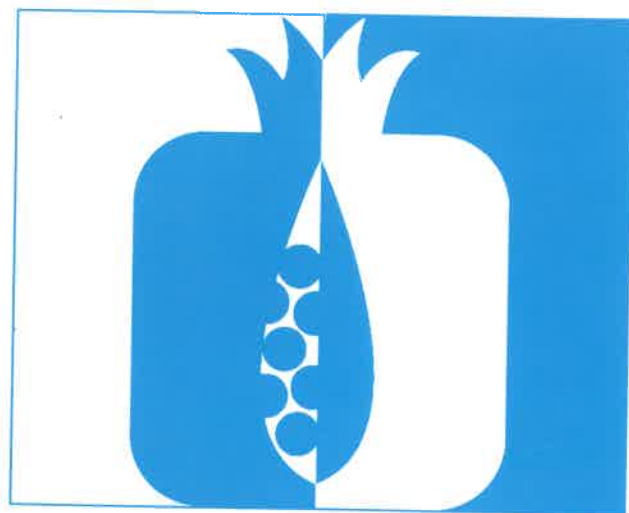


Quality in interpreting: widening the scope

VOLUME 1



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PREFACE

From the early days of interpreting studies, the notion of quality has attracted the interest of professionals, trainers and scholars alike. Its elusive nature gave rise to various approaches aimed at figuring out its constituent parts. These efforts have made it possible to understand quality from a multidimensional perspective.

Quality was already a well-established research topic in 2001, when the first international conference devoted entirely to it was held in Almuñécar, Spain. Ever since, the field has greatly evolved as research instruments and methods have been refined, not least because globalization has facilitated closer cooperation among scholars. Recent years have witnessed a considerable increase in the number of publications on quality, and the continued activity of both individual scholars and research groups testify to the liveliness of this area of research. In the course of this process, this area has become more interdisciplinary and technically sophisticated, widening its scope to cover new interpreting settings and language combinations.

This volume attempts to provide an overview of the state of the art in interpreting quality. It contains 16 papers selected through a double-blind peer-review process. All contributors took part in the Second International Conference on Interpreting Quality held in Almuñécar in 2011, and the reviews were conducted by a panel of international experts in interpreting studies.

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9. INTERPRETING QUALITY IN THE LIGHT OF DIRECTIONALITY: A STUDY ON THE INTERPRETER'S PERSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION

Quality is a key issue in the theoretical (and practical) debate on directionality in conference interpreting. This debate, which is largely characterized by the *content vs. form* dichotomy, has traditionally also been a debate about the definition of quality. The fact that both prevailing directionality theories (the B>A-based Paris School theory and the A>B-favouring Soviet approach) stress the importance of high quality interpreting services and base their respective hypothesis on the qualitative superiority of one over the other shows that what we are dealing with here is essentially (at least at an implicit level) a debate on the definition of quality criteria.

In view of this, it seemed imperative to take quality perception into account in our survey on directionality in conference interpreting (Opdenhoff 2011) and to investigate whether there is a relation between this perception and the attitudes of interpreters towards directionality and the way it affects their professional practice.

In our survey of conference interpreters we approached the perception of quality (one of various issues addressed in the survey, although not the main one) on three different levels:

1. Overall perception of quality criteria.
2. Self-evaluation of performance in B>A and A>B.
3. Expected quality perception of the audience.

Some of these issues have been covered in previous studies, which for these purposes can be divided into two groups. The first group of studies deal with the general perception of certain criteria for assessing the quality of interpreting. In this group the study by Bühler (1986) on the quality perception of 47 conference interpreters, all of whom belonged to the AIIC, is of particular note, as is the one by Kurz (1989), who applied Bühler's criteria to a sample group of conference delegates and observed that both groups offered very similar assessments of quality, except that interpreters awarded slightly higher scores to all the criteria, and in particular to form-based criteria such as accent, voice quality and grammar. Chiaro and Nocella (2004) also applied Bühler's quality criteria, but their results revealed that professional interpreters considered form-based criteria as clearly less important. The authors attributed these different findings to the different method they had used for measurement, which consisted in ranking the different quality parameters in order of importance, while respondents in Bühler's study had to score each aspect separately.

