



**Activist Interpreting:
Interpreters as Agents of Social Change and the Clash of
Personal and Professional Ethics**

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1 INTRODUCTION

If interpreters are sculptors of messages, language is their clay. Interpreters, like all other wordsmiths, construct with language. Their constructions are bound to a complex interplay of expectations and standards which can be implicit and explicit, and even legally codified and binding in the latter case. When it comes to the analysis of the interpreter's role, one of the most elusive and debated categories is advocacy, and when it comes to the analysis of the quality of an interpreter's work, one of the most elusive and debated criteria is fidelity (Setton, 2015). Defining these two concepts is to some extent an inherently subjective task, and both concepts have sparked increasing interest, debate, and research in interpreting as it become more professionalized. What happens when the axiomatic preconditions of advocacy are in discord with the expectations of fidelity and the adjacent ethical concept of neutrality? When an interpreter is bound to a professional ethics code in such cases, which shall prevail: her personal or professional ethics?

A notion that is contiguous to advocacy, in the general sense of the word, is activism. Advocacy in interpreting and interpreting research is nearly always treated in the context of particularities specific to the influence the interpreter may bear on the outcomes of an interpreted communicative event. As Jacobsen (2009) puts it, both in conference and community interpreting, "studies have traditionally focused on the *interpreter* as opposed to *interpreting*" (p. 156). Overlooked or ignored in interpreting research and practice, however, is a more general type of advocacy exercised through linguistic activism. The Janus-like figure of the interpreter, perpetually straddling or at the crossroads of languages, cultures, and frames of reference, is not only a mediator between worlds, but also a negotiator, arbiter, and architect of interlinguistic and intercultural narratives. With this in mind, the already immense responsibilities borne by interpreters become even greater: whether desired or not, interpreters are necessarily either passive protectors of existing social conditions and norms or active agents of their change.

In this work, to approach the conundrum of whether personal or professional ethics take precedence when they are at odds with each other, the role of the interpreter as an active agent of change will be analyzed. The kind of change in question will be the broad notion of power-decentralization and dehegemonization through the systematic tactical use of language by interpreters to that end. This sort of language use, as will be developed further on, will be referred to as activist interpreting.

In order to answer the fundamental question regarding the struggle between conflicting personal and professional ethics, a series of other questions was developed and then put to the test in a questionnaire distributed to interpreters. These questions are as follows:

- I. Do different interpreting settings, such as conference, court/legal, medical, police, or education correspond with different levels of self-perception by interpreters as activists with implicit ethical or moral obligations to use power-decentralizing language?
- II. Do other aspects of a given interpreter's profile such as their language profile, level of education and training, age, gender identity, or volume of volunteer work also correlate with self-perception as an agent of social change?
- III. Do those interpreters who do consider themselves activists employ power-decentralizing language even when it conflicts with theoretical concepts and ethical norms of fidelity? In other words, are such interpreters willing to break ethics norms as stipulated in codes and scholarly writing in favor of their own personal convictions and commitment to activism?

2 STATE OF THE MATTER

2.1 *What Is the Interpreter's Role?*

Before examining and defining what is meant by activist interpreting in this paper, it is first necessary to understand how activist interpreting relates to the concept of the role of the interpreter, an extremely difficult to define notion, as it is so contingent upon the purpose of the communicative event, the personal philosophies of the participants, and any relevant legislation. On a spectrum between the role of strict linguistic channeling on one extreme and full-fledged advocacy on the other, for example, approaches to the advocacy end tend to be more widely tolerated or accepted when the nature of the relationship between the participants is collaborative (e.g., in medical interpreting) as opposed to when it is adversarial (e.g., in court interpreting), in which case advocacy might be forbidden (Mikkelsen, 2008). The motives for such a disparate array of role conceptions has many causes, such as the lack of widespread, harmonized, and regulated profession entry requirements in many settings and places in which community interpreting takes places, a relative lack of substantive research in the field, and the tendency that each interpreter has of bringing her own cognitive biases into her professional behavior (Hale, 2008, pp. 100-101).

