 2024). Streamlining procedures, eliminating redundancies, and improving operational practices allow companies to achieve more efficient operations, thereby reducing the time and resources required for tasks (Hryhoriev and Habor, 2022) and ultimately lowering overall operational costs.

4.2.2.6 Cooperating with ATC Certification for mutual benefit

“Cooperating with ATC Certification for mutual benefit” was the least identified motivation, with only one participant noting that it was truly beneficial for both ATC Certification and themselves, as they served as a pilot company, helping ATC Certification fine-tune and develop procedures and requirements of ISOI. On the other hand, Participant 240603 described how ATC Certification was an absolutely fantastic resource, explaining:

They have tons of materials. They can schedule meetings. They can explain what’s involved. They can help you to assess your system as well, or your struck, you know, your business how it works. So it for us, it really have that the sense structured instructions. And they sent us basically the whole breakdown of the standard we are applying.

The findings demonstrated that while “cooperating with ATC Certification for mutual benefit” was the least cited motivation, it was still recognized for its value. This motivation’s importance for ISOI certifications may stem from its potential to provide exclusive training and support to the pilot company. Such cooperation can help the company better understand ISOI procedures and requirements, thereby reducing the additional workload and time required for certifications and enhancing overall operational efficiency. Moreover, collaborating with ATC Certification for ISOI certifications may enable the pilot company to drive industry development. By sharing its existing knowledge and high client requirements with ATC Certification, the company could contribute to the development of certification standards and set industry trends.

4.2.3 Summary

As detailed and discussed in Section 4.2.2, the primary motivations for pursuing ISOI certifications are differentiating from competitors, meeting client requirements and establishing a compliance framework. Although factors such as demonstrating adherence, increasing customer trust, achieving operational improvements, and cooperating with ATC Certification are mentioned less frequently, they are still significant motivations.

Each of these factors is likely to contribute significantly to the development of LSCs and enhance their overall performance. Specifically, these motivations could improve marketability, enable companies to qualify for public sector opportunities, and potentially boost client satisfaction and customer trust. They may also lead to enhanced service quality,

facilitate the establishment and maintenance of long-term relationships, and increase customer retention. Additionally, these factors might result in greater efficiency and productivity, reduced operational costs, and a streamlined ISOI certification process by minimizing additional workload and time requirements. Furthermore, they have the potential to drive industry development by fostering innovation and setting new trends. Overall, these benefits are expected to support the growth and competitive edge of LSCs, making them more effective and resilient in the marketplace. Consequently, securing ISOI certifications should be an important consideration for LSCs in providing translation and interpretation services to facilitate cross-cultural communication.

4.3 Challenges in implementing and certifying ISOI

As mentioned in Section 3.3, in-depth interviews were conducted to complement the initial findings from the questionnaires, aiming to gather explanatory data on managers' opinions and personal experiences. The subsequent analysis started with the questionnaire results, outlining the challenges identified by these LSCs, and was then followed by an in-depth exploration of the interview findings.

4.3.1 Initial findings from questionnaires

As presented in Table 9 below, companies faced two major challenges in implementing ISOI certifications: the time-consuming nature of the process and the complexity of implementation. Among these challenges, the time-consuming nature of the process was the most frequently mentioned. This finding aligned with prior research on ISO 9001 by Sfakianaki and Kakouris (2018), which identified time-consuming procedures as one of the most commonly cited obstacles. This suggested that such challenges are likely inherent to the ISO certification process in general, regardless of the specific standard.

Additionally, two participants chose "other" as a response. Participant 240603 noted that adapting their project management system and CRM to meet ISO standards was a challenge. However, Participant 240604 mentioned that since their company already holds other ISO certifications, they did not encounter significant difficulties in obtaining ISOI certifications.

Table 9: Challenges in implementing and certifying ISOI

Challenges	240601	240603	240604	240605	240606
Cost of certification					
Complexity of implementation		√			
Lack of internal experience					
Resistance to change within the organization					
Time-consuming process	√	√		√	√
Other		√	√		

4.3.2 Detailed challenges from interviews

Regarding the challenges faced by LSCs in implementing and obtaining ISOI certifications, six overarching themes were identified in the transcripts, as shown in Table 10. Although these challenges may share similar causes and effects, each was analyzed and discussed separately, in order of the frequency with which participants mentioned them.

Table 10: Encountered challenges

No	Overarching themes	Frequency
1	Time-consuming process	5/5
2	Complex implementation process	2/5
3	Demanding compliance requirements	2/5
4	High costs and budget constraints	2/5
5	Staffing limitations	2/5
6	Technology shortcomings	2/5

4.3.2.1 Time-consuming process

The obstacle of a time-consuming process was identified in all participants' responses, as indicated by the frequent mention of the word "time." Participant 240601 noted that:

Time was the biggest problem to actually map out the processes against the standard. So we've created the flow charts and sub-flow charts from them. So it took us quite a while. It took several months to do this, to get everything in place and also aligned with our own system.

In a similar vein, Participant 240604 mentioned that the entire preparation process took four weeks if worked on full-time, with the most time-consuming part being the identification and documentation of existing processes to use as evidence. Participant 240606 also reported that the whole process took nine months and was time-consuming.

Although participants 240603 and 240605 did not specify the approximate time required for ISOI certifications, they described the process as "a long journey" and "extremely time-consuming." Furthermore, Participant 240603 mentioned needing additional time to gather information from interpreters, while Participant 240605 noted that considering how to ensure and demonstrate consistent service quality was particularly time-consuming. This indicated that the ISOI certification process can be universally recognized as highly time-consuming, despite variations in duration across different companies.

The time-consuming nature of the ISOI certification process is likely due to the requirement of conducting a thorough internal review, which often leads to comprehensive adjustments to business practices based on the review's findings. As described by Participant 240601, mapping their processes to meet the ISOI standards required several months to develop the necessary flow charts and sub-flow charts. This detailed process of aligning their operations with ISOI requirements appeared to take significant time and effort. Such demands tend to increase employee fatigue and pressure (Kumar et al., 2006), resulting in decreased operational efficiency.

A further reason for the lengthy process can be stringent documentation requirements, which demand thorough and precise records of all processes and compliance measures (ISO R2 Consulting, 2023). According to participants 240603, 240604, and 240605, they had to spend a significant amount of time documenting existing processes as evidence, gathering interpreters' information, and addressing the challenge of maintaining and proving consistent service quality. All their experiences underscore the time-consuming nature of the process,

particularly due to the need for extensive documentation. This substantial investment of time and resources in providing comprehensive records to demonstrate compliance can strain the company's operational efficiency (Skoff et al., 2023), diverting attention from core business activities.

4.3.2.2 Complex implementation process

Two participants highlighted the difficulties associated with a complex implementation process. Participant 240604, from a medium-sized company that already held other ISO certifications, found that adapting and adjusting existing practices and documentation to meet ISOI's specific requirements was a relatively minor challenge. In contrast, Participant 240606, from a small business, mentioned that balancing regular business operations with the additional work required for ISOI certifications was challenging. Given that significant changes to practices and documentation, along with the need to manage regular business activities simultaneously, add to the complexity of the implementation process, these challenges were categorized under the theme of a complex implementation process. The findings demonstrated that the complexity of implementing ISOI certifications is a notable challenge, which varies considerably depending on the size of the company and its prior experience with ISO certifications.

The complexity involved in ISOI certification implementation is largely due to the need for participants 240604 and 240606 to manage multiple tasks simultaneously. For instance, Participant 240604 had to balance modifying existing practices and documentation with ongoing business operations, while Participant 240606 faced the challenge of managing the additional workload required for ISOI certifications alongside regular business activities without compromising either. This simultaneous management of competing demands significantly contributes to the overall complexity of the implementation process, likely increasing employee workloads (Zhang et al., 2023), which in turn causes greater fatigue and pressure.

In addition to managing multiple tasks, the complexity of the implementation process is likely driven by the need to consider various factors. For example, when adjusting existing practices to meet ISOI's specific requirements, Participant 240606 not only considered the practicality and sustainability of these changes but also anticipated and managed potential

employee resistance by working closely with staff, explaining the situation, and outlining the reasons for the changes to ensure acceptance. Balancing these diverse considerations—ensuring that changes are both effective and accepted—considerably complicates the implementation process. This complexity has the potential to increase costs for helping employees understand and adopt the new changes.

4.3.2.3 Demanding compliance requirements

The theme of demanding compliance requirements emerged from the responses of two participants. Participant 240603 pointed out that implementing a more robust and specific Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) for DNA requirements posed a challenge. Additionally, Participant 240605 highlighted difficulties in ensuring consistent service quality and collecting evidence to demonstrate compliance with ISOI standards. While these challenges could also fall under the theme of complex implementation processes, they were specifically categorized as demanding compliance requirements due to the stringent demands of the ISO certification process, which necessitates precise, detailed documentation (ISO R2 Consulting, 2023). This underscored that the issue of demanding compliance requirements represents a noteworthy challenge, even though it was highlighted by only two LSCs.

The demanding compliance requirements stem from the strict guidelines of ISOI, which specify essential requirements for the provision of general, legal, and health care interpreting services and offer recommendations for best practices. Certification to these rigorous standards necessitates comprehensive record-keeping (ISO R2 Consulting, 2023), consistent service quality (ISO, 2024b), and strict adherence to protocols (ISO, 2018), presenting substantial challenges during the certification process. For instance, Participant 240603 highlighted that their previous, more generic NDA made it challenging to fully adhere to the stringent protocols required. Moreover, Participant 240605 noted that the real-time nature of interpreting services made it difficult to verify service quality before delivery, while the intangible nature of these services complicated evidence collection for demonstrating consistency. As a result, their company invested substantial time and resources in attempting to meet these demanding requirements, which likely led to increased operational costs. This increase in costs, in turn, can redirect resources away from other key operational areas (Liu, & Luo, 2016).

4.3.2.4 High costs and budget constraints

Two participants mentioned high costs and budget constraints. Participant 240601 identified time and IT costs as significant challenges, noting that “the cost was not insubstantial either for the actual process preparation and the auditing.” In addition, Participant 240603 mentioned facing budget issues when purchasing new software. These findings demonstrated that high costs and budget constraints are notable challenges for LSCs.

The primary drivers of high costs and budget constraints are the extensive resources required for the preparation and auditing processes necessary for ISO certifications. These processes often involve comprehensive training programs, system enhancements, and procedural adjustments (ISO R2 Consulting, 2023), all of which contribute to the overall expense. According to Participant 240601, staff were trained in the new processes mapped out according to the standard. These processes were then rolled out across different projects and thoroughly tested before the assessment. The need for extensive staff training, implementation across multiple projects, and thorough testing are major contributors to high costs and budget constraints. These high costs and budget constraints are likely to divert significant resources away from core business activities (Liu, Liu, & Luo, 2016), thereby straining the company’s financial and operational capacity.

Furthermore, system enhancements can also lead to increased costs and budget constraints. As stated by Participant 240603, to meet the requirements for ISOI certifications, they purchased new software to update their old system. However, because the new software exceeded their budget, they had to shift their strategic focus to invest in these technologies. This situation illustrates the financial strain resulting from mandatory system upgrades, which can not only stretch Participant 240603’s company budget but also force them to divert resources away from other strategic initiatives (Liu, Liu, & Luo, 2016).

4.3.2.5 Staffing limitations

Staffing limitations emerged as a challenge in the responses of two participants. As described by Participant 240603:

We had to train ourselves on how to use the software. We had to have sessions. We had to have meetings with the developers. We had to upskill our staff, that was quite challenging because we had wide range of people. Also training someone remotely is not as easy as training someone in house. So we had a staffing obstacles immediately.

Sharing a similar experience, Participant 240606 stated that as a small business, they didn't always have sufficient staffing resources while managing the additional work required by the ISO standard. Therefore, staffing was a significant obstacle for them. These results indicated that staffing limitations present a considerable challenge for LSCs during ISOI certification, particularly for small-sized companies.

One possible cause of staffing limitations is the small staff size of the companies of participants 240603 and 240606. Both are small-sized enterprises, which may operate with a relatively small number of employees. This limited staffing can contribute significantly to their staffing limitations. When operating with a small workforce, they may struggle to manage the additional workload required for obtaining ISOI certifications. This situation can lead to increased workloads on existing staff (Tsipour et al., 2024), potentially causing inefficiencies and disruptions in regular business operations.

Another contributing factor is the companies' strategic focus. As noted by Participant 240606, their company shifted its strategic focus towards investing in new technologies due to the high costs associated with new software. This redirection of resources may have diverted funds away from hiring additional staff, resulting in a shortage of human resources to manage the increased workload required for ISOI certifications. This shortage could exacerbate the strain on existing personnel, potentially leading to decreased efficiency and disruptions in routine business operations.

4.3.2.6 Technology shortcomings

Among the five participants, two discussed challenges that were categorized under the theme of technology shortcomings. Participant 240603 highlighted outdated IT systems and project management tools as significant challenges, with inadequate laptop performance also identified as an obstacle. In addition, Participant 240606 encountered issues related to the implementation of additional systems and the optimization of existing software. This

indicated that technology shortcomings, including outdated IT systems, inadequate hardware, and difficulties with system implementation and software optimization, were notable challenges for some LSCS during the ISOI certification process.

The primary cause of technology shortcomings stems from outdated IT systems that hinder the effective implementation and integration of new software. As explained by Participant 240603, their laptops were not powerful enough to run the new software, which necessitated a complete system overhaul and investment in new IT equipment. This inadequacy in hardware directly increased costs and led to budget constraints (Participant 240603), which is likely to slow down other business activities or strategic initiatives (Liu, Liu, & Luo, 2016).

Another factor contributing to technology shortcomings can be resource strain. According to Participant 240603, the implementation of additional systems and the optimization of existing software often require both financial and human resources. However, Participant 240606 mentioned that they didn't always have sufficient staffing. This resource strain poses a risk of limiting the ability to maintain up-to-date hardware and software and delaying the implementation and optimization of these systems. As a result, Participant 240606's company's ability to adapt to new technological advancements and maintain high standards of service could be compromised.

4.3.3 Strategies and recommendations for addressing challenges

Although all five LSCs faced various obstacles when certifying ISOI, regardless of their company size and experience with ISO certification, they employed a variety of strategies to overcome these challenges. Additionally, some recommendations were proposed to help other companies that might face similar challenges. Since some solutions and suggestions do not directly address the problems mentioned in Section 4.3.2 with immediate and clear interventions, they are classified into direct and indirect solutions and recommendations. The following subsections offer a detailed exploration of how these strategies and recommendations can address the identified challenges and their potential impact on other possible challenges.

4.3.3.1 Direct solutions

According to the responses from the participants, four key strategies emerged as direct solutions and recommendations to resolve the challenges: establishing framework and defining responsibilities, modifying grading criteria and implementing post-mortem meetings, conducting objective reviews and refining processes, and documenting certification process and future updates.

In order to address the challenge of a time-consuming process, the method of establishing framework and defining responsibilities was used. This approach, as highlighted by Participant 240606, involved allocating the necessary time to complete the required work and setting up priorities. Additionally, as stated by Participant 240604, it involved identifying areas of responsibility for all the requirements. By clearly creating a structured workflow and assigning roles, this method can not only streamline the process and reduce delays (Popoola et al., 2024) but also minimize confusion and ensure that each requirement is managed by the appropriate person or team (Payne and Joyner, 2006).

In response to the stringent compliance demands of ensuring consistent service quality and collecting evidence to demonstrate adherence to ISOI standards, the strategy of modifying grading criteria and implementing post-mortem meetings was employed. As mentioned by Participant 240605, this method included modifying the grading system to include relevant items for interpretation, such as punctuality, and conducting post-mortem meetings to evaluate the outcomes of interpretation services and ensure they meet the set objectives. Additionally, it involved having some customers listen to the interpretations and provide feedback, if possible (Participant 240605). Although this approach may not achieve perfect consistency, it can effectively improve quality control (Andre et al., 2023) and address compliance requirements by systematically evaluating and refining interpretation services and providing tangible evidence for compliance.