The second group covers a series of studies on quality within the context of directionality. In addition to the surveys by Donovan (2002) and Čenková (2008) analysing the perceptions of conference delegates on quality within the context of directionality, which -probably due to the different samples they used- yielded different results, surveys have also been made of interpreters' opinions about directionality in which the quality of interpreting in both directions was taken into consideration. In this case too, results were very heterogeneous, which again, could be due to the different criteria used when putting the sample group together, such as participants' place of residence, work situation or membership of certain professional bodies. Martin (2005a, 2005b), for example, studied a group of 10 interpreters from Andalusia, Pavlović (2007) worked with 61

professionals from Croatia and the survey carried out by Bartłomiejczyk (2004) focussed on a group of 53 students and 40 professional interpreters, 35 of whom belonged to AIIC¹. The most extensive study was performed by Nicodemus (2010) (541 respondents from different professional associations), who focussed on the differences between spoken conference interpreting and sign language interpreting. Finally, in addition to these survey-based studies on product quality in both directions, there are also some experimental studies such as those by Barik (1994), who analysed the performance of both student and professional test subjects, Tommola and Helevä (1998), Jänis (2002), Ares (2003) and Lee (2006), who worked with student subjects only, and Darò, Lambert and Fabbro (1996), Donovan (2004) and Chang (2005), whose test subjects were professional interpreters.

The comparability of the results of these studies is limited, not only due to different sample characteristics but also to the fact that there is no common definition of what quality interpreting means and how it should be measured. In this context, a particularly delicate question seems to be the *tertium comparationis*, e.g. whether it makes sense to compare the interpreting quality of two different source speeches (or if it is better to compare the performance of two different A-language groups who interpret the same speech).

As mentioned above, quality was only one of several parameters analysed in this study. Nevertheless, the results seem to be of relevance, since the survey was based on a large, heterogeneous sample group (in terms of professional and personal profiles) and thus offered us the chance to compare the perception of different subgroups within the same sample, taking into consideration a large variety of parameters. Although the study is limited in the sense that it only deals

¹ An illustrative example of the divergent results is the fact that 82.0% of the respondents in Bartłomiejczyk (2004) considered the B>A direction better from a qualitative point of view (and 0.0% the opposite direction), whereas in Pavlović (2007) only 7.0% selected B>A as the better direction and 45.0% said that they were more satisfied when working from A into B.

with the interpreter's perspective, our results appear to support Pöchhacker's assertion regarding criteria for interpretation assessment that "we need a multiparameter model for description and analysis" (Pöchhacker 1994 cited by Kurz 2003: 3).

THE STUDY

Our survey was conducted online and was based on a questionnaire containing 45 questions, which was published on the Internet in four languages (English, French, Spanish and German). The informed consent form was sent to conference interpreters all over the world. The final sample involved 2129 conference interpreters from 94 countries (the majority of them from Western Europe). The majority of the participants were female conference interpreters (74.6%). The average age was 46.84 (SD: 11.87). The majority of the participants (68.8%) were full-time conference interpreters (40.8% indicated that they had worked for more than 80 days during the year preceding the survey). 36.1% of the respondents worked (or still work) for one or more international institutions, especially the EU and the UN, and 74.7% indicated that they had a professional qualification or a degree in interpreting. While 57.5% were members of only one, 17.5% belonged to various associations of translators/interpreters and 24.9% did not belong to any. The most popular of these associations was AIIC with 29.0% of the sample group being members.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section we will be presenting the results for the three areas mentioned above, beginning with the overall perception of certain criteria for evaluating quality in interpreting.