As Angelelli (2008) points out, the complexity of the definition of the interpreter's role in interpreted events is largely due to a multilayered confluence and interplay between sociocultural, societal, and institutional factors which necessarily also interact with personal

factors of the self, through which “the interpreter exercises agency and power, which materialize through different behaviors that may alter the outcome of the interaction” (p. 149). Of most pertinence to the examination of activist interpreting is, naturally, the interplay between the self (self-identification, group pertinence, age, socioeconomic status, nationality, racial and ethnic backgrounds, political inclinations, etc.) and the various other external social and institutional factors of an interpreted event (p. 152). In an earlier work, Angelelli (2004) also indicates the important fact that in most settings of interpreting, “the interpreter may have more factors in common with one party or with the other, but clearly not with both” and that “power differentials are more salient in a medical interview or in a court of law, although this certainly should not be construed to mean that no power differentials exist between heads of state or delegates” of countries with clear power dynamics between them (p. 28-29). Angelelli explains that Brewer’s (1998) psychological impression formation comprised of identification followed by (sub-)typing, individuation, and personalization will take place ubiquitously in the interpreter’s work, whether consciously or not (p. 35). In all these cases, personal factors of the interpreter’s self will necessarily bear some influence on her product. In other words, advocacy, especially when it is ultimately the fruit of the psychological typifying of participants by the interpreter, is far from being unique to community interpreting, as may be the first assumption; it can manifest itself in any interpreted communicated event. It is worth noting that here, as is the general trend across academic literature in interpreting studies on the concept of role, emphasis is often placed on the influence the interpreter may have on the outcome of a specific event depending on her relationship with and impression of the parties, as well as the social and institutional circumstances.

That is, even when personal biases and other factors are considered and the interpreter is not thought of mechanistically, her role is typically taxonomized and determined according to how she relates directly to the particular institution, legislation, culture, or individuals involved in a given event. While the interpreter’s role is far from an obvious, clearly delineated notion in all settings of interpreting, more variety of opinion, (self-)perception, and analysis arises in community interpreting than in conference interpreting due to the relative prevalence of dialogical and monological interpreting in each, respectively (Jacobsen, 2009, p. 156). When authors do accept a range in interpreters’ roles according to the contextual particularities of interpreted communicative events, said range is typically framed along a spectrum of varying terminology and nuance whereupon one extreme describes a role defined by strict linguistic transfer, while the other extreme describes at least some level of active participation, intervention, or mediation carried out by the interpreter beyond her role as a linguistic conduit.

For our purposes, activist interpreting is to be thought of as interpreting that first and foremost decidedly defends and furthers not the interests of a given participant in a given encounter, but rather particular social norms through language use. It is therefore relevant to understand how advocate interpreter roles have been thought of thus far to avoid confusion. Of course, interpreters need not embody only one role per event nor one role at a time: roles can overlap and be adopted or left throughout a single event according to the circumstances. Leanza (2005), for example, reminds us that medical interpreting involves further-reaching social questions than the mere practice of interpreting per se, such as the facilitation of minority integration (p. 168). Leanza cites Jalbert's (1998) five-role typology which includes the roles of "Translator" (the interpreter minimizes her presence and does not interfere with content), "Cultural Informant" (the interpreter implicitly facilitates and guides communication through the use and influence of cultural knowledge), "Cultural Broker or Cultural Mediator" (the interpreter explicitly explains or synthesizes cultural information to negotiate clashing cultures), "Advocate" (the interpreter decides to defend the patient's interests within the institution), and "Bilingual Professional" (the interpreter and the representative of the institution are the same person) (p. 170). According to Leanza's reading of Jalbert, the Cultural Mediator role is only adopted when some sort of culturally rooted communicative conflict arises, and advocacy is essentially limited to the protection of patients and the furthering of their individual interests. Leanza cites examples from hospitals and migration centers in France and francophone Switzerland to determine that these interpreters were far more aware of their extralinguistic roles than were the pediatricians observed in videotaped preventative consultations; such extralinguistic roles (those of Cultural Informant, Cultural Mediator/Broker, and Advocate from Jalbert's typology, along with Bi- and Multilingual Professional) represented 10% of the utterances in those consultations (pp. 171-184).

Analyses like Leanza's show that interpreter roles approximating cultural mediation/brokerage and advocacy are more accepted (and sometimes even encouraged) in medical interpreting than other settings because of the collaborative nature of the communicative event. This claim is further backed up by a 2014 study that screened and statistically analyzed a pool of over 1000 academic articles on the role of medical interpreters which were extracted from various databases, countries, and continents (Sleptsova et al., pp. 169-170). Of the 34 articles that were statistically analyzed, all but two of them "ascertained the importance of extending the interpreters' role to further functions including that of a cultural broker..., patient advocate..., or mediator" (p. 179). It would therefore seem that in medical interpreting, according to these works, interpreters and researchers alike are aware of

the plurality of interpreters' roles, which can include advocacy. However, as is also reflected in professional ethics codes such as that of the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC) in the United States, advocacy seems not to be conceptualized as a synonym nor a hyponym of activism. Rather, it "is understood as an action taken on behalf of an individual that goes beyond facilitating communication, with the intention of supporting good health outcomes" and that advocacy as an act "should derive from clear and/or consistent observations that something is not right and that action needs to be taken to right the wrong" (pp. 19-20). This is different from activist interpreting, the objective of which is not primarily to improve or influence the outcome of a given interpreted event, but rather to generally promote power-decentralizing language use and discourage power-centralizing language use. Such a conceptualization of advocacy is not reflected in the academic literature and ethics codes consulted for this work.