In addition to this approach, methods such as conducting objective reviews and refining processes as well as documenting the certification process and future updates have also been used to address the demanding compliance requirements. According to Participant 240601, the first method involved having two objective individuals review and validate the processes to ensure their accuracy and effectiveness, with ongoing updates and refinements to enhance overall procedures. This approach helps identify and correct potential issues early (Zailani et al., 2023) and align procedures with evolving standards, thereby preventing costly mistakes

and ensuring ongoing compliance. Meanwhile, Participant 240603 suggested breaking down the task of reassessing the system into smaller tasks every few months. This strategy can not only make the process more manageable (Robinson, Lynn and Lillystone, 2009) but also optimize resource use and reduce overall preparation time by preventing the accumulation of backlog. Although these strategies differ, they both contribute to maintaining and continuously improving compliance by optimizing processes and adapting to new requirements.

Furthermore, the second method, as mentioned by Participant 240604, involved maintaining a comprehensive record of the entire process and all updates required in subsequent years. This strategy is crucial for both the ISO audit and internal reference (Participant 240604), as it ensures that all necessary updates are thoroughly documented and easily retrievable. By systematically documenting each step and update, the company can quickly and accurately demonstrate compliance with ISOI, reducing the likelihood of missing crucial information or overlooking updates. Consequently, this minimizes the risk of non-compliance (Nabane, Klingelhöfer, and Geyer, 2024), and can also reduce overall preparation time by providing a clear and organized reference for future audits and reviews.

4.3.3.2 Indirect solutions

In addition to the four direct solutions and recommendations, participants' responses also revealed four indirect approaches: asking for feedback from employees, being honest and communicating with staff, planning ISOI-related work around workload and seeking assistance from external resources. Since the participants did not explicitly state the specific issues these measures were intended to address, the potential purpose of these approaches is inferred from their responses.

In addressing organizational resistance to change, the method of asking for feedback from employees was employed. As highlighted by Participant 240603, this approach involved actively seeking input from employees on the new system through regular meetings and feedback sessions. By engaging employees in discussions about their experiences and challenges with the system, the company gathered valuable insights and made necessary adjustments (Participant 240603). This process enables the early identification of problems

and ensures that employees feel appreciated (Wrench and McCroskey, 2008), which contributes to a smoother transition and fosters a cooperative work environment.

Beyond soliciting employee feedback, being honest and communicating with staff provides an alternative strategy for mitigating organizational resistance to change. As mentioned by Participant 240605, this approach involved clear communication, ensuring staff understood the purpose of the changes, reassuring them about job security, and addressing any concerns. It also included discussing and adopting staff suggestions when appropriate (Participant 240605). By valuing employee input and involving them in the transition process, this method can effectively overcome resistance by building trust (Weibel, Schafheitle and Werff, 2023), reducing uncertainty, and fostering a sense of ownership (Giunipero and Vogt, 1997), making employees more likely to support and engage with the change.

In response to staffing limitations, the approach of planning ISOI-related work around existing workloads was implemented. According to Participant 240601, this strategy entailed carefully planning meetings and brainstorming sessions to align with the employees' workload. While plans might occasionally be disrupted (Participant 240601), this method is designed to prevent overburdening staff, thereby avoiding additional strain (Tropschuh and Reinhart, 2020). By ensuring that ISOI-related responsibilities are integrated without overwhelming employees, this approach is able to maintain the smooth operation of existing tasks and reduce the risk of burnout.

To tackle the issue of staffing limitations, the solution of seeking assistance from external resources was implemented. According to participants 240603, 240605, and 240606, this strategy entailed collaborating with external consultants and organizations, such as ATC Certification, to provide guidance, additional resources, and expertise. This approach allowed the LSCs to receive valuable support throughout the transition, access necessary documents, and gain an objective perspective on internal processes (Participant 240603). However, Participant 240603 also emphasized that while external help is valuable, it is beneficial for internal teams to implement systems and processes themselves whenever possible. This can ensure that the team fully understands and is committed to the new systems, leading to more effective and sustainable implementation. Additionally, Participant 240605 highlighted the importance of maintaining a third party to assist with ongoing internal audits, ensuring objectivity and accuracy in evaluations. By leveraging external expertise, the obstacle of staffing limitations can be addressed, as these external partners are able to provide specialized

skills and resources and reduce the workload on internal teams (Raweh and Hashed, 2023), enabling the company to meet deadlines more efficiently.

4.3.4 Summary

As outlined and analyzed in Section 5.3.2, the primary challenge is the time-consuming process, while the notable obstacles include the complex implementation process, demanding compliance requirements, high costs and budget constraints, staffing limitations, and technology shortcomings. These challenges, driven by factors such as the need for thorough internal reviews and stringent documentation requirements, the simultaneous management of multiple tasks and consideration of various factors, adherence to strict ISOI guidelines, the extensive resources required for preparation and auditing processes, small staff sizes, strategic focus, outdated IT systems, and resource strain, can negatively impact the company's efficiency and overall performance.

To be specific, the time-consuming process tends to increase employee fatigue and pressure, leading to decreased operational efficiency and diverting attention from core business activities. Similarly, the complex implementation process is likely to increase employee workloads, which in turn causes greater fatigue and pressure, as well as raises costs for helping employees understand and adopt the new changes. In addition, demanding compliance requirements have the potential to increase operational costs, thereby redirecting resources away from other key operational areas. Furthermore, high costs and budget constraints can divert significant resources away from core business activities and other strategic initiatives, straining the company's financial and operational capacity. Moreover, staffing limitations are likely to increase workloads on existing staff, exacerbating strain on personnel and potentially causing inefficiencies and disruptions in regular business operations. Finally, technology shortcomings tend to increase costs and lead to budget constraints, which can slow down other business activities or strategic initiatives, ultimately compromising a company's ability to adapt to new technological advancements and maintain high standards of service.

Despite these challenges posing risks to the company's organizational performance and overall effectiveness, six methods were implemented to address and overcome them. These include establishing a framework and defining responsibilities, modifying grading criteria

and implementing post-mortem meetings, conducting objective reviews and refining processes, documenting the certification process and future updates, asking for feedback from employees, being honest and communicating with staff, planning ISOI-related work around workload, and seeking assistance from external resources. These methods not only have effectively alleviated the challenges but also can enhance overall organizational efficiency, boost employee engagement, and ensure sustained compliance. By addressing immediate issues and optimizing processes, these approaches are able to facilitate a more streamlined operation, improve resource management, and foster a supportive work environment. Therefore, it is highly recommended that companies facing similar challenges consider adopting these strategies to resolve their issues, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure ongoing compliance.

5. Conclusion

This chapter begins with a concise overview of the study’s findings and discussions. It then offers practical recommendations for LSCs considering ISOI certifications, as well as for those aiming to achieve and implement it. The chapter concludes by addressing the limitations of the current study and suggesting potential avenues for future research.

5.1 Summary

Guided by the three RQs: “What is the prevalence of ISOI implementation and certification among LSCs in the UK?”, “What are the motivations for these LSCs in the UK to adopt ISOI certifications?”, and “What challenges do these LSCs face when certifying ISOI?”, this study began with desk research using data from the Companies House website and the ATC Certification website to identify eligible LSCs. Subsequently, a qualitative methodology—comprising questionnaires and semi-structured interviews—was employed to collect data from five ISOI-certified companies. The data were analyzed thematically, and the findings and discussions are summarized below.

The first research question examined the extent to which LSCs in the UK have implemented and achieved ISOI certifications. The findings revealed that at least 14 companies in the UK have obtained ISOI certifications, though overall implementation remains relatively uncommon. Notably, while all of these LSCs have achieved ISO 18841 certification for interpreting services, the prevalence of ISO 20228 and ISO 21998 certifications—specific to legal and healthcare interpreting, respectively—is notably low, with only one company certified in each.

The second research question focused on understanding the motivations behind LSCs’ decisions to adopt ISOI certifications. Six driving motivations were identified from participants’ responses. Among these motivations, differentiating from competitors is a primary factor. In addition to this, meeting client requirements and establishing a framework for compliance and demonstrating adherence also serve as key drivers. Beyond these primary drivers, three other notable motivations were identified: achieving operational improvements, increasing customer trust, and cooperating with ATC Certification. These motivations are crucial for LSCs as they help to differentiate in crowded markets, enhance marketability, and

expand opportunities. They also enable qualification for public sector contracts, improve client satisfaction and trust, and elevate service quality. Additionally, these strategies have the ability to reduce operational costs, streamline internal processes, foster long-term client relationships and higher retention, and boost overall efficiency.

The third research question examined the obstacles encountered by LSCs during the ISOI implementation and certification process. The study identified six key challenges, with the primary one being the time-consuming nature of the process. Other notable obstacles include the complex implementation process, demanding compliance requirements, high costs and budget constraints, staffing limitations, and technology shortcomings. Driven by factors such as rigorous internal reviews, stringent documentation requirements, multitasking demands, strict ISOI guidelines, resource-intensive processes, small staff sizes, outdated IT systems, and overall resource strain, these obstacles are likely to lead to increased costs, higher workloads, and operational inefficiencies. Additionally, they may strain the company's financial and operational capacity.

In response to these challenges, four direct solutions and four indirect solutions were implemented to mitigate their impact and improve overall efficiency. The direct solutions included establishing framework and defining responsibilities, modifying grading criteria and implementing post-mortem meetings, conducting objective reviews and refining processes, and documenting certification process and future updates. The indirect solutions encompassed asking for feedback from employees, being honest and communicating with staff, planning ISOI-related work around workload and seeking assistance from external resources. By employing these strategies, the LSCs were able to alleviate the challenges they faced and enhance overall organizational efficiency, boost employee engagement, and ensure sustained compliance.

5.2 Implication

The present study offers recommendations for LSCs providing interpreting services that are considering ISOI certifications. As mentioned in Section 2.2.2 and Section 2.2.3, obtaining ISOI certifications can not only enhance credibility and marketability, improve customer satisfaction, increase efficiency, and strengthen risk management, but also positively influence the development of LSCs. Therefore, pursuing ISOI certifications is

advisable. However, LSCs may face various challenges and obstacles during the implementation and certification process, regardless of their size or prior experience with ISO certification. Consequently, it is crucial for LSCs to conduct thorough assessments and carefully evaluate whether ISOI certifications align with their needs before initiating the certification process. This approach would prevent wasted resources and increase the likelihood of successful certification, thereby ensuring a strategic fit with the company's objectives and optimizing resource allocation.

In addition, the current study extends suggestions to LSCs seeking to attain and implement ISOI certifications. As highlighted in Section 4.3.3, eight effective approaches were employed to address the obstacles encountered during the ISOI certification process. LSCs are advised to consider these strategies as a foundational framework. For instance, when dealing with time-consuming processes, LSCs should establish a clear framework and define responsibilities clearly to streamline procedures and minimize delays (Popoola et al., 2024). In the face of demanding compliance requirements, conducting objective reviews and refining processes is recommended to prevent costly mistakes and ensure ongoing compliance. Additionally, they should document the certification process and future updates to minimize the risk of non-compliance (Nabane, Klingelhöfer, and Geyer, 2024). Modifying grading criteria and implementing post-mortem meetings to improve quality control (Andre et al., 2023) are also advisable strategies.

To overcome organizational resistance to change, LSCs should solicit feedback from employees to identify problems early and ensure that staff feel valued (Wrench and McCroskey, 2008). It is also crucial to maintain honest communication with staff to build trust (Weibel, Schafheitle, and Werff, 2023) and foster a sense of ownership (Giunipero and Vogt, 1997). Finally, to address staffing limitations, LSCs should plan ISOI-related work around existing workloads to prevent overburdening staff and consider seeking assistance from external resources to alleviate the workload on internal teams (Raweh and Hashed, 2023). While these strategies offer a solid foundation, it is essential for each LSC to tailor and adapt them to their unique circumstances to achieve optimal results.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Considering that the primary purpose of this study is to evaluate the extent to which

LSCs in the UK have achieved ISOI certifications, its findings offer limited insights into the certification status of LSCs in other countries. However, as ISOI standards are not only internationally recognized but also frequently required in tenders, LSCs in different regions may have various motivations and encounter distinct challenges when pursuing ISOI certifications. Therefore, future research could benefit from examining ISOI certifications across diverse countries and regions to better understand the range of motivations and obstacles encountered.

Furthermore, constraints related to limited time and data collection experience led to the selection of only 430 LSCs for identifying eligible companies. Consequently, some potentially valuable sources of information may have been excluded. To enhance the comprehensiveness of future studies on ISOI certifications in the UK, including a larger sample of LSCs obtained from the Companies House website would be beneficial. This approach could provide a more thorough understanding of the driving motivations and challenges associated with ISOI certifications.

Another noteworthy limitation of this study is the potential for bias that cannot be entirely eliminated. As discussed in Section 3.6, all decisions related to the selection of eligible companies, data analysis, and interpretation were made solely by myself due to the absence of a second reviewer. As a result, the possibility of subjectivity and bias cannot be completely ruled out. To address this concern, future research could benefit from involving a second reviewer or multiple reviewers, which would significantly help in mitigating bias and enhancing the objectivity of the study's findings.

Lastly, this study is constrained by the difficulty of sampling. With only 14 LSCs identified, and many of them particularly busy during the summer, only five participants were able to take part in this study. This limitation could affect the credibility and warrantability of the findings. To enhance the reliability of future studies, researchers could either wait for more UK-based LSCs to obtain ISOI certifications or choose a less busy period, thereby increasing the likelihood of recruiting more participants and strengthening the study's validity.

Appendices

Appendix I Questionnaire



Language Service Industry Certification Survey

Please note: Questions 4, 7, 11 and 16 require selecting all that apply (multiple choice). All other questions are single choice.

*To ensure the confidentiality and privacy of your responses, please enter the unique participant identifier number provided in the email you received:

*1. What is the size of your company? (number of employees)

- A. 1-50
- B. 51-250
- C. More than 250

*2. What is the approximate number of interpreters your company works with (including both employees and freelancers)?

- A. 1-50
- B. 51-250
- C. More than 250

*3. How long has your company been in the language service industry?

- A. Less than 1 year
- B. 1-5 years
- C. 5-10 years
- D. More than 10 years

*4. What types of services does your company provide? 【Multiple】

- A. Translation
- B. Interpreting
- C. Localization
- D. Subtitling
- E. Other (please specify):

*5. Has your company obtained certification for ISO 18841, ISO 20228, or ISO 21998?

- A. Yes, we are certified for at least one of them.
- B. We are currently in the process of obtaining certification.
- C. No, we have not pursued certification, but we are aware of these standards.
- D. No, we have not pursued certification, and we are not familiar with these standards.

*If you selected option C or D, please specify if your company has pursued certification for any other interpreting or translation standards and briefly explain the reasons for pursuing certification:

*6. Would your company consider applying for certification ISO 18841, ISO 20228, or ISO 21998?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Not sure

*7. What are the primary reasons for your company to plan to pursue ISO 18841, ISO 20228, or ISO 21998 certification? 【Multiple】

- A. To meet public sector client requirements (e.g. requirements of government or governmental agencies)
- B. To achieve operational improvements (e.g. improvements of efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, or service quality)
- C. To differentiate from competition
- D. To increase customer trust
- E. Other (please specify):

*8. For how long has your company been certified with ISO 18841?

- A. Less than 1 year
- B. 1-3 years
- C. 3-4 years
- D. More than 4 years
- E. Not certified

*9. For how long has your company been certified with ISO 20228?

- A. Less than 1 year
- B. 1-3 years
- C. 3-4 years
- D. More than 4 years
- E. Not certified

*10. For how long has your company been certified with ISO 21998?