Overall perception of quality criteria

Participants were asked to evaluate eight parameters for high quality interpreting on a scale of 1 (*not important at all*) to 5 (*very important*). We chose similar

parameters to those used in previous studies, particularly Bühler (1986). The results (average scores) were as follows:

1. *Coherence with the original sense*: 4.82 (SD = 0.69)
2. *Listeners' satisfaction with the interpretation*: 4.63 (SD = 0.78)
3. *Correct use of terminology*: 4.57 (SD = 0.78)
4. *Fluency of production*: 4.46 (SD = 0.81)
5. *Correct use of grammar*: 4.39 (SD = 0.85)
6. *Appropriateness of style*: 4.36 (SD = 0.82)
7. *Complete transmission of the original*: 4.06 (SD = 0.90)
8. *Native accent*: 3.30 (SD = 1.01)

These results are almost identical to those of Bühler (1986), not only in terms of the order in which the different parameters appear but also in relation to the score given to each one. In our study too, the average results for all the parameters were grouped within a close range. They also confirm that professional interpreters consider formal criteria, such as *fluency*, *grammar* or *accent* to be less important. Notwithstanding these similarities, there seems to be one clear difference from Bühler's results: the native accent parameter, which is much further behind the other factors than in Bühler's study. A possible explanation could be a generally increasing tolerance towards non-native production in international conference settings.

One parameter Bühler did not take into account was listener satisfaction, which respondents considered to be of great importance. Interestingly, according to the results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA), there is a significant relationship between this parameter and the form-based parameters *fluency* ($F(4)=315.94$ $p=.00$), *grammar* ($F(4)=214.25$ $p=.00$) and *accent* ($F(4)=34.92$ $p=.00$), in the sense that participants who considered listener satisfaction more important also placed more emphasis on formal criteria. Another interesting observation in this context is the fact that the degree of importance given to the listener satisfaction

parameter depends on a particular aspect of the communicative setting, namely the percentage of native-speaking listeners of the interpreter's B-language. A significant correlation coefficient (Pearson $r_{xy}=.07$ $p=.05$) could be found between the evaluation of this factor and the estimated percentage of native listeners of the interpreter's B-language. Thus, the higher the percentage of users whose mother tongue was the B-language of the interpreter, the greater the relevance given to the listener satisfaction parameter. No such correlation was observed in A-language listeners.

Another interesting question concerned the possible differences in the evaluation of quality parameters depending on certain features of the respondent's personal or professional profile. In this context, significant differences could be found between respondents with different A-languages in all the parameters except three (*listener satisfaction, style and accent*). Table 1 shows the average maximum and minimum scores on the aforementioned scale of 1 (*not important at all*) to 5 (*very important*) among the five most common A-languages used in our survey: English (EN), French (FR), German (DE), Italian (IT) and Spanish (ES). The abbreviations in brackets indicate the group(s) of respondents that produced the highest/lowest average score for each parameter. According to our results, Spanish A-respondents are the most concerned with the parameters in question, German A-respondents the least.

The A-language variable seems to have a significant influence on the importance given to coherence with the original sense, an interesting fact for which there is no obvious explanation. No such linkage could be observed with other aspects of the interpreters' personal/professional profile. A series of correlation tests between the overall evaluation of the quality parameters and these other aspects revealed significant relationships in many cases but not in the case of the sense parameter or with regard to the correct use of terminology. These findings were interpreted as the expression of a sort of general consensus on the importance of these two quality criteria (sense and terminology). Table 2 shows the Pearson's correlation

coefficients in relation to age, number of years of professional experience, the duration of stays in B-language countries (under the age of 15) and the age at which respondents began to learn their B-language².

Quality parameter	Max.	Min.	Difference	ANOVA
Sense	4.89 (ES/EN)	4.72 (DE)	0.17	F(4)=3.02 $p=.02$
Correct use of terminology	4.73 (ES)	4.41 (DE)	0.32	F(4)=8.18 $p=.00$
Fluency	4.59 (ES)	4.35 (DE)	0.24	F(4)=4.36 $p=.00$
Correct use of grammar	4.56 (ES)	4.22 (DE)	0.34	F(4)=8.53 $p=.00$
Complete transmisión	4.18 (ES)	3.97 (DE)	0.21	F(4)=2.87 $p=.02$

Table 1. Evaluation of quality parameters (maximum and minimum average scores according to the A-language)