Although more controversial and delicate, some suggest that a certain level of advocacy may also be tolerated by the part of court interpreters. Mikkelson (2008) highlights that legal interpreters often find themselves in dilemmas of conflicting expectations. The disconnect is between the understanding of basic communication standards such as completeness, accuracy, fidelity, and so on as they are defined in ethics codes as opposed to how they are understood by "a large number of monolingual judges and attorneys who lack sufficient understanding of linguistic theory and interlinguistic transfer" in order to realize that their frequent expectations of syntactically rigid verbatim translation may yield unfaithful and indeed nonsensical renditions in the interpretation (pp. 82-83). Of course, as Aguirre Fernández Bravo (2019) reminds us, "certain deviations from a superficial equivalence to deliver the original's illocutionary force can be misconstrued by untrained individuals as a violation of the ethical principle of fidelity" (p. 63). Mikkelson furthermore points out a common and adjacent theme among ethics codes in court interpreting, namely that of impartiality/neutrality, which imposes the expectation of the interpreter not to have an identity beyond her professional identity and cites various studies from around the world that suggest that, across the board of settings (including legal), interpreters rarely perceive themselves as invisible, impartial agents, and that most often the pragmatic transfer of perceived meaning takes precedence over the strict observation of ethics codes' stipulations regarding additions (pp. 84-5).

De facto, the communicative liberties afforded by the prioritization of pragmatic transfer can often allow for advocacy to seep in. Mikkelson, for example, goes on to cite various court interpreting ethics codes and academic studies that show how the forms of advocacy that are considered to arise in court interpreting are fundamentally of three denominations: those

related to cultural mediation and negotiation, those related to advocating for the interpreting profession (such as advocating for proper working conditions), and those related to taking interventive action beyond verbal communication to guarantee due process in the face of severely imbalanced power differentials. This last form of advocacy, however, typically is not contemplated within the context of the behavior of individual interpreters and instead can take the form of specialized committees within professional organizations, such as the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT)'s Advocacy Committee in the United States (pp. 83-88). Here again we see that advocacy as traditionally conceptualized and discussed does not explicitly take activist language use into account as an ethical dilemma that interpreters face daily.

Similarly, Hale (2008) describes the controversies among these gray areas in the court interpreter's role along a spectrum that includes the role of helping a minority through the improvement of their linguistic presentation in order to favor their outcomes, that of helping the service provider/institution in the same way, that of becoming a third communicative participant by deciding what to say or not, that of ensuring communication by clarifying content with questions and comments, or that of merely removing language barriers (pp. 102-118). Each of these roles may have negative or positive effects on the empowerment of individual participants. Regardless, two things are clear. One is that concepts such as cultural mediation and advocacy in interpreting ethics codes and the academic literature tend to focus on in situ interventions to defend an individual participant in an interpreted communicative act. The other is that, as Aguirre Fernández Bravo points out citing Roy (1993), there is simply a "lack of consistency in the terminology used in the literature to refer to the public service interpreters' role," citing 13 terms from just three authors which all vaguely point to the same direction of extralinguistic cultural mediation without having clear, canonized, widely recognized, or widely accepted definitions (p. 65).

It is because of this lack of a common language that Aguirre Fernández Bravo (2019) proposes a "non-prescriptive role perception continuum" in order to describe roles in relative terms between the extremes of "conduit" and "advocate" interpreters through a series of nine subscales of self-perception criteria, several of which deal with the event-specific ilk of professional behavioral patterns frequently discussed in the academic literature (pp. 64-67). Of these subscales, however, Subscale 4, which measures the "interpreter's balancing of power relations" contrasts conduit and advocate interpreters by describing the former as considering themselves not responsible for power balancing and therefore "making no adjustments for the benefit" of the less powerful minority in an interaction, while advocate interpreters accept the

impossibility of complete neutrality and thus “make conscious decisions regarding the type of power relation they wish to favor” (p. 66). This is the closest approximation in the existing literature that seems to encompass what could be understood as activist interpreting, albeit in more general terms. Moreover, Subscale 8, which measures the “interpreter’s notion of fidelity” indicates that advocate interpreters adopt Reiß and Vermeer’s (1984) *skopos* theory’s notion of faithfulness based on the fulfilling of contextual needs, thereby allowing for Wadensjö’s (1998) strategies to expanded, reduce, summarize, break-up or omit renditions according to said contextual needs (p. 67). Nevertheless, to include within Wadensjö’s strategies activist interpreting as a part of this classification system would perhaps then be an unduly liberal interpretation of what is meant by “contextual needs,” as these surely refer to those contextual needs unique to the participants and the event in question rather than those of society at large in the subjective eyes of the interpreter as a partial individual.