- A. Less than 1 year
- B. 1-3 years
- C. 3-4 years
- D. More than 4 years
- E. Not certified

*11. What were the primary reasons for your company to pursue ISO 18841, ISO 20228, or ISO 21998 certification? **【Multiple】**

- A. To meet public sector client requirements (e.g. requirements of government or governmental agencies)
- B. To achieve operational improvements (e.g. improvements of efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, or service quality)
- C. To differentiate from competition
- D. To increase customer trust
- E. Other (please specify):

*12. How important is “Client requirements” in your decision to adopt ISO standards?

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Neutral
- D. Not very important
- E. Not important at all

*13. How important are “Operational improvements” in your decision to adopt ISO standards?

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Neutral
- D. Not very important
- E. Not important at all

*14. How important is “Competitive advantage” in your decision to adopt ISO standards?

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Neutral
- D. Not very important
- E. Not important at all

*15. How important is “Customer trust” in your decision to adopt ISO standards?

- A. Very important
- B. Important
- C. Neutral
- D. Not very important
- E. Not important at all

*16. What challenges has your company faced when implementing ISO 18841, ISO 20228, or ISO 21998? **【Multiple】**

- A. Cost of certification
- B. Complexity of implementation
- C. Lack of internal expertise
- D. Resistance to change within the organization
- E. Time-consuming process
- F. Other (please specify):

*17. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview to further discuss your responses in this questionnaire? The interview is expected to last approximately 15 minutes.

- A. Yes
- B. No

*Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview. Please write down three time slots that work best for you between the 21st and 28th of this month. Options include morning (9am-12am) or afternoon (1pm-5pm).

Submit

Appendix II Interview schedule and question

Opening (4 mins)

- Self-introduction
- Consent check

Semi-structured questions (25 mins)

Q1: In the questionnaire, you mentioned the primary reasons for your company to pursue the ISOI certification. Could you please elaborate on your choice(s) and explain the specific motivations and benefits your company aimed to achieve?

Q2: When deciding whether to adopt ISO standards, which factors do you consider first? Please rank the following aspects in order of priority: client requirements, operational improvements, competitive advantage, and customer trust.

Q3: Could you please explain the reasons behind your ranking?

Q4: Could you please describe any specific difficulties or obstacles your company encountered during the implementation process?

[If not mentioned in questionnaire and interview] Additionally, were there any other challenges you faced that were not mentioned in the questionnaire, such as poor communication, lack of resources, or anything else?

Q5: Following up on that, how did your company address or overcome these challenges?

Q6: Based on your experiences, would you recommend other companies facing similar challenges in pursuing certification to adopt the same methods? Or, what other strategies would you suggest they consider to overcome these challenges?

Conclusion (6 mins)

- Summary of the discussion
- Explanation of utilization of interview data

- Expression of gratitude to the interviewee

Appendix III Transcripts

240601	
I	For the record, I'm currently interviewing the participant of 240601. To start, in the questionnaire, you mentioned the primary reasons for your company to pursue the ISOI certification. Could you please elaborate on your choices and explain the specific motivations and benefits your company aimed to achieve?
R	<p>Yes. The company does a lot of interpreting. I set it up as a telephone interpreting service, initially. And from that, we developed into remote and onsite interpreting. So, we have a lot of people, a lot of freelancers, with whom we work, and a lot of clients in the public and private sectors, and private individuals too.</p> <p>So, we felt that although we knew what we were doing, we wanted to have a framework to work against, to ensure that our standards complied with international standards in the profession. And also with we noticed that some clients were asking for this accreditation.</p>
I	Thank you. And apart from that, do you have another reason for pursuing this certification?
R	There's not many of us for what I know in the profession who have achieved this accreditation or even sought to have it. So I wanted to distinguish us from the competition.
I	<p>That's great. Thank you. Now let's move on to the next question.</p> <p>Could you please rank these four aspects - client requirements, operational improvements, competitive advantage, and customer trust in the order of priority and explain the reasons behind your ranking?</p>
R	<p>Yes, I mean they're all very important. So that is difficult.</p> <p>The first one, I don't know. This is really tricky. I looked at this before, and I thought they're all number one, really. Emmm I guess competitive advantage is number one.</p>
I	Uh-huh.
R	Because as I said, there are a lot of companies out there, who provide interpreting, but they're not actually seeking validation of their expertise. But we are, because we know we're good at what we do. We just want to keep to the standard and keep improving. So our USP is to have this, this accreditation. So that's number one. Competitive advantage.

Comment[K1]: To have a framework ensuring compliance with international standards

Comment[K2]: To meet public sector client requirements

Comment[K3]: To differentiate from competition

	<p>Operational improvements would be number two then. Because that we're always mindful of what we're required to do in the standard. And it's there with us all the time. It's on the Internet. It's built into our processes, sub-processes and everything. So we're very mindful. But we need to be a daring with that all time. So that's good. That's helping us improve.</p> <p>Client requirements will come next, I would say, <i>because there are some clients who demand this.</i> We've noticed with our <i>French operation, particularly that European-based clients are asking for this in tenders.</i> When they go for competitive tender, we've noticed that is one of the requirements to have. <i>Before you can even bid for the tender, you must have evidence of the ISO.</i></p> <p>And then customer trust. I mean that's underpinning everything, but that's that would be the next one, because it does show that we know what we're doing and we've invested—time and effort and money—into getting this standard and certifying to it.</p>
I	<p>Thank you. I appreciate your detailed explanation.</p> <p>Now I like to discuss some of the challenges you faced. Could you please describe any specific difficulties or challenges your company encountered during the implementation processes?</p>
R	<p>Yes, yes. That's a good question.</p> <p>So we like most people, <i>most companies in the UK are quite small.</i> There are nine of us in the office. So it's your time. <i>Time was the biggest problem to actually map out the processes against the standard.</i> So we've created the flow charts and sub- flow charts from them. <i>So it took us quite a while.</i> It took several months to do this, to get everything in place and also aligned with our own system.</p> <p>So that, that wasn't in isolation, as I said. It's actually right in front of us for every project. We can see. We can access this on the Intranet, so we have to make sure the staff were also trained in it, obviously. And then roll it out across and test it across different projects before we went for assessment. So that I know, obviously, <i>there's a time and IT costs to all of this. So the cost was not insubstantial either for the actual process preparation and the auditing.</i></p>
I	<p>Yeah, that sounds quite challenging.</p>
R	<p>Yes.</p>
I	<p>And how did your company address these challenges? Apart from the flow chart?</p>

Comment[K4]: Limited time

Comment[K5]: Time-consuming process

Comment[K6]: Not insubstantial cost

R	<p>We had several team meetings, so we involved everybody. All nine of us contributed to this, even people who did not get involved in interpreting.</p> <p>So it was important for us that the whole company bought into what we were doing. And we were able to. We use them as well as Guinea pigs, if you like. We tested our systems on the people who did not do any interpreting—so they didn't actually run interpreting projects—to make sure it works.</p> <p>The work, it was sanity checked by an objective pair of people. So two people checked what we were doing, and then we were constantly updating and refining the processes that we put in place. So, the way we, sorry, the short answer is that is working as a team.</p>
I	Yeah.
R	Yeah.
I	Working as a team. And would you recommend other companies facing the same challenges in pursuing certification to adopt the same methods? Or what other strategies would you suggest they consider to overcome this kind of difficulties?
R	<p>Are they guess, we knew we were going to have to invest some time in this. So we had to plan these meetings and these brainstorming sessions very carefully around our workload. But obviously, we know, but this doesn't, it doesn't actually matter because you're gonna be interrupted, whatever you planned. Something will take priority and move things.</p> <p>So I think what we did was right. So I would recommend that people do that to actually involve other members of staff, not the whole company, necessarily, but get other people involved because they can be doing their validation or testing separately to what the rest of us are doing.</p> <p>So, you can also break it down into parts so that it's not impinging on the whole operation. So I recommend that, to people, small companies like us, in particular. But be mindful, that is quite a commitment.</p>
I	And apart from the difficulties, did your company face the challenges like poor communication?
R	We tested that. That was key, good question. That was key to our flow charts and all the procedures. Because you've got the flow charts, you've got the procedures written procedures behind them. They have to cross check . So if we say on the flow chart, this is what is in stage four

	of the procedure. You have to make sure that's exactly what is in stage four of the procedure. So yes, they absolutely. And you got to cross check everything, and make sure that it hangs together as a cohesive whole.
I	How do you solve that challenges? The poor communication.
R	The communication you just is proofreading, you proofread.
I	Uh-huh
R	<p>What was in the flow charts against the actual procedure detail and sanity checks it. So that it actually did match, because sometimes you get, you know perhaps stage five was in, in stage four on the procedure, and it should have been moved.</p> <p>So—we had to move it or split paragraphs within the procedure—they actually matched the blocks on the charts.</p> <p>So the communication is inherent in that the communication within the documents, I think, is what you mean, but the communication with the staff, that was through the meetings. And because this is all going on with people working remotely as well. So remote meetings were held, too.</p>
I	That's great. Thank you. To summarize, we discuss your motivations for pursuing certification, the prioritization of key aspects, the challenges you faced and how you overcame them, your advice for others. Is there anything you would like to add or other points you think are important to mention?
R	You need one person in charge of the whole process.
I	Yeah.
R	One person who is leading the entire certification project. Yeah, so that they're monitoring each stage, because there are different stages going on at different times. And you need 1 pair of eyes and one main spreadsheet or Gantt chart, whatever you want to use, but that I think is the secret to have that overall command, decide that at the beginning.
I	Yeah. Can I take it as the recommendations for others?

R	Yeah. Definitely.
I	Yeah. Thank you. And so that's great. Thank you for your time and cooperation. Your input is incredible valuable to my research. And if you have any questions or need for the Information, please feel free to contact me and have a great day.
R	Thank you.
I	Bye.

240603	
I	For the record, I'm currently interviewing the participant of 240603. To start, in the questionnaire, you mentioned the primary reasons for your company to pursue the ISOI certification. Could you please elaborate on your choices and explain the specific motivations and benefits your company aimed to achieve?
R	<p>So the reason why we choose these ISO certifications, we have three, actually got it. So we have, I think I mentioned in another question. We have the generic translation one. We have the ISO 17100, and we have the police one. So [REDACTED], we were the first one actually on the world who got the police specific specification for the ISO. Now, how we manage to do that, Kelly is that we cooperated with the ATC. So what we did they asked us if we would be happy to be a pilot company for them, because it was good for them to fine-tune and develop their, you know, procedures about their requirements.</p> <p>And they also ask for feedback, because our company has been doing interpreting and translation for more than 20 years. So we had all the experience. We had, you know, our system. We had our interpreters. We had all they basically established are criterion requirement for this sector. So what was good that we were able to share this knowledge with them, and they incorporated this into their ISO audit. So they asked us what is the highest standard, what you need for legal interpreting? And we use our existing knowledge and requirements and our client requirements, which is super high. And they added that into their base, because if anyone wants to do legal interpreting in the UK, they need to follow these procedures which is set by the police, but the ATC through their ISO also follows it, because it's similar. Because we feed it that back in to them. So it was really good for them and really good for us.</p>

Comment[K7]: To cooperate with ATC for mutual benefit

<p>The other reason why we did it, Kelly, is really simple, is prestige. To show that we have an ISO police accreditation. The first one, which we actually see the blog and some, you know, recognition on their website is super powerful. Because it gives you credibility that our company, but here is to the highest standards.</p> <p>And we've been audited, checked, and all our interpreters are compliant. This just gives satisfaction and credibility for us. When someone wants to use us, they know ok we have this. That's the whole point of ISO to give recognition for people who don't know about the company. But if you have all these ISO and you show it, they know ok, this is a reputable company. Otherwise you wouldn't be able to pass this. And you probably know, ATC is one of the best regarding that and they're quite trustworthy. So we use them. They are leading in interrupting and translations. So it was basically a really beneficial partnership.</p>	<p>Comment[K8]: To enhance prestige</p> <p>Comment[K9]: To increase credibility</p>
<p>I Yep. And in the questionnaire, you also mentioned the four reasons. So I want to make sure there are also the reasons for you to certify the ISO standard, right?</p>	
<p>R Yes.</p>	
<p>I That's great. Thank you. And then let's move on to the next question. When deciding whether to adopt these standards, what factors do you consider first? Please rank the following aspects in order of priority, client requirements, operational improvements, competitive edge, and customer trust.</p>	
<p>R The main thing was that I'm honestly to its client's requirements, because that's always on top. If we don't have clients, we don't have a business. Everything else comes second. The main thing was from our clients that they wanted us to improve, you know, the number of certifications we have. And this is something that's one of the reasons we cooperated with the ATC, that we could use this certification that demonstrate that we are compliant, even without them being checking us which they do. Or by having this certification, we can demonstrate that is a an independent body checking our company as well, which is the ATC. So the main reason was to improve, you know, our reputation and client requirements.</p> <p>The other thing was this organizational effectiveness. So we had older systems, IT systems, project management tools. So we had to completely reinvent our system. And that was one of our biggest challenges. But thanks to the new standards, we have to basically expand and have new software. We want new software. We change the way we deal with projects. And that's all thanks</p>	<p>Comment[K10]: To meet client requirements</p> <p>Comment[K11]: Outdated IT systems and project management tools</p> <p>Comment[K12]: To achieve operational improvements</p>

	<p>to the ISO standards and ultimately to ATC. So it basically affected every part of the business.</p> <p>And that's why it's now one of the core foundations of [REDACTED] is that the ability in all these certifications. So basically we work around them. We need to be constantly contacted. Any update, they coming from them. We look at it as a business case. And if it's something we can implement and financially feasible, we do it straight away because it's still beneficial.</p>
I	<p>Yep. And sorry. Maybe I didn't catch up with you. I still want to know your priority of the four aspects I just mentioned.</p>
R	<p>The first one is the clients. The second one is general reputation for the task for all other clients so when you said general satisfaction and reputation. So that was probably the second. Organizational effectiveness is third. And what was the 4th?</p>
I	<p>The fourth customer trust?</p>
R	<p>Customer trust yes is four, but it's all linked together to be honest with you. Because you do want you get the others, but if I would ranking that would be the fourth. OK?</p>
I	<p>Yep. Thank you for sharing that. Let me check. The second one is operational improvement, right?</p>
R	<p>Yes.</p>
I	<p>That's great. Thank you.</p> <p>And now I would like to discuss some challenges you've faced. Could you please describe any difficulties or obstacles your company encountered during the implementation process? I know you mentioned the system. So maybe more details about that? Thank you.</p>
R	<p>So the system was the biggest challenge for us, Kelly. Because we had an old database which we used, and that wasn't compliant with the standard. So what the standard asked us to capture, for example, feedback, improvements, we didn't have it. You just basically, we missed all of that. And surveys completely be ignored in our database, because it's a 20 year old custom-made SQL database. So that wasn't fit for purpose. So what we had to do as part of our transition, and to comply with the standard is that we basically use the brand new translation and interpreting bespoke software which we purchased. And we using this called LBS. It's been designed specifically for interpreting and translators. And they also use one of the main software for</p>