	Age	Professional experience	Duration stays in B language country (>15)	Beginning of B language studies
Fluency	.06*/.02	.07**/.01	.06*/.03	-.03/.22
Correct use of grammar	.08**/.00	.11**/.00	.07**/.01	-.01/.71
Style	.07**/.01	.09**/.00	.04/.09	-.01/.59
Complete transmission	.11**/.00	.12**/.00	.08**/.00	-.01/.70
Native accent	.13**/.00	.15**/.00	-.02/.49	-.07**/.01

Table 2. Correlation coefficients (Pearson) (r_{xy} / p) between different aspects of the personal/professional profile and certain quality parameters

² The last three variables are part of a wider set of parameters belonging to the respondents' personal/professional profile and were chosen to analyse the impact of professional and/or non-professional contact with the B-language on the respondents' opinion and professional conduct in the context of directionality issues.

The overall tendency of these results is that those interpreters who have more professional experience or, in general terms, more contact with their B-language and its culture attribute a higher degree of importance to all the quality parameters analysed in table 2 than those with less professional experience or contact with their B-language. Furthermore, a regression analysis based on the forward-selection method revealed that the native accent parameter is the most important for older interpreters ($\beta=.13$ $p=.00$) and those with greater professional experience ($\beta=.16$ $p=.00$). A possible explanation could be that this group of respondents have already achieved a high level of competence and have learned the necessary skills to make them feel confident about the accurate transmission of the original meaning and this allows them to focus their attention on formal aspects of their production.

Overall perception of quality and attitude towards directionality

One hypothesis of this study was that the overall perception of quality in interpreting in some way influences attitudes towards directionality, as expressed in the question about the legitimacy of working into B³. The data we obtained did not, however, allow us to establish any relationship of this kind. The only link we could establish was with the participants' attitude towards the basic arguments of the two directionality models (comprehension and production arguments)⁴. According to the ANOVA results, there is a significant relationship between four (of the eight) quality parameters and this attitude: *complete transmission of the*

³ Interpreters were asked in the questionnaire if they considered the practice of interpreting from A to B entirely legitimate, a necessary evil that should be avoided if possible or an unacceptable practice which should be avoided at all costs.

⁴ Participants were asked whether they considered it more important to understand all the details of the original speech (as the only way to render the idea in the target language), if they thought that good production (expressing the original idea in a natural and fluent way) was more important, or if they thought that the two aspects (comprehension and production) were equally important.

original ($F(2)=4.99$ $p=.01$), *correct use of terminology* ($F(2)=4.71$ $p=.01$), *correct use of grammar* ($F(2)=3.84$ $p=.02$) and *listener satisfaction* ($F=4.64$ $p=.01$). It is curious to note that the participants who viewed these parameters as less important tended to support the production-based approach (defended by members of the Paris School).

Just as no relationship could be observed with regard to general attitude towards directionality, the evaluation of the quality parameters did not seem to be related in any way to the participants' professional practice (their decisions as to whether or not to accept work on the basis of directionality)⁵ or on their personal working preferences (the direction in which participants prefer to work in simultaneous interpreting). As regards working preferences, only one significant correlation coefficient could be found in the case of the listener satisfaction parameter ($r_{xy}=.10$ $p=.01$), indicating that those who attach most importance to this parameter tend to prefer working in the A>B direction⁶.

Self-evaluation of performance in B>A and A>B

In one of the questions, participants were asked about the language direction in which they usually felt more satisfied about the quality of their interpretation (B>A or A>B). While most (40.8%) responded that they usually felt more satisfied working from B to A, almost the same percentage (40.0%) considered that there was no difference in the quality between the two directions. A much smaller number of participants (15.9%) indicated that they were more satisfied with the

⁵ Participants were asked whether, in their present work as interpreters, they accepted assignments only in B>A, only in A>B, generally in both directions or if their decision depended on the type of the assignment and on whether it was simultaneous or consecutive.

⁶ Thus, the percentage of participants who consider listener satisfaction to be very important (a score of 4 or 5 on the scale) was 88.9% in the subgroup of those who prefer working from B to A and 96.0% in the group who prefer the opposite direction.

quality of their interpreting when working from A to B (3.3% said they did not know)⁷.