2.2 Interpreters as Advocates and Agents of Change through Narrative-Building: Insights from Translation

In light of the above and any further glance at the existing literature of the interpreter’s role as an advocate, it can be safely said that, when it comes to advocacy, emphasis is generally placed on particularities unique to individual interpreters and their backgrounds, biases, and so forth as they relate to the other parties of an interpreted communicative event and the sociocultural and institutional contexts in which they occur. Said particularities are likewise generally framed in terms of the influence that the interpreter can have on the results of a given encounter: the type of medical diagnosis or treatment a patient receives, the impression a judge receives of a witness or defendant, whether cultural gaps in communication are bridged, and so on. These event-specific outcomes are, of course, of dire importance in understanding advocacy in interpreting. However, they seem to overlook or exclude another side of the coin, namely, a more general activism to support causes favored by the same conscious or subconscious biases held by interpreter that guide her behavior in areas such as those analyzed in Aguirre Fernández Bravo’s (2019) continuum subscales.

Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary (n.d.) defines advocacy firstly as “the process of supporting a cause or proposal.” This sort of definition, while broader and vaguer than the one included in NCIHC’s Code of Ethics cited above, allows for a more holistic and wider-reaching understanding of the impact advocate interpreters’ actions and decisions have not only on the outcomes of particular interpreted communicative events, but also on their communities and societies at large over the course of time. Just as language is a critical tool in the carrying out

of a bevy of public and private services, whence its increasingly meticulous regulation through professional ethics codes in interpreting, it also plays a crucial role in the manner in which societies construct and contextualize linguistic images of themselves, their historical development, their present state, and their future trajectory. As such, Baker (2018) posits that translators and interpreters are to a large extent arbiters and architects of this sort of public narratives, “narratives” being understood as “dynamic entities” that “change in subtle or radical ways as people experience and become exposed to new stories on a daily basis;” according to Baker, we come to believe stories about personal attributes, such as race or gender, and these stories fundamentally bear more influence on our behavior than the phenotypical attributes themselves (p. 3). Translators and interpreters are therefore at the crux of societal narrative-building when it comes to interlinguistic confluences produced by social phenomena like migration, refugeeism, asylum-seeking, or globalization (p. 36). Baker places particular emphasis on the choice that translators and interpreters have “to accept or contest and challenge a given conceptual narrative,” as they are perpetually analyzing and reconstructing such narratives in their professional lives, which furthermore implies an “ethical choice with every assignment: to reproduce existing ideologies as encoded in the narratives elaborated in the text or utterance, or to dissociate themselves from those ideologies” in order to explicitly or implicitly subvert or advocate for them in their subsequent construction of a framed social reality (pp. 43, 105-106).

In order to illustrate this unavoidable position-taking with respect to narrative-building that translators and interpreters constantly face, Baker presents a series of examples from both literary and journalistic translation throughout history and in the present of what she describes as “selective appropriation,” which is understood as the adherence to “patterns of omission and addition designed to suppress, accentuate or elaborate particular aspects of a narrative encoded in the source text or utterance, or aspects of the larger narrative(s) in which it is embedded” (pp. 114-118). In the cases presented, the translators took clear stances to suppress, omit, or maintain ideologies expressed in the source texts with clear goals in mind regarding the public narrative-building they were contributing to among their readerships. Additions also can and have been made to texts to advocate for given causes, especially in literary translation, to “subvert the text with the author’s permission” (or without it) and produce, for example, a feminist rendition of the original by altering the plot, adding or eliminating characters to redress imbalances (Castro, & Ergun, 2018, p. 129).

2.3 From Activist Translating to Activist Interpreting

Parallels are clearly difficult to draw between these forms of selective appropriation in activism-oriented translation and what possible counterparts could be in interpretation without incurring severe infringements on even the most liberal definitions of fidelity. While activism in interpreting can largely be carried out through the selection and filtration of clients and professional assignments, by carefully accepting and rejecting work according to one's personal ethical standards, certain aspects of activist translation can nevertheless be carried over to interpreting. In both translation and interpreting, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics obviously influence the fanning of asymmetrical power relationships, whether it be a broad social relationship between a hegemonic and non-hegemonic social, cultural, ethnic, racial, or linguistic group (such as women and men, ethnic minorities and majorities, speakers of minority and dominant languages, etc.), or a direct interpersonal relationship between, say, a defendant and a judge or a patient and a doctor.