<p>translation and interpreting, which is Trados.</p> <p>So that's the industry standard we use Trados. Every single project goes through Trados. That is ISO-compliant, but we haven't had that before. So one of the key challenges is to purchase the software. We had to train ourselves on how to use the software. We had to have sessions. We had to have meetings with the developers. We had to upskill our staff, that was quite challenging because we had wide range of people. Also training someone remotely is not as easy as training someone in house. So we had a staffing obstacles immediately. We had budget issues as well, because the new software costed more than what we had. So we had to basically shift our strategic focus to invest in these technologies, which we haven't had before. And the other thing we had to do is we also had to talk to our interpreters because of the standard, because some bits in the standard required, more documents and more information from our interpreters and translators. For example, we had to be more robust with NDAs which previously was, covered under our generic agreement. But now we had to have a specific NDA (Non-disclosure agreement). For example, for every single project they do. And it's just more streamlined. You know all the videos that I would say these were like the biggest challenges for us regarding implementing, you know, the standards.</p>	<p>Comment[K13]: New software purchase and training</p> <p>Comment[K14]: Inadequate staffing</p> <p>Comment[K15]: Limited budget</p> <p>Comment[K16]: More time to collect information from interpreters</p> <p>Comment[K17]: More robust and specific requirement for DNA implementation</p>
<p>I Yep. So can I say the cost is another challenge that you need to think about? Right?</p>	
<p>R Yeah. Of course. So we are a small business, Kelly. So we have around 20, 22, 23 people with a limited budget. So for us to implement a new software technologies of massive discussion, we can't just jump, ok we buy this, because they need to like every couple of thousand pounds matters in our business. So because of the size of our company, any idea, any technology could change is a senior director level decision and you know we all need to think what so.</p> <p>To give you an idea, in order to make our company ██████ first edition, ISO-compliant, it took us a year and a half. It was a long transition because tomorrow we can't use the system because you need to train people, you need to lay the foundations. It's not just getting the software. We also have to make sure that you can run the software. Guess what? Our laptops weren't strong enough to run it. So we had to invest in new IT equipment as well. We had to have a new cloud server, new storage, the way we handle all these information. So it was a complete change of how the company functions in regarding all these projects, which like I said now is closely linked to ISOI. So we are compliant. But it was a long journey and we had many challenges. Some people didn't know how to use the technology. They don't have that IT skills. So we had some issues, but we</p>	<p>Comment[K18]: Inadequate laptop performance</p>

	managed to overcome it, but it was a long process.
I	Yes, about the long process. How do you and maybe solve that problem?
R	<p>It's simple. You have basically a business plan. So the first of all, we had to commit that we would like to go for the ISO 17,100 certification. We looked at what's the requirement, what we missing. So we did a risk assessment. What was missing? What we had to do? Where we are compliant, and where are we not? And where are we not? What we need to do in order to be complex, we basically we put like a strategic timeline. We distributed the task between senior managers.</p> <p>So for example, I will start to obscure people. So I looked at programs, CPDs (Continuing Professional Development) and scheduled online meetings and training events for people to understand how to use this technology and the software. Senior managers being trained, how to use the platform and they pass on that information. We created documents guidelines.</p> <p>So it was the finance people, they implemented all the strategy, ok, how much we need to pay? What's the more going cost? So they did the financial risk assessment parts. I did, because I'm representing the HR department. I was looking at the human element like training. They absolutely make sure everyone is comfortable with this new technology. Is it safe to use? Is it okay for us to use? Can everyone have access to it? Our IT department says that do we have the necessary infrastructure to use this? Our laptops are okay. Do we need to use something else like remote server? Because the PCs are and laptops are not strong enough to run it. So we had lots of things.</p> <p>And basically, what we did is we had management meetings. When we discuss what's the progress, is there any bottleneck? Do we need help here or there? How are we getting on financially? So it was basically the whole senior management and the company for together to achieve this. We obviously ask for feedback as well. How people feeling about this? It wasn't just like here it is, you know, they believe it. So we ask for FBs. We also feed it back to the developers as well if they can feed something. So it was a massive corporation from everyone. The whole company was in it.</p>
I	Wow. I can see how that would be challenging and frustrating.
R	If you think about it, Kelly, it's significantly affects your business. If you don't know how to use a system, because we've switched a new one or you don't have access to it, you can't work. That

Comment[K19]: Time-consuming process

	<p>causes issues that because you need to do, you know, part of your job. If you don't know how to because there's, you know, IT issues, software issues, training issues, then we have a problem. So we have to factor that in. And we also have to factor that in. If we have a new member of staff, they need to be able to use it. So we have to come, you know, so we need to think about ongoing compliance as well and how we can quickly train people to get ready. Maybe we need to be. I think that into their induction package that how what software is used, how we use it. We also mentioned our ISO compliance.</p> <p>Now, for example, when we recruit people like what that means. And what expected from them, because there's a human element into it. It's not just the software. And the standard is actually ultimately the people who are compliant. So, they need to understand why this is important than the risks.</p>
I	Uh-huh. Could you please tell me how many people were involved in those process?
R	With all the managers, so that's five.
R	Yeah.
I	Like I said, we are small companies, all the managers, and then ultimately all the people who are using it as well. So I would say that's another 15. Because we ask for feedback, we had to monitor ongoing compliance. Is it ok? Is it working as how the system, is it resilient? Are we having any issues? So it was a massive, you know, fundamental change for our business.
R	Yeah, thank you. That's very insightful. And apart from the challenges, do you have any challenges you want to mention?
I	<p>I was not really because the key thing was, like, I said, is to prepare our IT, prepare the people, get the finances ready. We also had to tell our translators what that involves.</p> <p>So maybe that was also a challenge because there were some additional things to be declined from them as part of the compliance.</p>
R	<p>So that was also. We had to find a way, Kelly, how we pass on all these new requirements without causing too much distress, because we have more than 800 translators and interpreters. So that we have a duty of care to ensure that they are up to date.</p> <p>So we had to do CPD training for them as well, like how to use trials, how to use these new fancy</p>

	<p>software, what is required from them to be compliant with these new standards.</p> <p>So we had to come up with some training as far. So I would say that was another job and task for us to do. And also we had to tell our clients as well that all we know, we have this new standard what it is. So because, of course, now that you have it. Yeah, you had to sort of promote it. So the police like, for example, a key customer, they didn't know what this ISO standard is because it didn't exist before. So we have to explain now we are compliant these legal bits and we explain what it is in the standard. So they know, okay, great. So we had to explain to our core clients as well what this means and how they can check it that way there. How they can use, for example, the ATC website or the, you know, the registration number, how they can get more information what that involves. So we had to have a little bit of session with our clients society to inform them what this means and why is this beneficial for them?</p> <p>Any additional bits they can do to safeguard this, for example, like the feedback loop and the survey, which is now part of, you know, the ISO certification. This is really important.</p>
I	<p>Yes. So can I regard the communication as a problem, right?</p>
R	<p>I wouldn't say a problem, but this is something we had to work with, Kelly. So we had to we have to share the information because not everyone knows what this accreditation is or all these accreditation. What that means?</p> <p>So if someone who doesn't know about it and they want to work with us, and we say we have ISO 17100 certified, they say ok, what that is?</p> <p>We have to explain to them. We have to have like a little package for them or like a leaflet that we doing this. And for translators, this is really important because that means we have an ending in place. We have proper project management tools. We don't just do the project and pass it on. We do proofreading checks, etc. So certain elements in place, which means we are ISO 17100 compliant, but we need to explain that to the customer. You can't just say we have this certificate because they don't know only people who are working in this industry. They know. So we have to prepare this little pack information guidance to them as well that this is what this means. This is why it's beneficial for you. You can run this all. You can question these things because we should be supposed to be doing this. So that's a two way thing. We've given them a tool that every project we do for whatever to our clients, we have all the safeguarding measures in place.</p> <p>So that, again, that leads back to our resilience and credibility that they can run these things. They can talk to our project managers, they can talk to senior managers, and we happy to explain</p>

	<p>how we completed that project, what safeguarding measures we had. That's one of the extra main things of the ISO. All these, you know, extra protection in there that we need to do everything up to a certain standard.</p>
I	<p>Okay. Thank you for sharing that. And based on the challenges you faced, could you please summarize the methods you used to overcome these challenges?</p>
R	<p>The key thing is Kelly is honesty. So what we did is, like I said, we had multiple meetings. We had, first of all, we started from senior management, so obviously, we had to decide that we go for it. We made the pledge we committed that we start this. But after that, straight away, we involved all the people who are using this new system. This was really key. This is the main thing how we overcome this challenge that instead of forcing people to use these new things and get the ISO certification done, actually given many tasks for people for feedback and they to ownership, and basically they were the main driver for all this change. But we had weekly meetings, communication be asked for feedback, because they are using the system.</p> <p>So for example, for the key IT challenge we had is that our system is not compliant, wasn't compliant with ATC system. So what we did, we asked people, can you give us some ideas? Look, have a look at what's our system like in tell us what improvements we need to do. This led to all these things, because senior managers they don't use the system day to day is the actual project men. They just use it. So we relied on them to tell us what we need to do. So we had like an open two-way communication with people who are using the system. And that was a massive success, because not just highlighted what we missed in order to get this accreditation, but also help them to understand the new system because they were constantly reevaluating, ok, this new ATC, this new system. We can do this, this, that, that. Technically they self trained themselves in the process. So it was a win-win.</p> <p>Communication and honesty was the key thing. So we had to explain to that. Look, first of all, your job is safe. This technology, this piece of IT and software, I think is here to help you not to replace you. It gonna streamline project manager and they loved it. But you have to talk to them, because if you just show a new technology to them, they might be scared, they might be worried. Or am I gonna be next? Because now the system is so sophisticated. You don't need human beings in there. We having now with AI. So clear communication. Most we done, Kelly, talk about this.</p>

I	Yeah, and get every, not everyone, it should be more people involved, right?
R	Yeah, there were, look Kelly, there were everyone we send our company wide newsletter emails meetings . We ask look if you have any ideas how to improve the system, how to participate, get in touch. Human capital is a really powerful tool.
I	Wow, yeah.
R	The scams begin buying. So we didn't have that much issue with opposition, because people were happy to cooperate. Because we explained why we doing this rather than forcing it as a big difference . This is how we managed to overcome all of this, and people loving it, because they don't look at it as a threat .
I	Yep, I do like this method as well. Thank you for explaining that solution. And based on your experience, would you recommend other companies facing similar challenges in pursuing certification to adopt the same methods or other strategies would you like suggest they consider to overcome these challenges?
R	I would say yes, if, but it depends. If their clients are working in any of the industry, any of the specialization, where there is an ISO accreditation, I would say, yes, because it's really powerful. Because its competitive advantage. If there are 15 companies doing the same translation services, but one is ISO credited that company gonna be on top. Because any person, any business or senior level manager knows what an ISO is. And it just gives credibility because if you running a business and you wanna give a project to another company, you wanna make sure that they do a job now how you do it? If I look at the general feedback on the internet or something would ask for people who wrote them, or you can look at their ISO status. That's really powerful, but it's not for everyone. There's a lot of cost involved. They need to change that whole system how they operate. It's not for everyone because some companies might be that small, that it's if they won't be feasible, or they completely need to reinvent and rethink how they operate. So I would say if someone wants to go for it, they need to do a total risk assessment from top to down . See how it is it for them. What's the benefit? Is it actually worth doing? For us? It was because that's our main business, legal interpreting. General translation be working with medical, you know, industry, police, courts tribunals for this certificate. This certification designed for us. We gained a massive advantage by the first one to adopt this, put it on our website, show it all our clients. We got this, and it was massive. But, it

	<p>really depends on your business. As with every ISO, Kelly, is absolutely fantastic. What you need to do a proper assessment. Is it actually good for you? What's the long-term benefit? Or is it inevitable? You need to do it at some point. And then you just basically need to allocate the funds and go for it. So it's really a business. It's a case by case basis. There's obviously direct benefits. ISO is a great thing. There's a reason why ISO exists, but it's up to the individual businesses. Ensure that is it actually good for them? Is it mandatory? Might be, or is it an optional, extra? And then they need to do risk assessment that what are the pros and cons?</p>
I	<p>Yes, thank you. I mean if they have the same challenges, would you recommend them to use the same methods, you used? I mean the way to solve the difficulties like clear communication involved.</p>
R	<p>Yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely. That's the key thing. I mean there are multiple ways you can do it. You can send out an email saying, look from now when we doing this, you know, but you need to ease the transition and clear communication and honesty and explaining what's going on, what's gonna happen, what's gonna change, and how they are part of this. It's crucial. We think that with multiple newsletters, we have staff meetings for feedback, and I recommend everyone to follow this.</p>
I	<p>Yeah.</p>
R	<p>And that obviously depends on the company, depends on the size of the company, because it might not be feasible to have a one on one meeting with 15,000 people. I do understand. But then it needs to be clear communication from top management or some training or videos, short clips, something really important.</p>
I	<p>Thank you so much for the detailed responses and valuable insights.</p> <p>To summarize our discussion, you highlight several key points. First, your primary motivation for pursuing the certification was to meet the requirements of the ATC right? And then to get the prestige?</p>
R	<p>Yeah.</p>
I	<p>Thank you. And the in terms of privatization, you rank aspect as client requirements, operational improvement. Sorry, the third one is?</p>

R	So, we had the operational effectiveness. That was the second. The first one was the client requirement that you had two other. I know we discussed this, you had two other. One was emmm...
I	A competitive edge?
R	Was that prestige or general? I I think that's always about a client satisfaction or feedback. That's the thing is can be they all interlinked. So if you do one, the other students follow now, depending on how you rank it. It's the reason why it's difficult because it depends on client by client basis, what the client needs, what the industries. For police compliance is number one because it's police,
I	Uh-huh.
R	For private sector. So again, that's another thing. Public and private sector is completely separate. For private sector, compliance is not the highest, it's prestige. And you know, what we do it, how we do it, it was the quality. That's super important. So I would say quality is more important in a private sector and how your company being perceived. So it really depends on case by case basis. And that's something we need to evaluate. And that's where the ISO also comes in. And that's why I said that every company needs to make a decision whether it's good for them. Is it needed? Was their main client base? Do they require this? Are they actually aware of this test? You know. All these accreditation exists? Like, for example, I know that the ATC 17100. Everyone in translation industry they know. But the general translation one and the police on the 20001, I'm not sure if they all know, because it's a relatively new one.
I	Yeah. Thank you for sharing that. And you also mentioned some challenges like the transition process that is quite long. And the fees the cost for the software and training sessions like that, right? And to overcome these challenges your company uses strategies like clear communication and get everyone involved.
R	The communication, get everyone involved, have a strategic plan with everyone, you know, discussion. Who's doing what? Because remember is the senior managers to C-level who drive this. So we had to have a proper strategic plan. We all had our, you know, tasks and duties in it and they followed it. Obviously they also communicated with stuff, but remember it's driven

	<p>from top. So our CEO made that decision. Look, guys, we need to go for this accreditation and set up little task groups who's doing what. We had our management meeting. We had the budget coming in. We talk to our IT people to implement these, but what's the time frame for that? Update the server who thinks in cloud? We had to change the way how we store files, how we deal with translation projects. We had to change the way how we complete translation assignments. We had to implement proofreading, checking, random sampling, all that involved.</p> <p>So everybody had basically a role in it, Kelly. But the key thing is you have to have like a master plan. We went through that because otherwise things fall into peace.</p>
I	<p>About the master plan is that decided by one person or whole? A lot of person I mean.</p>
R	<p>Five people. So the senior management, when we had the meeting, we basically distributed to us based on our role.</p> <p>For example, I was HR. I was responsible for the training, the up-skilling, you know, the videos, the CPD events. Operational team were involved in how we actually work with the projects. What needs to be changed? Is it okay? Or do we need to implement extra bits because of the accreditation. Also, operational team were talking with our external IT company to implement all these soft efforts. So that was like probably one of the busiest. Our CFO was basically the financial base. We are a small company, so we had to allocate some funds to make the transition. We had to pay for an ISO assessor. We had to factor all that thing in. And our CEO was regarding, you know, the general comes to people coming from top as a CEO to explain what this new accreditation is, what we're gonna do.</p> <p>And also he was the one talking to our clients to explain we are going through this new accreditation. This is what expected. This is why it's beneficial for us. This is why is beneficial for you. So he was handling things from semen contracts, key clients. So we all had our role and the other meeting, and we discuss. Are we going in the right direction? Any bottlenecks? Do we need to put more resources in something? So it's quite tight cooperation. Kelly. And along the line, we were following this, like I said, this master plan, they also inform people-our staff-what's going on? Because like I said, they were to drive. They need to know what's going on in order to make a change and help us. Because from top down, you don't always see the day to day operations. So you don't necessarily know how it affects our business. Is the actual people using the system? So we went basically straight to resource.</p>
I	<p>Thank you. So if there were some disagreements, how do you solve that?</p>