In this case, too, significant relationships with different parameters of the participant's personal and/or professional profile could be found. Thus, the ANOVA found a clear linkage between the interpreters' perception of the quality of their own performance in both directions and their self-assessment of linguistic and cultural competences in the B-language (compared to those in the A-language) in the following cases: Production competences ($F(10)=8.30$ $p=.00$), grammar competences ($F(10)=3.15$ $p=.00$), lexical competences ($F(10)=3.96$ $p=.00$), pronunciation ($F(10)=3.64$ $p=.00$) and cultural competences ($F(10)=2.65$ $p=.00$). Nevertheless, no significant relationship was found in the case of the comprehension competences. As regards the production competences, 55.6% of all those participants who considered themselves worse in B than in A stated that they performed better in B>A. On the other hand, only 36.4% of the group who claimed that their production was as good in B as in A said they were more satisfied with their interpretation in B>A, and 37.5% of those who considered their

⁷ In all these groups, participants indicated that during the course of their career they had noticed changes in the quality of their performance in both directions. Among the first group (better quality in B>A), 66.8% indicated that their performance quality in A>B was now closer to that in B>A, 14.4% that A>B had always been worse and 9.0% that the quality of their work from A>B had been better before. Among the second group (better quality in A>B), 44.9% indicated that the quality of B>A was now closer to that of A>B, 19.6% that their performance quality had been better in B>A but that with time this situation had been reversed and only 9.8% stated that their B>A quality had always been worse without getting closer to that of A>B. Among the third group (same quality in B>A and A>B), 42.8% indicated that initially their performance was better in B>A but that quality was now more evenly balanced, 31.9% that quality had always been the same in both directions and 16.5% that initially they worked better from A to B. In an attempt to explain these changes, we analysed the responses of the three groups separately. The number of years of professional experience did not seem to be an important factor in any of the groups ($F(49)=.68$ $p=.95$ for the first, $F(37)=.63$ $p=.95$ for the second and $F(48)=.86$ $p=.73$ for the third group). The duration of stays in the B-language country only seems to have influenced the responses of the third group ($F(48)=1.44$ $p=.03$). For those in this group who indicated a better initial quality in B>A this situation appears to have changed as a result of longer stays in the B-language country.

production competences in B better than in A said they performed better when working from B>A. In these two groups, the percentage of those who declared that there was no quality difference between the two directions (44.5% and 41.0%) was much higher than in the first group (26.8%).

Significant relationships could be found in some, but not all, of the other parameters. The ANOVA revealed that there was no relationship between the self-evaluation of performance quality in A>B/B>A and the question as to whether or not participants had completed a professional interpreter training programme ($F(1)=.88$ $p=.35$). Furthermore, no significant relationship could be observed either for the duration of stays (over the age of 15) in the B-language country ($F(57)=1.25$ $p=.10$) or the number of years of professional experience ($F(53)=.92$ $p=.63$). The ANOVA did, however, reveal significant relationships in the case of stays in the B-language country under the age of 15 ($F(17)=2.25$ $p=.00$) and also regarding directionality aspects of professional training programmes ($F(3)=5.81$ $p=.00$). Table 3 shows a clear trend towards the B>A direction among those participants who had only been trained in B>A, whereas the self-evaluation scores of those who had been trained in both directions were more balanced.

	Higher degree of satisfaction with own performance quality in...			
	B>A	A>B	No difference	Don't know
Only trained in B>A	63.8%	10.3%	21.6%	4.3%
Only trained in A>B	43.1%	17.6%	37.3%	2.0%
Trained in A>B and B>A	41.8%	15.4%	39.1%	3.7%

Table 3. Quality perception in A<>B according to the directionality of professional training

We also observed a significant linkage between self-evaluation in B>A/A>B and workload in both directions ($F(7)=19.14$ $p=.00$). As with training programme directionality, those who in the year prior to the survey worked more (or much

more) in the B>A direction clearly preferred this direction from a qualitative point of view, whereas the responses of those who worked more (or much more) from A to B were more balanced, with the highest percentage (40.4%) of participants stating that there was no difference in the quality of their work in one direction or the other (see table 4).