Interpreters must tread far more carefully, however, than literary translators, especially when they must comply with legally binding professional ethics codes. Here, other tactics must be adopted. In the face of asymmetric power dynamics in the context of broader social group relationships, Carcelén-Estrada (2018) advocates for what she calls “activist translation,” whereby “activist translators manage meaning to express non-hegemonic thinking while appearing to comply with the official language of the state and rule of law” (p. 254). This sort of activity in interpreting settings with high legal stakes that hinge upon compliance with codes of ethics would be ideal, as dehegemonizing language would be employed without putting the interpreter's reputation or professionalism in jeopardy. Such non-hegemonic thinking and activity, according to Carcelén-Estrada, describes the translator's (or, in our case, the interpreter's) patterns in political behavior as a methodological basis by which to inculcate social change and paradigm shifts to alter power asymmetries, which is opposed to “*translatio imperii*,” or the consolidation of political or social hegemony and cultural appropriation through equally tactful translation and language use and which has been carried out since the dawn of our civilizations (pp. 254-258). The notion of what precisely constitutes power-centralization, and the consolidation of hegemony, and whether said consolidation should be combatted or not, is admittedly inherently subjective and necessarily different from person to person according to each one's biases, previous knowledge, lived experiences, and sociocultural backgrounds. Despite this, these notions of activist translation will serve as the underpinning of activist interpreting in this paper. Just as an activist translator does, an activist interpreter “analyzes modern/colonial discourses and rewrites them through a performance of identity that simultaneously adapts to and contests modernity as it incorporates other ways of

remembering, knowing and governing” in order to “redress this epistemic power imbalance” (p. 264). We could dub the willful maintenance of said imbalance *interpretatio imperii* in the case of interpretation.

Just as it is a concern in feminist translation, for instance, in some languages the neutral masculine or replacement of neutral source-language pronouns with default masculine target-language pronouns can make non-sexist originals sexist, gendering third persons or rendering feminine figures invisible (Castro & Ergun, 2018, p. 129). This can be a particularly cumbersome ethical predicament when professional and personal ethical standards clash or are ambiguous regarding fidelity: would rendering “citizens” in a general sense in Spanish as “los ciudadanos y las ciudadanas” or “las ciudadanas” constitute a fidelity-infracting addition or distortion? As Trissot (2017) points out regarding feminist translation, language systems enact power relations, and “the process of choosing the “right” words in the target language raises ethical questions: What is revealed by and who is heard in that choice, what/who is silenced, what is altered of the other’s voice?” (p. 37).

Answering such questions in concrete stylistic choices of grammatical gender is far from simple. In the example above, the answers will depend on the speaker’s, the audience’s, and the interpreter’s subjective opinions on various issues such as whether or not an inclusive masculine sexist, whether or not the terms “ciudadanos,” “ciudadanas y ciudadanos,” or “ciudadanas” unduly gender non-binary citizens, what the speaker’s intention is in light of those opinions, and whether the interpreter prioritizes her own opinions and preferences over her perception of the speaker’s if they are incongruent. Ideally, an activist interpreter selects an option while seemingly abiding by prevailing language norms according to the state and law, as cited above in Carcelén-Estrada’s description of activist translators. For example, opting for “los ciudadanos y las ciudadanas” is in keeping with grammatical standards of use in Spanish, even though the Real Academia Española (RAE) is of the opinion that such “desdoblamientos son artificiosos e innecesarios” and, since they are at the expense of the economy of language, are to be avoided. However, also according to the RAE, “es incorrecto emplear el femenino para aludir conjuntamente a ambos sexos,” for which reason opting for “ciudadanas” would, by the RAE’s criteria, be a riskier choice (Real Academia Española, n.d.). The non-isomorphism of languages and cultures further complicates this issue. The use of “ministra” in Spanish to refer to female government ministers, for example, is widely accepted and causes no eye-batting, while in European French, phrasings like “madame le ministre” continue to prevail and ruffle feathers in the Assemblée Nationale and general populace alike (Mateus, 2021). Rendering “madame le president” as “señora presidenta” might then simply

be in keeping with pragmatic language use, though some may argue that it would not reflect the original speaker's intention of using the masculine and therefore be unfaithful. On the other hand, rendering "señora ministra" into French as "madame *la* ministre" would both be faithful to the original and protest for sociolinguistic change in a target-language community where the feminization of many professional titles is not as widespread and taken for granted as in the source-language community.