R	<p>Well, it's simple. We had meetings, and we explained, ok, so what, first of all, why there's a disagreement. Is it a system? Or is it training issue? Is the personal issue?</p> <p>And we can be found that because they all have their base. If it's an IT technical issue, we looked at. Ok. Can we implement change? Why there's an issue? And ultimately we have to make a decision that what's gonna be the way forward. Bear in mind, it needs to be compliant with, for example, the new ATC, you know, ISO standards. So that was, we can't differ from the standards.</p> <p>But if there's some flexibility in bits, we obviously back to that, they also had stuffing issues. Some people didn't know how to use that technology. They said they were really scared. They were opposed. They said they don't want to use the new system. We spent extra time with them. We had one on one. So I had meetings. I explained this is what is step by step, explained a bit. And he gained my end. And actually, ultimately, the person said, actually, this is not too bad.</p>
I	<p>Uh-huh</p>
R	<p>But then, again, it's a case by case basis. We couldn't just say you need to do this all. So we had to spend more time. One on one's line manager involved more training and the others benefited from that as well. So we need to deal with it, Kelly and depends on which departments force the issue. You sort it out.</p>
I	<p>I see. Thank you for sharing that. Is there anything you would like to add or any other points you think that are important to mention?</p>
R	<p>One thing which is really important to mention, Kelly and which helps everyone is always work in the company who's having the ISO accreditation.</p> <p>For example, in this case, the ATC absolutely fantastic source. We couldn't have done this without them. So we were like properly cooperating. We had a partnership. We had meetings. We asked, look, what do you think about this suggestion? Ok. Great. Can we implement this? No! Ok, let's move on. Let's have this lesson. These to be realistic, but they really have to ease the transition. They have tons of materials. They can schedule meetings. They can explain what's involved. They can help you to assess your system as well, or your struck, you know, your business how it works. So it for us, it really have that the sense structured instructions. And they sent us basically the whole breakdown of the standard we are applying. So, we can do a proper risk assessment, like I said, which is step number one. Do you start with the risk assessment? But</p>

	<p>how you do it? You have all the information from the creating body, which is the ATC in this regards. In this case, and you know exactly where you are.</p> <p>So what I'm saying is never be afraid to call contact, you know, ATC or whoever helping you, you know, the accreditation to ask for more information, feedback, guidance, documents. It can be scary. It's a big transition, but if you ask for documents, they have loads. So you don't need to be, you know, intimidating by the burden and don't be afraid to ask for help and share the more people. One person can't do this transition. Kelly. You need to gain buying, need everyone to help you. It's a massive thing. It affects the whole business. And ongoing thing is as far as one other, my other recommendation is for everyone whoever doing this certification. You can't just get a quick win by doing it and forget it. That's one of the really important things that I think you need to demonstrate ongoing compliance. So you need to reassess your system. Every couple of months. You need to break it down to individual task. You need to have enough human resources to deal with it. And if you, the more time you spend and, you know, the more organized you are, the easier it's gonna be.</p> <p>So I'm the, for example, I'm maintaining over our standards, but because we do it every month, we break it down to little chance, it just really helps streamline this rather than, ok now ISO is coming up. And you do everything in 1 month or 1 week, you're gonna fail. They're gonna see it. It's ... So be honest, always talk to them, ask for support. They have extra people. They can have, you know, assessments coming in. Talk to them, always talk, don't hide, and don't try to do everything by yourself. That's my number one advice because they are there to help you. It's their business as well, and it's your business as well.</p> <p>So you are not enemies, help. And you will get through this. If it takes more time, it takes more time. That's absolutely fine. You can have that in what you need to communicate clearly and be honest about this and set up realistic tasks.</p>
I	<p>That's sounds really great.</p> <p>Thank you again. For your time and cooperation, your input is incredible valuable to my research. Before we ending the recording and interview today, do you have any questions to ask?</p>
R	<p>Not really good. Luckily, it's a big task. Well done. You got a nice topic absolutely go for it. I would be. Is that something we could see? The outcome because I would love to read if it's in formats which you can publish or send like, I don't know, draft or something. I would love to read it because it might be something we can benefit later on. But they are apart from that.</p>

	Absolutely good luck. If there's any extra support or bits. We can do or bit or some examples. I'm happy to share it, Kelly. About apart from that.
I	Well, about the details. I will send you by email. Okay?
R	Yeah.
I	Thank you so much.
R	Like I said if there's something we can have. Let us know, Kelly, ok?
I	Thank you so much! Have a great day! Bye.
R	You too. Bye bye, bye.

240604	
I	For the record, I'm currently interviewing the participant of 240604. To start, in the questionnaire, you mentioned the primary reasons for your company to pursue the ISOI certification. Could you please elaborate on your choices and explain the specific motivations and benefits your company aimed to achieve?
R	We already hold three ISO accreditation, and these are mandatory for some of our clients. So we already hold 9001 quality management, 14001 environmental management, and 27001 security management. And we thought that this would and how just sit nicely with what we've already got. And they're more required by clients. This one was more of a nice to have, and maybe give us an advantage, sometimes over a company that doesn't have this ISO accreditation.
I	As for the three ISO I want to know, do you update this three certifications on your website?
R	Yes.
I	Because I just find a news about the ISO 9001. I cannot find the rest two.
R	Right? I'll look into that and make sure that they are on there, but we do hold the three.
I	Yeah, I think maybe just check and then upgrade some websites.

Comment[K20]: To differentiate from competition

R	Yes. And this is for our significant assigned video website as well. So that's the one where I would expect them to be. I would have expected them to be there. I'll be honest, but I will double check.
I	That would be great. Thank you. Apart from the motivations you mentioned, is there any motivations that driving your company to obtain the ISO certification for interpreting.
R	Emmm now it was, to be honest, it was more. When we looked into it, we just thought that with the other ISO accreditation we've got, most of the requirements of the interpreting accreditation, we've already got in place. And we just thought that it would be nice to have an advantage if we are tendering for work or I just to be able to show them that we meet the criteria required about accreditation.
I	Yes. Thank you for sharing that. Now let's move to the next questions. When deciding whether to adopt ISOI standards, which factors do you consider first? Please rank the following aspects in order of priority: client requirements, operational improvements, competitive advantage, and customer trust.
R	That's the thought, that's the order I've got them in. I've got the written down. Because client requirements, this is for some of the clients we have. It's compulsory that we have 9001, well all three of them, to be honest. Because in this day and age, we need to be able to show them our environmental credentials. So by having the 14001, it shows that we meet the criteria required for our environmental management. And 9001 is a requirement just to show that we have correct management procedures in place. And when we quality management criteria and the 27001, due to the nature of our business and everything is IT-based. So we must have that and be able to prove that we've got IT security in place. And it's the same thing really with the 18841. It's more advantageous for us to be able to show clients that we've got, but that we've got everything in place to meet the requirements of that interpretation ISO.
I	Is the one for interpreting is unnecessary, or is required by the clients?
R	No, it's not. It's just for us. It is a nice to have rather than required.
I	Thank you for clearing that. Maybe I didn't make myself clear. Actually, I want to ask the factors

Comment[K21]: To gain a competitive advantage in tendering for work

Comment[K22]: To demonstrate compliance with accreditation criteria

	is about when you decided to take the ISO standard for interpreting.
R	Right, the same thing, really, maybe client trust to move from 4 to 1, because they've got the opposite that show. And everything else. And I I think it comes up the trust with our clients. So I would put client trust number one, then client requirements, operational improvements and competitive advantage.
I	And could you please give me some reasons for your ranking?
R	Yes, our clients trust is the number one, the customer, because it's in addition to what we've already got, it just shows very quickly any clients or potential clients that the standards that we were to. And it would help with, because any new clients we have to do complete due diligence and the answers a lot of the due diligence questions, the fact that we meet the requirements of this ISO standard that we have everything in place.
I	And the reasons for put the competitive advantage at the last?
R	Emmm, it is just because the other, the others are on a day to day basis. They are more important towards the competitive advantages. It's good, but it's not necessarily be all and end all, although it is good to have.
I	I see, thank you for your detailed explanation. And I would like to know, are there any factors you consider when deciding whether to adopt the ISO standard for interpreting, apart from the four aspects we just discussed?
R	Yeah. Mostly because we've got, for us it was a relatively simple process. And when we when we decide when we looked into it and decided to go ahead with gaining this accreditation. We knew that we got much of the what was required already in place. Some of the documents needed. A little bit of tweaking to meet the exact requirements. But we did know that because we already have the other three ISO in place. But we were we were in a very good place with documentation. And all of the information required to meet the requirements of the accreditation.
I	Can I regard the answer to the question is that you have plenty of the resources to use? So the availability of the resources is another factor when you decided. Right?
R	Yeah. I was much more confessed. That was it.

I	Okay. Now, I like to discuss some of the challenges your face, and it's great to know you didn't experience significant challenges. Were there any minor challenges or obstacles, even if there weren't significant?
R	The one, a few requirements are different. It was just being able to adapt what we do, what we'd already got and presented. It may be in a different way so that it met the requirements of the interpreting accreditation. And that were, the challenges weren't particularly significant. We did need to make sure that the documentation we had was presented correctly to meet the requirements. Yeah, that there was some information that we needed to additional information that we need to document.
I	Do you find the whole process is time consuming, even you just need to adopt or change some of documentation?
R	Emmm, it would depend on what stage you are as a business. It is time consuming. It is, you know, it's quite involved making sure that you've got. Emmm, everything that you require, that you have everything documented and then you can evidence and all of the requirements as well, because one of the things that we find, all that we have, what is that, and we already do work for watch of what is required by the standard, but it wasn't necessarily documented in a way that would be suitable through it. And so the most time consuming part was identifying what we've got and making sure it was documented in a way that we could use as evidence.
I	Yeah, thank you for sharing that. And I would like to know usually how many people will be involved in this process?
R	Emmm, about 7.
I	7, thank you.
R	Well, so as well, really, actually, that's across the board. For the interpreting ISO, it's three. I am so across the board because it's the heads of department that we need to involve to both. But if we're talking about just the interpreting ISO that is three.
I	Thank you. And how long will the whole process? Since we discussed it was time consuming. So the length of the whole process, how long is the whole process?

Comment[K23]: Adapting and adjusting existing practices and documentation to meet the accreditation requirements

Comment[K24]: Time-consuming process

R	Emmm, it's hard to quantify, really, because it's not something that we would work on 4 days or 4 weeks. But if you were working on it full time, then I would say 4 weeks, each for the over two up to 2 weeks for me.
I	4 weeks and 2 weeks that should be 6 weeks.
R	So 4 weeks were, yeah, between the people involved.
I	That can be quite difficult, really! Time-consuming.
R	Can be. Yes, it can be. Because you're preparing for an audit. It's just making sure that emmm everything that's in the standard is covered. And with and that you can evidence your participation in every aspect. So it can be time consuming.
I	Thank you for sharing that. And about the challenges, how did your company overcome these challenges? Documentation?
R	Emmm, well is the case of working together with the people that are involved . So I'm actually, my job track is compliance officer and I'm the the person with all looks after this with an overview. But for this, I work with our head of interpreting and for ... Cause I'm not familiar with all of the documentation that is required. And I also work with our part member name a job cycle. Let me just check... Head of workforce management as well, because she's responsible for booking interpreters into jobs and sessions. But then we have head of interpreting always responsible and that split into two different departments. So I would work with the both of them . And I would be the one that pulls the information together.
I	Since you worked with different departments, and I would like to know, do you come across any difficulties, such as the poor communication between different stuff or departments?
R	With the interpreting one it now, because it's much less complicated than the other three ISO. And they aren't. They are specialists in that field because this is quite, it's not general. The information is not general. It's very specific just to the interpreting and the provision of interpreters. So you're dealing with people who are very specialized at what they do. So that side of it was not difficult at all.

Comment[K25]: Time-consuming process

I	Thank you for clarifying that. Given the challenges you mentioned, would you recommend other companies facing similar challenges in pursuing the certification for ISO interpreting to use the same method?
R	Emmm, no, I think all companies would have to look at their own structure and make it fit whether they manage it, make it fit around their own structure. And I think you need to be methodical and you need to identify areas of responsibility for all of the requirements , and that would be very different emmm in every company.
I	Yep. Apart from identify the specific responsibility , what other strategies would you suggest they consider to overcome the challenges?
R	Just make sure that you can identify your existing procedures to match the requirements . It's just, I think that's very important, because what you probably find is that when you look at the requirements, they are generic. I bought you. Most companies would probably meet all of the requirements. It's just identifying your processes to match the requirements.
I	And if they find, they cannot match the process?
R	Then you've got to create something, you then need to create emmm a way of providing evidence, but you've got to provide. Some of it is very small. Some of it is very, emmm, it's quite consuming. But as you need a very methodical approach to identifying how you will evidence and provide the evidence required to meet the each requirement.
I	Thank you so much for the detailed responses and valuable insights. To summarize our discussion, you highlight several key points, your primary reasons for pursuing the ISO certification is to get competitive advantage. And to you, you think it's nice to have that, right?
R	Yes.
I	And for the priority ranking, you rank client trust first followed by, sorry, followed by the operational requirement.
R	Yes.
I	And the competitive edge. And the very second one, let me check.

R	Right.
I	The second one is?
R	So it was quiet. It was really, quite trust. One of the client requirements, operational improvements, and then competitive advantage.
I	Thank you for clarify that.
R	OK.
I	As for the challenges, since you have obtained the other three ISO standards. So the minor challenges could be the ability to adopt your documentation. Right?
R	Yes.
I	And also the time can, also, be a challenge for you? Even though it's a minor one.
R	Yeah, it's time consuming. You've got to be prepared to commit a little bit more initially setting it up. Because once you want to, after the first year, then you've got everything, you then updating rather than creating. But when approaching it for the first time, then it's about emmm match your existing processes to the requirements of the standard. And then preparing a gap analysis and that working through. And if you meet this and you can't evidence, then you would need to prepare a gap analysis of work your way through that. And it's a very methodical about the way you approach that.
I	So the time consuming is not only because you need to prepare the document, also need to update document for the next certification, right?
R	Yes.
I	That would be quite time consuming and difficult.
R	Yes. It's just a case of just making sure you've got all the documents available. And the ones that you know need updated as well, which is most, emmm, because I think part of it is that most documents need to be updated annually, things like you know, policies. And you need to have a record of everything that needs updated in subsequent years . Ready for

	the audit.
I	Is there someone who's responsible for that or department?
R	Well, in our company. That's me. It could be, you see, in another company, you may have a document management system and that belong to someone else. That's what I mean, but you can't follow someone else's the way they do it. Because it's all company structured very differently. And you need your methods recording, emmm, very clearly and responsibilities assigned.
I	I see, yeah. Okay, for the recommendation, you mentioned that the company should identify the person's responsibility and the whole procedure to make sure they meet the requirement of the standard, right?
R	Yes.
I	And also make some recording of the whole process.
R	Yes. Yeah. You need. It is all about documentation and evidence. And that is for both for the ISO auditor and yourself as well, because you need, emmm, to be able to refer to all of your request, all that you need ready for the audit. So it's you need someone with also very organized and taking responsibility.
I	Thank you for sharing that with me. Is there anything else you would like to add or any other points you think that are important to mention?
R	No, I don't think so. I think that is the overarching that if you want to approaching this and you've never done it before, that you need to, I think, been methodical. It's a watchword and just make sure that you are being organized and having a very methodical approach helps you further down the line.
I	I really like the methodical approach. That was really great. Thank you again for your time and cooperation, your input is incredibly valuable to me. And before we end this discussion, do you have any questions you like to ask?
R	No. Is this it? So I want you to coming back some more Information at any point, or is this the end of it today?

