Chinese Student Interpreters’ Renditions
When Interpreting Authentic
Cross-examination Questions in the
Legal Interpreting Classroom

Prof Ineke Crezee
Auckland University of Technology

Thursday, 25 April 2019
4:30–6:00 pm
730 Run Run Shaw Tower
Centennial Campus, HKU

Ineke Crezee is Associate Professor at
Auckland University of Technology
in New Zealand. She has been
involved in interpreter and translator
education in New Zealand since the
early 1990s and published her first
textbook on healthcare interpreting
in 1997. Her 2013 textbook Introduction
to Healthcare for Interpreters and
Translators was published in different
language adaptations (Spanish,
Korean, Japanese; Arabic). In 2016
Ineke published a special version for
Chinese-speaking health interpreters
and translators together with Dr Eva
Ng from HKU.

This presentation will discuss the findings of a small empirical study in which
interpreting students were asked to interpret authentic legal discourse from a video
clip showing a lawyer cross-examining a witness in a New Zealand murder trial. The
paper focuses on the way in which Mandarin-speaking students in an undergraduate
legal interpreting course at Auckland University of Technology chose to interpret polar
interrogatives and declaratives with tag questions.

The analysis assessed student interpreter performance using criteria developed by
the author, focusing on two very common Chinese syntactical constructions, which
were used to interpret polar interrogatives and positive/negative declaratives with tag
questions. These were common question forms in the clip, which involved a lawyer
engaging in aggressive cross-examination of an ambulance officer.

The findings suggest that some of the Chinese constructions used by student
interpreters resulted in interpretations that deviated significantly from the original
with the loss of illocutionary intent.

The findings will be beneficial to (legal) interpreter educators and students working
between English and Mandarin.