Continuing with the gender of professional titles, interpreting an already neutral source-language term like "honorable members" into Spanish or "dear citizens" into French prompts an unavoidable position to be taken, even if one option is more conventional than others. Let us recall that according to Aguirre Fernández Bravo's continuum, advocate interpreters "make conscious decisions regarding the type of power relation they wish to favor" (p. 66). We could go a step further and reach a definition of activist interpreting as a praxis by adding to this that activist interpreters, borrowing Carcelén-Estrada's notion of activism, can and do make such decisions, and they do so systematically with the purpose of decentralizing power-centralizing language and introducing power-decentralizing language wherever possible to challenge prevailing social, political, and institutional power asymmetries, even when doing so conflicts or does not clearly comply with prevailing expectations of fidelity.

The previous examples highlight cases of feminist language use in grammatical gender and professional titles, but activist language use could also take many other forms, and new ones are constantly coming into existence as society evolves. For example, Baker (2018) explains how the seemingly innocent and trifle difference between "the Democrats" and "the Democratic Party" (in the United States) or between "the Six Countries," "Ulster," and "Northern Ireland" do indeed carry clearly marked, non-neutral, and non-interchangeable political ideological undertones that are as clear as night and day to native English speakers of the cultural communities in question (pp. 122, 128). Here too translators and interpreters have no choice but to follow ethical criteria of some sort and opt for one option or another.

Although the forms of activist interpreting through power-decentralizing language use are as extensive as dilemmas of power differentials, for the sake of staying within the scope of this work, only four such forms will be examined: feminism, gender equality, gender neutrality and non-binary pronoun use, and register alteration to soften institutionalized aggressive or intimidating tone. These forms of social activism were selected by the author because they were deemed to underlie important social issues of the day. The last form, that of register alteration, is succinctly summarized in Hale's 2007 study of Spanish↔English court interpreters in Australia. In said study, she concludes that the frequent sensation of solidarity

between interpreters and witnesses or defendants led some interpreters to consistently introduce alterations and additions in the form of diminutives such as “hijita” for “daughter” and phrase handles such as “no más” (absent in the original) in Spanish renditions in order to soften the intimidating original tone, possibly as the result of a subconscious bias (pp. 41-53). Even though the use of such register-altering elements of language may not be power-decentralizing per se, they can be considered fruits of activist interpreting as they serve to dehegemonize the institutionally asymmetrical institutional power differential between the parties of an interpreted communicative event (defendants/witnesses and judges/lawyers in the examples cited above) by systematically altering tone.

Since we are taking activist interpreting to mean the promotion of power-decentralizing language use in these areas even when it is at odds with the ethical concept of fidelity, we will first need to understand what is meant by fidelity before using it as a criterion in the questionnaire.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 *What is Fidelity?*

As one of the most notoriously difficult to pin down notions within interpreting, fidelity has been examined by a plethora of interpreters and researchers. Naturally, among the family of basic interpreting terminology, it is more relative and everchanging a theoretical concept than other notions that are easily and more or less objectively measurable, such as short-term memory capacity or intonation. Unlike these concepts, no clear empirical tests can be run to determine an interpreter’s capacity to produce a faithful rendition of a message, due in part to the wide array of definitions and standards that fidelity has across the worlds of geographical space, professional sectors, settings, associations, and scholarship. Whether due to a parallax view or to fundamentally different concepts sharing a common name, at times it can even seem that the definition of fidelity varies from interpreter to interpreter, each with her own idiosyncratic idea of what it ought to be; surely no interpreter is unfamiliar with the fervid debates with colleagues and acquaintances that can frequently arise regarding whether a given solution to a given passage constitutes an infraction of fidelity to the speaker’s original utterance, however frivolous and mundane the item in question may seem to an outsider.

Despite the general lack of consensus at the interpersonal, interinstitutional, intersectoral, and academic levels on what constitutes fidelity, there clearly exists a range of degrees of completeness and correspondence between originals and their renditions, which, to invoke Wadensjö’s (1998) taxonomy, can be close (i.e., with approximately equal content),

expanded (i.e., via additions), reduced (i.e., via omissions), substituted, split up into two or more parts, non-corresponding, or left untranslated altogether (pp. 106-108). Whether or not anything short of (or beyond) exhaustively complete renditions is justified then depends on a slew of factors unique to the content, context, and hypertext of every original utterance. Despite the unavoidably colossal differences in opinion and expectations with regard to these alterations of fidelity, it is nevertheless typically the cornerstone criterion when it comes to evaluating quality in interpreting schools and accreditation exams, thereby requiring that some model be adopted to explicitly establish where and when strict linguistic equivalence takes precedence over the transfer of perceived intended meaning, or vice versa (Setton, 2015, p. 161). The range in what is generally deemed acceptable on these lines in different settings is rather astounding; while an improvement of the rhetoric, form, efficiency, or clarity of the speaker's original may be tolerated, lauded, or even expected in diplomatic, business, or conference settings, it is often legally prohibited in legal settings, especially in court interpreting (Setton, 2015, p. 163). For this reason, any analysis of fidelity compliance among interpreters working in different settings will necessarily have to take into account the panoply of differing expectations to which they are held.