I	I can not say it's just the end.
R	That's fine. That was fine. I just wondered if you got now. Is that if you need anything else, it's fine. If you want, or you need more information, I'm quite happy if contact me.
I	Yeah, that is so great. Thank you.
R	Yeah, that's no problem.
I	That would be so great. So if you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact me. Have a great day.
R	All right, good luck with you. So, okay.
I	Thank you so much.
R	Bye. Bye.

240605	
I	For the record, I'm currently interviewing the participant 240605. To start, in the questionnaire, you mentioned the primary reasons for your company to pursue the ISO certification for interpreting. Could you please elaborate your choices and explain the specific motivations and benefits your company aimed to achieve?

R Right. When we first started, not with the one for interpretation, which is 18841. We're gonna start with that one. We started with 9001, which by the time was the only thing we could certify if we did this backing 2013. So all these new ISO standards were not nonexistent. So we were services, and we said ok what we can do this recognizable, you know, across the globe. And we were trying to get into the United Nations providers and supplier portal. And having a certification, I think back then it was a must. So we did it firstly because not everyone else was doing it, so it was kind of the first at least in our region.

So we want to have kind of slogan. It was a commercial drive. On the one hand. So we wanted to have a slogan saying like, the first one was this certification, this region, et cetera, or something like that. And then, also because of the technical requirement for a possible prospects or larger clients, that require some kind of certification. And ISO standards are acknowledged globally. So it was kind of good. We considered IRON as well, but we settled down with the ISO as a better standard.

And then also the differentiator from our competitors, and last but not least I'd say it gave us a structure, because we already have procedures and sheets here and there and documents, but we didn't have something like in a top format, like you know where to look for information. And we didn't have vision, for instance. So you may come and find duplicates. And you wouldn't be sure which one is most current unless you look for the file modification date or something like that. So that was the biggest gain of all the structure it provided, the way of thinking and also the involvement we good get from our team. Because one of the things we did was to have each area create their own flow chart, instead of going up to down from the direction, saying ok this is what you do.

We want the other way around saying explain what you do. Because even though and this is something that happens with ISO you need to update your procedures. You need to update your instructors, et cetera, because things change and maybe use newer technology. And the procedure changes. So we went up to down that also gave them a bigger incentive to actually commit and live by the standard. So if they, you have to have a draft of something prior to a delivery, they would do it because it's something that they participated on the road that they understand. Why is it necessary. So it was a super, super interesting. And we also had to add or ISO, I don't know what it is. Pretty comprehensive. So we had to add a lot of materials we didn't have. And over the update from 2018 to 2015, we had to do some changes to after the new standard.

And then last year we certified to work for interpretation, another one for translation, but the one

for interpretation, which is the one that falls under your scope. And it was pretty easy because we already had all these training ten years of 9001 on our back.

So it was kind of easy to, did you like click and include another service? We did find some challenges. You can stop me if I'm talking about something else, but if it helps, I'll keep talking.

But we did find some challenges. **It wasn't so easy to adapt.** Because interpretation compared to other different services, I mean the delivery is something kind of famous. It's something that goes away. I, you know, it's just words are spoken to the wind, and that's the service. So it's not emmm you have a draft. I suddenly have a Q&A that where you can, emmm proof of, I mean the audit real, messy, and sometimes you cannot. Because those meetings are secret, or and you cannot record anything, or you cannot refer to specifics of the meaning. So in those instances, I mean it's emmm it was very difficult for us, and it is still a challenge, even we've been certified for it.

For almost a year in November, for the 4 year, the kind of measure the quality of service through the ISO standard glasses looks like, because here you find that I mean there's no way to kind of predict what the interpreter would do, not just in their plain language, but their attitude, their expertise in the subject matter, their attitude. And during the meeting, normally they work in teams. With another interpreter. So the attitude with the colleagues. And I know that and there are external factors that sometimes affect interpretation that are not controllable by us. For instance, one, the client hires the audio. The audio is good, or the context has some noise, et cetera, or the headphones don't work. There are kind of a few things that make it a little bit more challenging than it is. **When you are dealing with just the other services, where you have a deliverable that you can, as many times as you want, in this case, the interpretations unless you record them in full, it's something that just goes away.**

So here, what the customer thinks is most important as a measure of quality, because if it served the purpose, if it were, et cetera, sometimes they are looking for an enjoyable experience, think about tourists. They might not care that much about specific, you know, grammatical mistakes, et cetera. They might be more interested in having a very engaging explanation or storytelling of something living the city or whatever. So they may. That's more important in that type of interpretation, a medical congress on cancer, for instance, or you are very interested in exactly what the other speakers is talking about.

So, anyway, it becomes subjective, very, very, very subjective, more, so than what we're used to in translation, in general, in written translation or, emmm, in video editing or desk publishing, all

Comment[K26]: Ensuring consistent service quality

	those things normally go out. And without errors, even though it's the text for tourism, let's say it's kind of different binding. If you will.
I	So the difficulty for interpreting, what is your difficulties for that?
R	So pointed, because if you say that your measurement of how good service was, is customers opinion that is customer qualification. Then for customer, the degree customer gives you, then every service is different. So, you may have, for instance, a service that has had certain mistakes that you know they made grammatical mistakes. For instance, like this one in tourism. Emmm but the customers may be super happy because the story was compelling. It was fun. They had a great time. It was a good experience. They may rate you with a ten, whereas in different contexts that's infeasible, and they give you two. That's just the same interpretation. But what changes its context? What the client's expectations are? So in that regard, it's difficult because again, as I said, customers opinions on interpretation vary a lot. So it's that subjectivity on behalf of the customer, what makes it difficult for us to grade ourselves. It's not that we can do a pre-production, grading of interpretation. Normally, when

	<p>we're talking about written services, we know what's gonna go out, because we have it before we deliver it. Here the production and the delivery happen at the same time.</p> <p>So we have no way to control that. It happened to us once that the interpreter just got back. She panic and she couldn't speak word and she just sat there and if she has kind of a panic attack. It just happened and she was qualified everything, but it emmm so happened. You know. It's life. It can happen. We're all humans, and she had a panic second, and then she couldn't do any interpretation. And we had to improvise something. But again, production and delivery happens in simultaneous. That's the challenge interpretation.</p>
I	I mean the challenge for certifying the ISO standards.
R	<p>Ah. The challenge for certifying emmm having explained to the auditor, in a sense, was a challenge and getting up with a way to make it more summarized. I mean to emmm ... That's something we're still thinking about, you know, ways of making it more like the production line, where you can somewhat have a framework, where you can grade stuff in a more controlled environment.</p> <p>So coming up with that kind of a system, which is something we've had, you know as I said, a part time finding was most difficult part, because for what our other services, this application was kind of busy. Because you know they always require some kind of a draft or some kind of preproduction sample that you can grade to make sure that the delivery is gonna be all right, et cetera. But here, other than, you know, trusting the interpreter, checking backgrounds, et cetera, having experience in the subject, et cetera, making sure that the channels are right. But we have no way to check our production prior to delivery because they happen at the same time.</p> <p>So coming up with some that kind of map, flow chart was super difficult. And I said that we still haven't overcome that. And again, we have to resort to post-mortem meetings with customers to determine how valuable and what can we do better in the future? So ...</p>
I	In that case? Can I regard it as the the difficulty of finding evidence to support it, because ...
R	Yes. Emmm ...
I	Because it's not easy to measure the customers' opinion. So you may not find the appropriate evidence to support that you did make the requirement of the ISO certification.

Comment[K27]: Collecting evidence to demonstrate compliance with ISO standards

R	Right. Here came with an example. If you have to deliver a written translation, you can read it previously and make sure you know everything is fine. In an interpretation, you can't.
I	Yeah.
R	So putting that into the flowchart that somewhat requires you to have a certain degree of assurance that, you know, the service is gonna be performed according to what the client expects is super difficult. I mean it's a long shot to say, you know, this interpretation is gonna go 100 % according to what's planned, because you don't know, I mean ... It's a promise really, you don't know until it happens.
I	Yeah.
R	<p>You can lay everything for it to be a good service. But if something else happens, I don't know it. Interconnection is bad or something. Then the interpretation does not go according to plan, and then it wasn't a good service. But there's no way procedural speaking and that you can guarantee 100 % is gonna be all right.</p> <p>So from the procedures standpoint, it's super complicated to put a 100 % stamp are assuring something that's not going to probably. I mean it exists. The possibility is not gonna happen. The way you plan it. That's usually what happens. There are variance, maybe the speakers or whatever, you know no more the things don't go according to the plan. So you plan for excellence, but you are good. So it's seek for excellence, but for not in the important goals, you seek for perfection. In the meantime, you get excellent, but the perfection is unattainable. So that's ...</p>
I	So the difficulty can be without the clear measurement to measure the customers satisfied. Sorry, their opinion, right?

R	<p>All right, no. Because the opinion is easily measurable, because you can just have a meeting with them, and they'll grade you. And that's what we get a as a result.</p> <p>But the difficulties to come up with the procedure in which you can assure that the service is gonna be performed, the way it was intended to prior to the execution of the service. Because the execution of a service and the delivery happened at the same time. So you don't have that luxury. Let's say, of having some visualization of what the service is gonna be like.</p> <p>At least in our perspective, maybe we are trying to make square feet and around all something that maybe we're making it proper complicated, but we can with all this baggage of ok where's the evidence of this and that? And how do you assure a client that this is gonna happen the way should be. It's the only service in which we cannot assure 100 %. That is gonna be perfect because we cannot, because things may happen during the execution. We don't have extra time to do it again. It's just that chance. That's the only chance we have. It happens only once. Whereas in translation, if something goes bad, you can re-translate it. You have an additional stages. You have proofing stages. You have, you know, extra time, extra opportunities. And one, the delivery comes. It's just perfect.</p> <p>So it's, you know ...</p>
I	<p>So can I say this ISO certification has a clear standard, but it's difficult to find clear evidence to support the meet of that requirement, right? Like cannot guarantee 100 %, cause it's immeasurable.</p>
R	<p>It's immeasurable prior to the delivery. After the delivery, it is measurable, but essentially outside, customer opinion is the most transparent way of judging what the interpretation was like. Because as I said, in some cases, you cannot have a record of what went wrong or what were right, because you via that NDA by keeping a record. So you cannot keep a record. So the easiest way to do it across the entire variety of customers is by having them judge the interpretation. If it help them or not in the results. And of course, we do our internal evaluation, you know, knowing if the interpreter was punctual or not, because we have to like it, baseline of things that must occur for us to believe that interpretation was good independently of what the customer thinks about it or not. But there are a few non negotiable items, like punctuality, good presence, et cetera, that should occur.</p>

I	I see. And since you mentioned the time consuming process as a challenge, could you please specify that this one?
R	Time-consuming in what regard? Sorry.
I	The challenges when you pursuing or trying to obtain the ISO certification for interpreting. The process.
R	<p>Oh yeah. Thinking about all these was extremely time-consuming and because of others services slightly different to the others.</p> <p>So how the services were kind of more or less the same, it was just in a different area. I graduated from long chart, instructions, et cetera. But it was kind of the same. We still have. We can still add QA stages during the execution of the service, where we can, you know, correct any possible variations defined during the execution. Here we cannot. So that was big. What do we do now in a moment?</p> <p>But anyway, yeah, the certification process was not as difficult as we thought. I was almost sure we were gonna get some kind of NCR or something. I was going to ask the term they did is the auditor about it and say, what do we do now? Please give me some advice because we are kind of lost here. But she didn't, I mean, she was okay with that. She understands that the nature of the service is different. It's like she compared it to sign language interpretation in some regard. So she said it's just the same, but it can be sure what it's gonna happen. I mean if the interpreter has low sugar and passes out due to interpretation, you just can't, you are not in control of that. So this may have, ok.</p>
I	And you also mentioned the cost. Can you give me some examples about the cost?
R	<p>The cost wasn't high at all. And the first time we certified, it was costly because it required about a year prior to the certification day, you know, to come up with everything that one had a significant cost, because it was not just the cost of the assessment from the firm that who were helping us putting together all the documentation.</p> <p>But also our in the internal time, all the hours we spend, putting together flow charts, talking in meetings, meeting with other people, reviewing stuff, re-reviewing stuff, and writing, and lot of writing, at least for ISO 9001. It was like, I don't like 200 pages. We need up with a system, 200 videos kind of belong. And over time, we learned that we had gone too far and that we needed to</p>

Comment[K28]: Time-consuming process

	<p>make it simpler because we're fallen victims of our own complexity.</p> <p>We just decided over the next cycle to make it a bit lighter and don't go too much into detail, because the more details you go, the easiest it is for you to emmm to miss something and to go away from the system.</p> <p>So it's emmm it was better for us to go simpler. So we did that. And it worked perfectly. So over the next years. Their certification process was a lot easier because it was just maintaining the standard. And adding when you have already a standard, adding another standard is simpler. You know what to do. So the cost is a lot less outside 10 % less than it is. When you first start, I mean if it's your first standard, my advice for other people, I mean if it's your first standard, it's gonna take time. It's not gonna take that much time, when ISO 9001 or something similar that goes across the entire company. So it's emmm ...</p>
I	Uh-huh. and about the two main challenges. How do you solve them?
R	<p>Well, talking to people. And actually, we had to modify our ISO system, at least our grading system, incorporate all these strategies, like specifically for interpretation, including the items that are appropriate for interpretation, such as punctuality, et cetera, which are different from what we have in the now our ISO.</p> <p>And also doing a post-mortem meeting, we give everyone just making sure the interpreting was arrived at, it set the purpose, et cetera, which is something we do not do with translation, because we know already. Prior to the delivery, what's the product like? And it sets the purpose of march, et cetera. But we don't do that as much as in detail as we did with interpretation. Within interpretation we do with all customers. Whenever we can, if we can, we have someone listening to interpretation, and then we ask the customer to grade it.</p>
I	I see, thank you. And can I know how many people were involved in this whole process, for certifying the ISO for interpreting?
R	<p>Three people. It was me, human resources and another person who has a lot of background interpretation. He's a project manager and and we are just preparing of the procedure to make sure, you know, they're covering everything.</p> <p>That happens during an interpretation was like a teamwork playing, because human resources would give us information about their backgrounds and what kind of information she gets or she</p>

	<p>can ask for, or what the kind of information we already had.</p> <p>How would we, you know, calculate all that within the system to ... usable. And we can find it whenever we look for it, especially thinking about when you have a new project and you require just the right candidate, how do we find it?</p> <p>And also, how do we keep that evidence to show to the auditorium in the audit as well? And how will we handle the conformity, et cetera? What will we do? That's how we do if we shall apply the same rules of as we apply with our ISO. But again, the answer to that is it's just copy and paste. It's kind of easier when you have something done before.</p>
I	Yeah, in that case, do you have the difficulties like the poor communication or lack of resources?
R	Emmm I'm sorry, the difficulty in what regard to the ...
I	Emmm, like poor communication between different stuffs or interpreters?
R	<p>No. No, the biggest challenge we face doing an interpretation project is really location when they require in person interpretation. Yeah, location is a huge deal. Sometimes if there's nobody around and you need to send someone look at the hotel or that it requires a lot of time.</p> <p>That is the biggest issue. But checking that out, one thing we've encountered during the last interpretation is customers do not send their materials with the decide for our time. So we have very little time to get up to speed with subject matter and terminology. And that so.</p>
I	Uh-huh. Sorry to interrupt, I mean the difficulties for certifying the ISO not for preparing or delivering the interpretation.
R	Ah! Sorry.
I	Yeah.
R	Sorry, I misunderstood. The QA procedure outside that kind of a part would be coming up with that. Specific procedure was the most difficult one.
I	I see, thank you for sharing that. And I also want to know when deciding whether to taking the ISO certification for interpreting which factors do you consider first, please rank the following aspects in order of priority, client requirements, operational improvements, competitive advantage, and customer trust.

