Quality criteria for interpreting into English in China

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Abstract

English has become the lingua franca for numerous international settings, hastening the necessity to study the assessment made by the interpretation users with English as the lingua franca. This study intends to analyze non-English native audience assessments of the consecutive conference interpreting performance. The conferences under study are held in international aid training programs through interpreting in consecutive mode between English and Chinese. By analyzing data by conducting structured questionnaires and on-site interviews from conference participants who use English as a lingua franca from actual interpreting performance, it aims to find out non-English native user expectations towards Interpreters and the strategies or tactics that interpreters could adopt in relation to relevant context(s).

Methods and Materials

2. Subjects and method
Quantitative methods were used to organize and describe the response contained in the 154 questionnaires. A short web-based Chinese structured questionnaire was devised consisting of the following seven questions falling into the two blocks: general socio-demographic background information and perception of linguistic and extra-linguistic criteria affecting the quality of the interpretation (Delia Chiaro & Giuseppe Noccella 2004:283). Block 1 including the first four questions which were used to elicit the general information concerning responders’ gender, age range (taking into the consideration of the sensitivity of the age for female responders), field of expertise, the experience of using interpreting service before. Block 2 encompassing the 5th to 7th questions which were used to investigate the responders’ perception of linguistic and extra-linguistic criteria affecting the quality of information, the criteria used in this investigation are generally similar as those used by Bühler (Bühler, 1986) with exceptions to a few modifications but with the following major differences. To make the questionnaire more reliable, followed by the advice offered by Pöchhacker (Pöchhacker, F 2015:160), the questionnaire also includes a five-point rating scales (not important at all-scored, of little importance-score 1 of average importance-score 2, very important-score3 and absolutely essential-scored) concerning the relative importance of output-related criteria by a requirement to rank three most important criteria in the list (Question Sand 6).

A 7th question was devoted to the topic of the level of tolerance of the irritant on the part of the audiences.

Results

Of the 154 responders who filled in and submitted the web-questionnaire, 54.55% were female, and 45.45% were male. 32.47% responders are in the age category from 46-60 years, whereas the largest group of responders (55.1%) can be found in the category from 33-35 years old. In terms of technical occupational background, 57.14% responders engaged in the technical-related work. Around 59.74% responders have prior experiences using interpreters in some seminars or conferences, whereas 40.26% responders do not have such experiences. In the part of the web-questionnaire, responders were requested to rate the relative importance of ten output-related criteria for a consecutive interpretation on a five-point ordinal scale ranging from “not important at all” to “highly important” and rate the 18 items of the irritants from five levels of tolerance. For all the respondents, the three criteria were attributed the highest degree of importance are sense consistency & logic with the average score of 3.36, articulation (moderate speed and volume) with the average score of 3.32 as well as native accent & fluency with the average score of 3.25. When the responders are requested to list only three most important criteria, articulation (moderate speed and volume) was attributed the most important one. It comes to the three most irritants, causing cultural conflicts are the most intolerant one, followed by the low-spirited & listless interpreters and inconsistency & illogical in message delivery.

Discussion

In order to test whether there are gender differences in the preferences of the criterion and in the tolerance of the irritants, chi-squared tests were performed. It showed that the difference in the ratings of criterion of information consistency & logic to be statistically significant(Chi=13.34, P=0.01<0.05). 35.71% male responders chose item 4 (important) higher than the female counterparts with 10.71%. For the non-verbal information delivery (Chi=13.02, P=0.01<0.05), 57.14% female responders chose item (highly important) more than the male counterparts(41.43%). When it comes to the irritants, lack of interaction with the audience was considered to be statistically significant (Chi=13.37, P=0.01<0.05). 27.14% males chose the second level of tolerance than the female counterparts(10.71%), which shows that females are more tolerant to the lack of interaction than the male counterpart.

The gender difference in the tolerance of improper register did reach statistical significance(Chi=10.35, P=0.03<0.05) with 25% females chose zero tolerance(item 1) higher than the male responders(14.43%).

Conclusions

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