3.2 Fidelity According to Professional Codes of Ethics

To gain a practical idea of how fidelity is conceptualized and measured in various sectors, one can look to the codes of ethics of professional interpreter organizations. Due to the enormous proportions of an exhaustive analysis of fidelity in all currently existing codes of ethics and for the sake of brevity, a brief sampling will be taken of five prominent ones from different settings: the International Association of Conference Interpreting (AIIC, worldwide, conference), the National Association of Judicial Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT, United States, legal), the Asociación Profesional de Traductores e Intérpretes Judiciales y Jurados (APTIJ, Spain, legal), the Judicial Council of California Court Interpreters Program (CIP, United States, legal), and the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC, United States, medical). The sample admittedly suffers from a Euro-American bias, which is to be borne in mind by the reader. However, given the professional domiciles of the questionnaire respondents, they also seem to be the most appropriate.

3.2.1 AIIC

Starting with conference interpreting, in AIIC's four-paged Code of professional ethics, last updated in March 2018, there is no mention of fidelity to be found (International

Association of Conference Interpreters, 2018). Given the global scope of this association as a hallmark of quality in the world of conference interpreting, it may come as a surprise to outsiders and newcomers that such a fundamental criterion of quality is seemingly taken for granted in its Code, as is the case for adjacent concepts dealing with the interpreter's role, such as neutrality. Rather, the bulk of the text focuses on ethics in the context of confidentiality, professionalism, the image of the profession, and standards for working conditions. Given the total absence of notions of fidelity, impartiality, neutrality, and role in AIIC's Code, one could argue that, at least in a strictly by-the-book sense, the activity of activist conference interpreters who are AIIC members would not be in compliance with the ethical norms to which they are bound.

3.2.2 NAJIT

NAJIT's Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities, last updated in 2005, is rather different in terms of content when compared to AIIC's Code, as is to be expected given the difference of interpreting settings with which each deals. While NAJIT's code makes no mention of working conditions, its eight Canons focus almost entirely on fidelity (addressed circumlocutorily under the heading "Accuracy"), impartiality, and the interpreter's role (National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators, 2005). The accuracy Canon explicitly states the interpreter's responsibility to conserve "all the elements of the original message while accommodating the syntactic and semantic patterns of the target language" including elements such as "hedges, false starts and repetitions," and, more importantly "the register, style and tone of the source language" (p. 1). Canon 2, on impartiality, furthermore stipulates interpreters' responsibility to remain "impartial and neutral in proceedings where they serve" and to "maintain the appearance of impartiality and neutrality" (p. 1). While the Code does not enter into further explicative detail on what impartiality and neutrality and their appearance precisely entail, the categorical and systematic insertion of power-decentralizing language where it is not present in the original could clearly be a conflict of interest. It could also be at odds with the Canon on accuracy which includes that "there should be no distortion of the original message through addition, omission, explanation or paraphrasing" (p. 1).

3.2.3 APTIJ

APTIJ's bilingual (Spanish and English) Code of Ethics for Court and Sworn Interpreter's and Translators, last updated in 2010, is of a similar scope and length of NAJIT's, comprising of a preamble followed by seven headings (Asociación Profesional de Traductores

e Intérpretes Judiciales y Jurados, 2010). The first addresses “accuracy and completeness of the text or speech” (“fidelidad e integridad” in the Spanish) and offers another boilerplate requirement that members provide their services “accurately and in full, without changing, omitting, or adding anything...as far as possible,” with the important stipulation that members do so “without changing the content or intention of the message” (pp. 1-2). Interpreters must also “be impartial, neutral and independent at all times” (p. 2). In this sense, activist interpreters’ use of power-decentralizing language where it is not present in the original would be conflicting with the ethical norms of this code, as it of course necessarily introduces intention, even if the original speaker happens to agree with said intention.

3.2.4 *CIP*

Of the codes of ethics here analyzed, CIP’s 53-paged Professional Standards and Ethics for California Court Interpreters, last updated in May 2013, is by far the most extensive and detailed. Like the two above-mentioned codes for interpreters in other legal settings, the bulk of CIP’s code’s text also focuses heavily on fidelity, impartiality, neutrality, and the interpreter’s role, while also containing some sections on working conditions (Judicial Council of California Court Interpreters Program, 2013). Its 14-paged chapter on “Complete and Accurate Interpretation” enters into considerably more detail than the previously mentioned codes as regards definitions of items such as additions, omissions, changes in meaning, errors, and the like.