R	<p>After first of all, it's a competitive advantage. Because as I said, sometimes you cannot even get the job. You don't have that application. So it was just that. Then operational improvements, which that gives you all the structure that it gives you is just awesome. It's super cool. It simplifies training of new resources. So when you have, for instance, new employees, a lot easier to train, because you have the standard already to. Then that requirements, sorry. I think I get the definition of a competitive advantage, which kind of comments. I will re position and plan requirement just first.</p>
I	<p>Uh-huh.</p>
R	<p>But if you manage operational improvements and then customer trust because I don't think there is that much of a change, when you say you are certified for interpretation, we haven't seen that much inflow of customers say ok we trust you because you have this, you still have to prove who you are, et cetera when you're doing interpretations.</p> <p>So I don't think it gives you customer trust beforehand if that's what is intended boring your question. But yeah tell me ...</p>
I	<p>Can I know about the competitive advantage, you mentioned that sometimes the client will require it, right? Can I know is it from private sector or public sector?</p>
R	<p>Well, the private sector just the big fishes if you want to work with Morgan Stanley, for instance, you know, having a certification is to pass. And then if you are working on the public sector, international organizations require you to have that certification. Sometimes some for certain projects, not for all. So, but for the rest I mean right now, what has happened is, for instance, of the rush to get the 9,001. I mean everyone has it. At least most people has it. So it doesn't have the same effect to say that you are 9,001 certified anymore. So it has lost its magic anyway.</p> <p>So kind of something like that happens with the other standards. I mean it's okay that you're certified in makes you kind of equal to other companies. But if you are not certified, it's you know, at least our perception from this client's time point is that it's okay if you're not certified as long as you can do something good. That's okay. But the fact that you have a certification doesn't guarantee it's gonna be all right. That's the kind of feedback we get from, all the kind of sensation we get from customers and kind of comments we hear from other companies. It's just that I have seen companies that are certified. The way they are certified means that they can deliver pretty much whatever they want. And it still falls under the certification. And it's not a good service for</p>

	<p>real. So emmm, again, the fact that you're certified doesn't imply that service is gonna be good. So, anyway ...</p>
I	<p>I see, thank you. And based on your experience, would you recommend other companies facing the same challenges in pursuing the certification for interpreting to use the same methods or strategies you used?</p>
R	<p>Emmm, yes. I'll tell you having a company or an assessor working with you through the process from day one. It's absolutely advisable because it gives you a lot, otherwise it's too overwhelming. You don't know if you're ...</p> <p>I think that guides companies through the process is emmm it's really emmm super advisable. It simplifies the process so much because you know what to expect to do in the audit. And even after that, maintaining a third party to help you with the internal audits and all that is advisable as well. Just to make sure, you know, you're still doing things, right. You are not biased by losing objectivity. It's very difficult to do the stuff evaluation sometimes, because you're biased, obviously. So maybe if you have had some good rapport with that first adviser, consider having them as a internal bodied person. Throughout the years, they know you very well.</p>
I	<p>Thank you for taking your time and sharing with your opinions with me. That's very insightful. And cause the time limited and I know you're quite busy, so I may summarize our discussion and send you an EMAIL, is that okay? And could you please help me to check whether my summarization or opinion is right about our discussion?</p>
R	<p>All right, yeah, sure, absolutely. Go ahead. I'm sorry if I want to very fuzzy about the our challenges, but it was to us a very challenging ISO standards certify, sorry for ...</p>
I	<p>No worries. Maybe I need some time to summarize it.</p>
R	<p>Yes, you can use GPT if you want. It helps.</p>
I	<p>Sounds great, thank you. Before ending our discussion, do you have any questions you would like to ask from me?</p>
R	<p>You broke up. Sorry. Could you say that again?</p>
I	<p>Emmm before ending our discussion, do you have any questions you would like to ask?</p>

R	Not really, but I wish you the very best with your research.
I	Thank you.
R	And you're getting a great grade and very peaceful experience and many people out so?
I	And also it's my first time to do the interviewing, actually.
R	Ok, all right. How is it going?
I	Quite overwhelming and challenging, really! Cause ..
R	Uh-huh.
I	I have never learned the ISO certification before actually. So although I do prepare some materials for ISO certification 9001, but I don't know too much about the detail. So maybe some of your responses, I cannot get the main points in a short time as still need some time to figure out what's that mean or what that mean. Yeah.
R	<p>Ok, to summarize 9001, it's all about traceability. Whatever you do has to be trademarks somehow, and you have to show evidence of that. If you decide I mean if certain service falls under the scope of that, you have to make sure that the person you are picking is being picked by a reason. Everything has to be documented in the process. Everything it process has to be accompanied by an instructive, which is how you do the process. The process is the work, and how is the instruction? So the instruction sheet should abide the picking up of that person. And if you have picked that person up, where is the evidence that person was good? Where was it picked up? Was it was there a test? Where is the test? How is it great? So it's a bit neurotic in that regard. So and the same applies to the entire company. So what laws are applicable? Show me that you are abiding by those laws, at least show me an evidence that you are considering those laws.</p> <p>And next year, you have to show me that you have gone through the local legislation to be that you are, you know, complying with that. At least show me that you have had a meeting evidence of the meeting. So if you did a training who attended the training, where are the signatures? Or was the evidence of that training? Is there an online form? Whatever? But you have to always show evidence. That's why we have such a great deal when we face the interpretation side of things where the execution happens at the same time of delivery, because we have no evidence</p>

	<p>prior to delivery.</p> <p>So that was our most difficult a thing to process, because we come from this structure thing that is asking you to get to the very initial contact. I mean during all days, we've been asked for emails, EMAIL chains, contracts with contract sign. Was the sample prior to delivery? You have to have yes or sample prior to delivery. So as well, ok. You have to get a lot of documentation, the risk matrix at the polyvalent matrix, et cetera, six kind of, it's an entire planet of evidence. So, yeah.</p>
I	So showing the evidence is quite a big challenge, right?
R	<p>Yes. To show not so much the evidence sometimes, because let's say if you can record, that is the evidence. Or if it may take a test to train interpreter, that's the evidence. But the challenge of showing an evidence of what is about to be delivered. It's impossible. So overcoming that much was emmm, it was kind of difficult to come up with something.</p> <p>But anyway, it was us just over thinking it. Because in the end, what happened during the outputs. You know what, it's true, I mean you are not in control what you are about to deliver, up to a certain degree. Things may happen to an execution, but that's the nature of things. I mean this standard is slightly different throughout the standards. He said you cannot control everything prior to you. It's not like a product that you can pick one from the production line before shipping and you can analyze it and know that lot of Coca Cola is all right. You know. It's not that it's just imagine you deliver Coca Cola, people drink it and then they have to tell you if they liked it or not. I mean if the flavor was the same the previous year.</p> <p>So there is a degree of some of uncertainty. The 9001 is the one picking up one product from the production line. The certification one is the one asking the people after they have run the coke.</p>
I	Yeah, that's quite challenging, really.
R	Yes, yes.
I	Thank you for your time. And I will send an EMAIL about how the data will be used for analyze something like this and hope you can give me some ideas or opinions or comments on that.
R	Ok, sure, I will.
I	Thank you so much.

R	And thank you.
I	Have a great day. Bye.
R	Bye bye.

240606	
I	For the record, I'm currently interviewing the participant 240606. And can we start now?
R	Yes, we can.
I	Thank you. In the questionnaire, you mentioned the primary reasons for your company to pursue the ISOI certification, which is the ISO certification for interpreting. Could you please elaborate on your choices and explain the specific motivations and benefits your company aimed to achieve?
R	<p>Yes, what happened is that recently we became an accredited member of the ATC. And we now want to be part of the network and work with ATC. We find them really really professional. When we realized that they also carried out ISO standards and help language businesses like ourselves. To do that, we became a member. And in conversation with them, we've recently started doing some tender work on our with everything that we do the more commercial, but we've started doing more tender work.</p> <p>And with every sort of tender that we looked at, they've always asked for ISO certifications. And when we started communicating with the ATC they mentioned that they help with these accreditation. And that's quite a lot of ISO accreditation that you can go for, but we narrowed it down to the three that we chose done. One is the ISO for quality. The second is the one for interpreting. The third one is for the translation. So these were relevant to our organization. That's why we chose those three. And I'm sure that as we call further down accreditation, if we need to do others, then we will look at those as well. So that was our motivation to do this. And also is the bigger picture. We not only is it a good check for all our internal systems. We've got all the internal systems in line with what ISO needs. We're monitoring them now. We're updating them now as ISO tutors us on how we do things, and a lot more and more systems are going in place.</p>
I	About the tender for the ISO certification, is the one for interpreting is required by the customers?

Comment[K29]: To meet client requirements in tenders

Comment[K30]: To learn and implement best practice

R	We have all the customers, all potential customers when they work with companies like ourselves, they want to see what accreditation, what official procedures have you gone through. That is now becoming more and more of a requirement and quite rightly so.	Comment[K31]: To meet public client requirements
I	So that's not just for the quality management as well as for the interpreting, right?	
R	Yes, objective and translation.	
I	Yep. Thank you. And the requirement is from the public clients, right? Not just the private one.	
R	That's right. For the public clients . Also, it's very, very beneficial to have private clients as well. I would assume.	
I	Could you please tell me which area the public sector is? Like the police or the NHS?	
R	Yes, these systems in its contracts, like for the NHS and or public contract with this council .	
I	Thank you for your detail explanation. Now, are there any other reasons or factors that influence your choice?	
R	The other factors that influence our choice with this is something that we wanted to do as a business long time ago. And with all these small business, we've grown, we've got processes and we got new people coming on board. And rather than put it new system with the ISO what it's allowed us to do is that the individuals employees will now follow the ISO process and procedure . And it is also a good demonstration to all our clients that this sort of organization, this company are doing things in line with the ISO standards .	Comment[K32]: To achieve operational improvements Comment[K33]: To demonstrate compliance with accreditation criteria
I	So can I regard to enhance customer trust is another reason.	
R	Customer trust? Yes, yes, because everything that we do, we always are professional in the service we provide. All the quality checks have been put in whether it's qualified in terms just qualified translators, but then the ISO standard gives customer assurance that they've come through that as well .	Comment[K34]: To increase customer trust
I	Thank you for sharing that. Then let's move on to the next question. When deciding whether to adopt ISO standard for interpreting, which factors do you consider first? Please rank the following aspects in order of	

	priority-client requirements, operational improvements, competitive advantage, and customer trust.
R	<p>I think the first one, the operational one is because everything that we want to do it, we want to get our system right.</p> <p>And I think client satisfaction, because everything we do, we want to make sure that we deliver our services to the clients. And then, the one was competitive advantage is obviously. They will follow. They're all important in their own way, because if you can demonstrate you go ISO standards, you automatically and give yourself at least secure 牢固, 可靠的 or so competitive advantage with the client.</p>
I	Yeah, and the customer trust?
R	Customer trust that's very high debt as well, but it's hard to probably put them in order, but I would see them all as being important .
I	Yeah. But if you have to...
R	Customer trust number emmmm second. Competitive advantage number four.
I	Uh-huh. Competitive advantage number four.
R	And then what would you do to operational one?
I	The operational improvement?
R	That's number one.
I	Ok. That's number one. And client requirement is the third one. So the second one is customer trust.
R	Yes.
I	Thank you. And could you please explain the reasons behind your ranking?
R	The ranking, which we that is why I've done the right in that way. One of the first that matters to us thing is that everything that we do as a business we have. We do professionally. And that's

	why that's there very much high competitive advantage output. But as last, because I think if you get the other three right, the competitive advantage should follow.
I	Uh-huh. Yeah. Thank you for sharing that. And are there any factors you consider when deciding whether to adopt the ISO for interpreting?
R	What were you saying?
I	Other factors you considered when thinking about whether to take the certification for ISO interpreting?
R	It's almost like having a seal of approval that you whatever, everything that we are doing is right to that standard. So when we recruit an interpreter, we follow all procedures, then qualifications, ID, the sector experience, everything that they have their DVS aspect, so that allows us to put everything in place, when we are selecting our interpreters and same thing goes for translation.
I	So could you please help me to summarize this factor?
R	It's all about drive it forward, quality.
I	Drive it forward, quality so that one should be operational improvement. Is that right?
R	Yes.
I	Thank you. I appreciate your detailed explanation, and now I like to discuss some of the challenges you faced. Could you please describe any specific difficulties or obstacles your company encountered during the process, the implementation process?
R	<p>Yes, we had actually put in a lot of those processes already. We were doing those. And the consultant from the ATC lady, very, very nice, very professional lady. She helped and supported us so much and and sort of helped us in realizing the importance and how the rankings should happen.</p> <p>And then there were challenges because we are a small business trying to not only get on without doing business, but happy to do all the additional work that ISO standard involved. We as a team worked outside of those and made sure that we put the systems, the procedures that we needed to do that. So the challenges were as a small business trying to balance everything that we're doing.</p>

Comment[K35]: Balancing regular business operations with the additional work required for ISO certification

I	Balance everything. Ok, balance. In that case, that could be the time consuming process, right?	
R	Yes, but the thing is, it is time consuming . And as a small business, you don't always have the resource . But the ultimate goal is what you want when you get that accreditation. You know that all the systems and procedures that you put in you can take those forward and follow those.	<p>Comment[K36]: Time-consuming process</p> <p>Comment[K37]: Lack of resource - staffing</p>
I	Uh-huh. Could you please tell me how long the process took?	
R	It has taken us by 9 months now, from start to finish.	
I	Uh-huh, 9 months. And how many people were involved in this process?	
R	With a team-10, 11-we had about five half of the team involved in that process.	
I	Thank you, five people. And apart from the balance to between your daily work and the work for the certification and the resources. Are there any challenges?	
R	So please repeat that.	
I	I mean, apart from the additional work you need to do and the resources to use, are there any challenges you faced?	
R	The other challenges, we have to put more systems in place . And we've now it's like giving an example that we've got with drawing more, more sort of software packages. We utilized even some of the existing software packages we had, we utilize them more in a better way now. So it's all been very, very beneficial to us.	<p>Comment[K38]: Implementing additional systems and optimizing existing software</p>
I	So do you think the cost is another difficulty for you?	
R	There was some cost . There was time. A lot of time was the biggest, I think. Cost, but the cost that we'd actually put in a lot of those systems anyway. So the cost was already there. We committed to that cost. But it was an eye opening that we could use some of our existence stuff in a different way. So we that helped us.	
I	So the cost may not be a difficulty for you, right?	
R	It could be that was the opposite, cost of all the certification fees which is not cheap. But that's an investment as a form of a business, from our point it is an investment.	

I	Yeah. So have you ever faced the poor communication between different departments or stuffs?
R	No, we are a small team. We work very well together. Communications, we've improved a lot, and this has helped us to do that more.
I	Yeah. And how do you solve the problem, if you have the disagreement among the five people?
R	Right now, obviously, we will sit down, talk about it and say this is what we need to do. This is what we're doing this. And usually you sort of have an agreement anyways. And then that's obviously that senior management, I will look and say that the reason why we're doing this is because this is why we need this. And if it's part of the process, it helps the business. Then that's why we did, what we do.
I	So there are some votes, right? For the five people. You have the votes for disagreement?
R	Yep. Obviously, we have meeting, you talk through with colleagues. Colleague makes suggestions and we take those sessions suggestions for on a mutual agreement.
I	Okay, I see. It is understandable why that process is quite challenging. Right?
R	Maybe we do have it. We didn't have that much, because the good thing about our team is that we are all sort of we were on the same wavelength. We all wanted the same thing. And if there was a system that we could put in which improved our system, we were all very willing to do that.
I	Thank you for sharing that. And how did your company address or overcome these challenges?
R	By objective, talking with our staff, working with them, and give them the situation, the outline to why we're doing this, and why this. All process we've gone through is to improve. It's all is about improve what we're doing. And ultimately is about making sure our clients are happy. Our suppliers are happy. They are looked after, because without our suppliers and interpreters and translators, that's the very fundamental part. The clients are ready for the part. So everything we do is always to help that process.
I	So the method you use is just to explain the details to the staff and supplier and the interpreters, right?
R	Yes. If the staffs were coming with suggestions, obviously, we look through and think about that.