	Higher degree of satisfaction with own performance quality in...			
	B>A	A>B	No difference	Don't know
Work load predominance in B>A	60.7%	7.7%	29.7%	2.0%
Work load predominance in A>B	24.6%	28.8%	40.4%	6.2%

Table 4. Quality perception in A<>B according to the work load in A<>B

Finally, contrary to the view of the representatives of the Paris School, who assume that the difficulty (and thus the quality) is the same in all language combinations, our results show that quality evaluation varies significantly from one language combination to another ($F(23)=3.86$ $p=.00$). Thus, there are certain language pairs in which most respondents indicated that they were more satisfied with their performance quality in one of the two directions, regardless of which was their A- or B-language. This is the case of the German<>English combination, where 92.3% of the English A-respondents and 52.5% of the German A-respondents considered their performance better when interpreting from German into English. Further examples are the German<>Spanish combination, with 100.0% of the Spanish A- and 57.1% of the German A-respondents considering their work from German into Spanish to be of higher quality, and the Spanish<>Italian combination, with 85.7% of the Spanish and 55.6% of the Italian A-respondents indicating that their work from Italian into Spanish was of higher quality.

Self-evaluation and attitude towards directionality

As with the above interpreters' evaluation of the relevance of general quality parameters, the results of the self-assessment of their performance in the two directions were analysed in relation to their influence on general attitudes towards directionality (see footnote 3). Here, the ANOVA revealed a highly significant relationship ($F(3)=23.32$ $p=.00$). Those participants who claimed higher performance quality when working into the A-language showed a much more ambiguous position towards interpreting in the A>B direction than those who worked better from A>B or those who said that there was no difference between the two directions. (While in the first group 25.1% indicated that interpreting from A to B was a necessary evil that is best avoided and 74.9% said that working in this direction was entirely legitimate, the corresponding percentages were 8.2% and 91.8% in the second group and 8.4% and 91.1% in the third).

A significant linkage was also observed between self-evaluation and professional practice ($F(3)=6.34$ $p=.00$) (see footnote 5). While the percentage of participants who generally accept assignments in both directions was 71.2% in the group who described the quality of their work in the B>A direction as higher (and of which 26.1% indicated that their decision on this question depended on the type of assignment), the respective percentages were 79.3% (and 17.9%) for the group who considered their performance to be better when working into the B-language, and 88.7% (and 10.5%) for those who said there was no difference between the quality in the two directions.

Finally, and as expected, the ANOVA also revealed significant linkages between self-evaluation and the preferences for language directions in simultaneous interpreting ($F(3)=82.05$ $p=.00$). While the majority (93.5%) of those who were more satisfied with their performance quality in B>A preferred to work in this direction in simultaneous interpreting (compared to 6.5% who prefer to work in

the opposite direction), the majority (79.4%) of those who said that their work in the A>B direction was of higher quality also preferred simultaneous interpreting in this direction (compared to 20.6% who prefer to work from B to A). In the group of those who said that there was no difference in the quality of their work in B>A and A>B, the percentage of those who preferred working into the A-language was slightly higher (53.8%) than the percentage for those who preferred working in the opposite direction (46.2%).

Expected audience perception

Apart from illustrating their overall perceptions of quality criteria and evaluating the quality of their own performance in both directions, participants were asked to estimate their B-language listeners' perception of three error sources of non-native production: *lexical errors*, *grammatical errors* and *accent*. As expressed in table 5, lexical errors are considered to be the ones that most irritate the listeners. The results for grammatical errors are very similar. With regard to accent, most respondents thought that their listeners did not mind their accents. Curiously enough, there were more respondents who considered that their listeners were happy (or very happy) to listen to an interpretation with a foreign accent than respondents who thought their listeners found this irritating (or highly irritating).

