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The complex mediating role of pivot interpreters: Simultaneous interpreting competence in giving and taking relay

The nature of relay interpreting as an imperfect yet inescapable phenomenon in many multilingual communicative contexts, such as the Institutions of the European Union, is a cornerstone of indirectness in simultaneous interpreting. Having one interpreter's output serve as the source for another (Pöchhacker 2004, p. 21) creates a strong interdependency between them, in a somewhat unnatural format of teamwork. Doubling an already convoluted process makes relay twice as prone to errors (Čeňková 2015, p. 340), although there are still too few studies to substantiate the hypothesis that these are inherent to the process of relay (Gambier 2003, pp. 60-61).

How can quality be ensured throughout the doubly mediated communicative process of relay, considering the immediacy required by simultaneous interpreting? Revolving around this general research question, our contribution will present the main results of a study exploring the connections between indirect interpreting and the construct of quality in the ears of interpreters who regularly give and take relay. Our research is based on a survey collecting the professional perceptions of 30 EU-accredited staff and freelance Spanish interpreters on the advantages and disadvantages involved in indirect interpreting, with a particular focus on the specific challenges that this double process poses in the context of immediacy-driven communication. Building up on the survey's results, the specific interpreting competences that are essential for pivot interpreters and relay-takers will be described and further discussed. Our ultimate goal is that of presenting the audience with a didactic proposal of a training module for M.A. students in Conference Interpreting to delve deeper into the intricacies of indirectness in simultaneous interpreting and consolidate their awareness and skills when performing in contexts that require relay interpreting.

References

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Pöchhacker, Franz. 2004. *Introducing Interpreting Studies*. London: Routledge.