	We discussed that. And if those suggestions are good, we've taken them as well. We've taken them forward.
I	So can I regard as a feedback from them? Right?
R	What it is ... ?
I	Can I regard the suggestions as a kind of feedback from them?
R	Feedback. Yes, of course. There are suggestions of help just to do, to gain our crediting, we will work together as a team. Yes, of course.
I	Uh-huh. So you ask the feedback from all the stuff or just the interpreters? The feedback, how many people you asked for it?
R	The feedback you start internal stuff. You talk about, when we were working on the ISO. It was just internal stuff that worked on this.
I	Internal stuff. Ok. Thank you.
R	So any suggestions they have, any improvement we talk forward.
I	Uh-huh. What about the balance between your work and additional work? How did you solve that one?
R	What were you saying?
I	The balance, you mentioned the how to balance the daily work and the additional work.
R	Oh yes. That was a challenge. But obviously, we always knew that we will have to do this additional work. We set up priorities and that this takes precedent, and amongst we go on with all other priorities as well. It's just you have to do more in order to, and we knew once we've got to that stage, then obviously we will see some normality again. For those 9 months, there were times where we had a lot more challenging, a lot more work to do. But we got through that.
I	So congratulations for work through that.
R	Thank you very much. Now, we're really pleased with the ATC. They've helped us a lot. I think we needed that. And it's nice to know that they are working with us. And one of the reasons for

	us join us is one mission so that they support specialist. There was a specialist organization helping translation companies. So we thought it's most appropriate for us to go and work with them on this one. Otherwise, you can get another ISO consultant to come in, but we found that wasn't appropriate for us. It will be right for us to work with the ATC on this.
I	That's great. And another method you used is to ask help from ATC, right?
R	Sorry?
I	Another method you used to solve the challenges is to ask help from ATC?
R	Yes. Yes, absolutely.
I	That is so great. And in that case, you can also use this to resolve the resources , right? The lack of resources.
R	Yes. What we find that would be ATC now. But any question we have, there are additional resource . There are umbrella organization looking out for the interests of language businesses.
I	Yeah. They were quite professional.
R	They do some fantastic work. Just always hard time was to gain all with everything that they do. But, you know, it's hard, but they are doing some fantastic work.
I	Yeah, cause they are quite professional,
R	Very professional.
I	That sounds really great. And based on your experience, would you recommend other companies facing similar challenges in pursuing the certification to adopt the same methods?
R	I do, well, I spent just the language is quite a lot of small businesses like ourselves. Small businesses don't always have that additional resource . And what we found with the ATC, the lady consult Emma, she was very good. She was there helping and support and she gave us guidance and she gave us targets to do. And I I think it's very important. Take care of the companies to do as well. Yes.

I	So you mean just to seek help from ATC right? Yes, one of the recommendations you give for the other companies.
R	Yes, definitely.
I	And other recommendations?
R	I think with any small business, we always start out somewhere. You have to start somewhere as we grow. What we find is that we have to put these procedures in place. ISO is almost like a professional check process that you are doing everything right. You've got systems in place for every aspect. And I think it is very important for all businesses.
I	Uh-huh. So you will recommend others to certify this ISO, right?
R	I would encourage companies if they are able to do the ISO certifications.
I	Yes. And actually, I would like to know, are there any suggestions you would recommend them to use to overcome the challenges you faced?
R	I think that sometimes it would be easy just to bring the consultant to do everything for you. That's great if you have the resources and the means and the financial means to do that. But even so, if you do, I think it's important to do it yourselves, because then you are learning as part of that process. So I think that's been a big learning, big good thing for us, because everything that we put in the system process, we will now be using going forward.
I	Uh-huh. So can you summarize the suggestion for me?
R	So say if you had enough consultants to come in and say you need to do this, this and this. That would work and does work. But when all those suggestions are being put in by the staff, they put them in because they do that, they will be doing that's part of the process, just very important that the team know what what they are doing and they put those systems in.
I	So, you mean, ask some consultants, right?
R	Yes, you know, if you're on internal team, put those systems and processes in. I think that's far beneficial for you as a business, because you're gonna follow them. But if somebody else externally put those systems in, you will always fully appreciate those. You might follow them,

	but you won't appreciate them. Like you probably yourself.
I	It is a method that you ask help from external stuff, right? Or ..
R	Yes, please do ask for help from external stuff, because they are professionals, they'll help you. But what I'm saying is, if you put those systems in yourself personally, then you'll know what the systems are. You'll be able to follow them a lot easier.
I	You mean, suggest others just not ... They need to do it by themselves, right?
R	If they are able to, I think I'm do that yourself if you can. But officially if you don't have that resource by all means work with consultants.
I	Okay, cause I'm not very familiar with the details of the certification process. Can I say the whole process can be done by the company if they have the ability?
R	Yes. Of course.
I	And if they cannot, they need to ask help from the professional consultant.
R	There's a lot of professionals there that would have to do.
I	You mean, apart from the ATC, there could be a lot of consultant to help?
R	Yeah. There are a lot of external consultants. But my view would be who do you choose? Whereas with the ATC they've already done that work for you. They have chosen the consultant stuff familiar with language translation work, language work.
I	Uh-huh.
R	I would choose the ATC every time for the last 30 year. I would recommend.
I	I see. So there are two suggestions for the other companies. One is to ask help from ATC. And the second one is to do it by themselves. So that they could learn how the whole process and then to use for their further certification, right?
R	Yes, use the ATC consultant as your mentor.
I	Consultant. What about the time consuming process? How did you overcome this challenge?

R	The time? We have to start, we have to allocate the show time to make sure that we did the work that was required.
I	The allocation. So do you have the timetable or framework for this one?
R	Yes, there was a proper timetable that we pretend to say that we need to do these targets by certain. It's such a full timetable that we have.
I	Uh-huh.
R	And each member of team was allocated to that work.
I	Ok, for these methods, would you recommend others to use this one?
R	Yes, I would.
I	Is the timetable set before taking the whole process, right?
R	Yeah, definitely. Is that ok, and we come to the end of our questions?
I	Yep. And I need to summarize our conversation, is that all right for your time?
R	Summarize and EMAIL me, I'll have a read clue if there's anything that I can help it, I will do.
I	Yep.
R	Just a really busy time, I just wanted to help you, because obviously, the ATC have been very helpful to us, and I just want to take this time to help you as well.
I	I see, thank you so much for your time, and maybe you could add some points when reading my email.
R	Yeah. Is that been useful? Is that you got no more further questions?
I	Yes, no more for the questions. And thank you again for your time and cooperation. The details will be sent through the emails. Before we end our discussion, do you have any questions to ask?
R	Are you a uni student or what you're doing?

I	I'm a student studying the from English to Chinese interpreting with translation.
R	I see that's why you leave the contract of the ATC to do.
I	Yes, that is a collaborate project with the university.
R	When the ATC recommended the option, then I knew that option it was recommended by themselves. So that and what they found because we'd recently gone through the ISO accreditation that we were the right people for you to talk to. So please that would be for being with that we've been able to help you.
I	Yeah, thank you so much.
R	Best of luck Kelly with your studies and thank you for your time.
I	Thank you for your time as well. Thank you, really. Bye.
R	Bye bye.
I	Bye. Thank you.
R	Thank you. Bye bye.

Appendix IV Thematic analysis

Table I: Initial codes

Pseudonym	Driving motivations	Encountered difficulties
240601	<p>To have a framework ensuring compliance with international standards;</p> <p>To meet client requirements;</p> <p>To differentiate from competition;</p> <p>To meet client requirements in tenders</p>	<p>Limited time;</p> <p>Time-consuming process;</p> <p>Not insubstantial cost</p>
240603	<p>To cooperate with ATC Certification for mutual benefit;</p> <p>To enhance prestige;</p> <p>To increase credibility;</p> <p>To meet client requirements;</p> <p>To achieve operational improvements</p>	<p>Outdated IT systems and project management tools;</p> <p>New software purchase and training;</p> <p>Inadequate staffing;</p> <p>Limited budget;</p> <p>More time to collect information from interpreters;</p> <p>More robust and specific requirement for DNA implementation;</p> <p>Inadequate laptop performance;</p> <p>Time-consuming process</p>
240604	<p>To differentiate from competition;</p> <p>To gain a competitive advantage in tendering for work;</p> <p>To demonstrate compliance with accreditation criteria</p>	<p>Adapting and adjusting existing practices and documentation to meet the accreditation requirements;</p> <p>Time-consuming process</p>

240605	To gain competitive advantage	Time-consuming process; Ensuring consistent service quality; Collecting evidence to demonstrate compliance with ISO standards
240606	To meet client requirements in tenders; To learn and implement best practice; To meet public client requirements; To achieve operational improvements; To increase customer trust; To demonstrate compliance with accreditation criteria	Balancing regular business operations with the additional work required for ISOI certification; Lack of resource (staffing); Time-consuming process; Implementing additional systems and optimizing existing software

Table II: Overarching themes

Driving motivations	Differentiating from competitors	To differentiate from competition (01); To enhance prestige (03); To differentiate from competition (04); To gain a competitive advantage in tendering for work (04); To gain competitive advantage (05)
	Increasing customer trust	To increase credibility (03); To increase customer trust (06);
	Meeting client requirements	To meet client requirements (01);

		<p>To meet client requirements in tenders (01);</p> <p>To meet client requirements (03);</p> <p>To meet client requirements in tenders (06);</p> <p>To meet public client requirements (06);</p>
	Achieving operational improvements	<p>To achieve operational improvements (03);</p> <p>To achieve operational improvements (06);</p>
	Establishing a framework for compliance and demonstrating adherence	<p>To have a framework ensuring compliance with international standards (01);</p> <p>To demonstrate compliance with accreditation criteria (04);</p> <p>To demonstrate compliance with accreditation criteria (06);</p> <p>To learn and implement best practice (06)</p>
	Cooperating with ATC for mutual benefit	To cooperate with ATC for mutual benefit (03)
Encountered difficulties	Time-consuming process	<p>Limited time (01);</p> <p>Time-consuming process (01);</p> <p>More time to collect information from interpreters (03);</p> <p>Time-consuming process (03);</p> <p>Time-consuming process (04);</p> <p>Time-consuming process (05);</p> <p>Time-consuming process (06);</p>
	High costs and budget constraints	<p>Not insubstantial cost (01);</p> <p>Limited budget (03);</p>

		New software purchase and training (03)
	Staffing limitations	Inadequate staffing (03); Lack of resource-staffing (06);
	Technology shortcomings	Outdated IT systems and project management tools (03); Inadequate laptop performance (03); Implementing additional systems and optimizing existing software (06);
	Complex implementation process	Adapting and adjusting existing practices and documentation to meet the accreditation requirements (04); Balancing regular business operations with the additional work required for ISOI certification (06)
	Demanding compliance requirements	More robust and specific requirement for DNA implementation (03); Ensuring consistent service quality (05); Collecting evidence to demonstrate compliance with ISO standards (05)

Appendix V Participant information sheet

You are being invited to participate in research on ISO standards for interpreting (ISOI). This study is being conducted by Kelly Su, a postgraduate student in Modern Language at the School of Languages, Cultures, Art History, and Music at the University of Birmingham. The project is not funded by any organizations or funds. Before you decide to take part, it is important that you understand the purpose of the research and what participation will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

What are the purposes of this study?

This study will evaluate the extent to which language service companies (LSCs) in the UK have integrated and attained certification for ISOI. Additionally, this research will explore the underlying motivations driving the adoption of ISOI within these LSCs, and identify the challenges encountered during the implementation and certification processes. The findings of this study will provide LSCs seeking to attain and implement ISOI certification with practical ideas and suggestions to overcome potential challenges that may hinder their adoption of these standards.

Why have I been invited to take part?

I am inviting managers responsible for ISOI implementation and certification at LSCs and are interested in learning about and helping integrate ISOI into the interpreting industry.

Do I have to take part?

No – it is entirely up to you. If you do decide to take part, please keep this Information Sheet and complete the Informed Consent Form to show that you understand your rights in relation to the research, and that you are happy to participate. If you do decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Please note down your participant number (which is on the Consent Form) and provide this to the researcher if you seek to withdraw from the study at a later date.

What will happen if I decide to take part?

Data will be collected via a short online background information questionnaire and voluntary follow-up interviews. The questionnaire will gather basic information about your company's size, the length of time it has been in the language service industry, the types of services offered, the duration of ISOI certification, the reasons for pursuing ISOI certification, and the challenges faced. The data from the questionnaire will be linked to your interview data but it will not compromise your anonymity in any way as no real names are used at any point. A numbering system will be used to protect your anonymity. You will be associated with a number (e.g. 240600-05), and get a questionnaire with the number at the top. When introducing you in the interview, your associated number will be used (e.g. "In this interview I'm talking to Participant 240600-05). Pseudonyms will be attached to numbers when writing up the research.

You will be invited to describe any specific difficulties or obstacles your company encountered during the implementation process and to share the methods your company used to address or overcome these challenges. The interview is expected to last around 30 minutes and will be recorded with your consent. It will be conducted in a safe environment via Zoom and scheduled at your convenience. Ideally, I would like to audio record the interview responses, so the location should be a fairly quiet area, and your consent will be required for this.

The follow-up interview data will be transcribed by the researcher. Opportunities will be also provided for you to check the transcript of your data and review the interpretations of the researcher throughout data analysis, if you request. Transcripts will be anonymised upon transcription. All personal names, places, and any other identifying markers will be changed and not be disclosed.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By sharing your experiences, you will be helping other companies seeking to attain and implement ISOI certification to better understand and integrate ISOI into their operations. If you request, I can share a summary of the research findings with you. I hope you may find this beneficial for your own ISOI implementation and certification process.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

There are no significant risks associated with participation.

What if I am unwell prior to the research interaction?

If you feel unwell, then please contact the researcher (Kelly Su and telephone number: +44 7536244799), and we will postpone or cancel the research interaction.

What if I want to withdraw from this study?

Agreeing to participate in this project does not oblige you to remain in the study nor have any further

obligation to this study. If, at any stage, you no longer want to be part of the study, please inform the researcher [Kelly Su, ZXS336@student.bham.ac.uk]. You should note that your data may be

used in the production of formal research outputs (e.g. theses and reports) prior to your withdrawal and so you are advised to contact the researcher at the earliest opportunity should you wish to withdraw from the study. On specific request I will destroy all your identifiable answers, but I will need to use the data collected prior to your withdrawal, and to maintain our records of your consenting participation up to the time of withdrawal.

Data protection and confidentiality

Your data will be processed in accordance with Data Protection Act 1998. All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. Unless they are anonymised in our

records, your data will be referred to by a unique participant number rather than by name. If you consent to being audio video recorded, all recordings will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. Your data will not be disclosed to other organisations. All electronic data will be stored on the researcher's laptop with password protection for up to one year. Your consent information will be kept separately from your responses in order to minimise risk.

What will happen with results of this study?

The results of this study will be summarised in the researcher's dissertation. Quotes or key findings will always be made anonymous in any formal outputs unless I have your prior and explicit written permission to attribute them to you by name. Information may also be kept for future research.

Who can I contact?

If you have any further questions about the study, please contact the researcher, [Kelly Su, ZXS336@student.bham.ac.uk].

Appendix VI Participant consent form

Study title:

Investigating the implementation of ISO standards for interpreting in the UK language services industry: Drivers and challenges

Participant number:

Statements of understanding/consent

- I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. If I withdraw my data will be removed from the study and will be destroyed.
- I agree to my interview being audio recorded.
- I understand that my personal data will be processed for the purposes detailed above, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Based upon the above, I agree to take part in this study.

Name, signature and date

Name of participant..... Date..... Signature.....

Name of researcher..... Kelly Su..... Date..... June 18..... Signature..... Kelly Su.....

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