	"very happy about it"	"happy about it"	"they don't mind"	"find it irritating"	"find it highly irritating"
Lexical errors	1.7%	4.0%	20.9%	55.8%	17.7%
Grammatical errors	1.8%	4.3%	30.8%	49.4%	13.8%
Accent	6.8%	15.9%	55.1%	20.7%	1.4%

Table 5. Supposed user perception of non-native production

As far as grammatical errors and foreign accent were concerned, significant differences could be found between the reactions interpreters expected from different B-language listeners ($F(31)=1.74$ $p=.01$ for the grammatical errors and $F(31)=1.93$ $p=.00$ in the case of foreign accent). Of the five most common languages in our survey, French listeners are – on average – considered to be the most critical, followed by Spanish, Italian, German and English listeners.

Interestingly, the participants' own quality perception (their evaluation of the relevance of quality parameters) is similar to what they expect the users' perception to be in all three categories: lexical errors ($F(4)=3.70$ $p=.01$), grammatical errors ($F(4)=20.63$ $p=.00$) and foreign accent ($F(4)=26.93$ $p=.00$). Gile (2005) suggested that there was no correlation between the user's perception of quality and the real quality as assessed by professionals, whereas our results suggest that there is a strong linkage between the expected user perception and the actual perception as assessed by interpreters. This might apply especially to the form-based (and thus "listener-oriented") parameters and could help explain the results obtained by Kurz (1989), to which we referred earlier and which suggest that interpreters attribute greater importance to form-based criteria than delegates.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study are very similar to those of previous studies on the evaluation of quality parameters. They confirm that interpreters generally consider form-based criteria to be less important. This, however, does not necessarily contradict the findings of previous studies, where interpreters were found to attribute more importance to these parameters than delegates. This fact should perhaps be interpreted in the light of our results, according to which those interpreters who attribute greater importance to their listeners' satisfaction also consider these formal criteria more important for high quality interpreting. Even though it seems clear that the listeners' idea of a successful interpretation cannot

be equated with its quality, it is nonetheless logical that the interpreters tend to attribute more importance to form-based criteria, since these criteria are the most "visible" characteristics of the "product" they "sell". With regard to the link between the evaluation of quality parameters and several features of the personal/professional profile, results suggested that interpreters with more professional experience and more contact with their B-language generally set the bar higher, especially when it comes to foreign accent.

Another important finding in this context is that the evaluations of the 'sense' and the 'correct use of terminology' parameters were not influenced by these profile features (with the exception of the interpreter's A-language, which seems to influence the 'terminology' and – to a lesser extent – the 'sense' parameters). We have suggested that the fact that there is no strong link between the personal/professional profile and the evaluation of these two quality parameters could be the expression of a kind of general consensus about their importance. Finally, our results could not confirm our initial hypothesis about the influence of quality perception on the overall attitude towards directionality, and on the participants' own professional practice and preferences.

As regards the second aspect – we analysed participants' self-evaluation of their performance in both directions – results showed that the majority of professional interpreters considered their work to be of better quality in the B>A direction, but that nearly the same percentage claimed that there was no difference between the two directions. It is likely that the (obvious) differences between our results and those of Bartłomiejczyk (2004) and Pavolović (2007) (see footnote 1) are due to the different sample characteristics (their studies analysed more specific segments of the population: in the first study, members of AIIC and in the second, interpreters from Croatia). Furthermore, our results suggest that participants' self-assessment of their performance depends on several personal/professional features such as directionality in professional training or working practice in A>B. Differences were also observed between certain language combinations and

others. In contrast to the overall perception of quality, self-evaluation exerts a clear influence on the overall attitude towards directionality as well as on professional conduct in this context.

Finally, as regards the third aspect we analysed, expected user perception, the most important findings concerned the differences between various B-languages and the fact that participants' perception of their own quality was closely related to the expected listener perception, a fact that might be related to the great relevance given to listener satisfaction.

As a general conclusion, our results point to the fact that both quality issues in general and directionality mechanisms in particular have to be studied within the framework of a multiparameter approach, which has to go beyond the product-based perspective and must include factors that refer not only to the personal and professional circumstances of each interpreter but also to the communicative context in which the interpretation takes place.

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