Additions are broken up into various subtypes such as embellishments (the improving or smoothing of low-quality original language) and clarifications (adding emphatic elements to avoid ambiguity) (pp. 3-5). Emphasis is placed on the interpreter’s function “not to make any party sound more articulate or logical in the target language...than they did in this source language,” but, given the fact that the chapter on impartiality and neutrality dictates that the interpreter “must remain detached and neutral and never offer [their] personal opinion about any matter related to a case,” it can be inferred that the insertion of power-decentralizing language where absent in the original would constitute an infraction (pp. 3, 21). The same can be said in the case of the modification or omission of power-centralizing language, as omissions of all types, including omissions of redundancies, fillers, and false starts, are considered unethical (p. 5). It is furthermore explicitly stated that interpreters “must not edit out the offending terms” and that their duty in the case of foul or offensive language is to conserve meaning, “elicit the same response from listeners,” and “[express] only the reactions of the parties for whom [the interpreter is] interpreting” (p. 9). This same idea is mentioned again in

the chapter on impartiality, which stipulates that testimonies containing “incorrect grammar or vulgar speech” should be interpreted “just as faithfully as...that of any other witness” (p. 21). Most instances of activist interpreting would therefore generally be considered unethical according to this code.

Cases of language-specific inherent ambiguity are even addressed. Several examples are given, such as the English word “child,” which does not refer to any specific gender which may be interpreted into languages which require gender-specification, such as Spanish. According to the code, all such ambiguities should be retained “if the target language allows” and that the interpreter “must clarify any such linguistic ambiguities before interpreting” (p. 12). In other words, if “child” were to be used in a context in which it would not be clear whether the Spanish translation should be “niño,” “niña,” or another word, the interpreter should clarify before interpreting. In this and other examples mentioned in the code, it seems that ethics oblige the interpreter to clarify about specific individuals signified by a word such as “child.” No explicit mentions are made, however, of the protocol for general statements, such as mentions made of “children” in general. In one sense, the rendering of “children” used in such a general sense as “niños y niñas” or even “niñes” in Spanish would seem to in fact be in keeping with the code, as it maintains the lack of gender specificity in the original English. In this sense, aspects of some forms of activist interpreting could surprisingly be argued to be in accord with the CIP’s code if taken to the extreme. Nevertheless, such renderings also clearly introduce a pragmatic addition of intention and attitude which might not be shared by the original speaker. Keeping in mind the general spirit of the document and the fact that in most cases activist interpreting would constitute a flagrant addition or omission, the activist interpreting and the CIP’s code are clearly not ubiquitously compatible with each other.

3.2.5 NCIHC

Finally, NCIHC’s 23-paged code of ethics, last updated in July 2004, includes fidelity as one of its three “core values,” along with “beneficence” and “respect for the importance of culture and cultural differences,” which precede nine ethical norms (National Council on Interpreting in Health Care, 2004, pp. 8-9). In the core values section, the code cites The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language’s definition of “fidelity” (“the unflinching fulfillment of one’s duties and obligations and the keeping of one’s word or vows. In a related nonpersonal sense, it refers to faithfulness to an original”), which is described as “the attitude with which interpreters should approach their work” (p. 8). The second of the nine ethical norms deals with the interpreter’s duty to accuracy and faithfulness to the “content and spirit

of the original message,” with much emphasis placed on the interpreter’s obligation to ensure that the encounter “approximates, as much as possible, what would be happening if the patient and the provider spoke the same language and shared an essentially similar cultural frame of reference” (p. 13).

Importantly, it is stipulated both that “meanings conveyed are not [to be] censored except by the parties themselves” and that “in no instance should interpreters decide to omit or distort messages because these are personally offensive to them or because they are uncomfortable with the language or content of the message” (p. 13). The importance these aspects of fidelity are rooted, according to the code, in the importance of both the content and form of language as a diagnostic tool for medical staff and a means by which their relationships with patients are developed; in both cases language, in content and form, can radically alter the fruits of an interaction (p. 14). Later in the code, the interpreter’s role as one of advocacy, understood as “an action taken on behalf of an individual that goes beyond facilitating communication, with the intention of supporting good health outcomes” is deemed ethically sound, but only “when the patient’s health, well-being, or dignity is at risk” and that otherwise the interpreter must remain impartial; social justice advocacy, therefore, does not qualify (p. 19). According to this code, then, activist interpretation would again be an unethical practice.

3.2.6 *Synthesis*

In synthesis, we can then pool together the essential features of the discussed ethics codes as follows:

- I. The interpreter must remain impartial and neutral without expressing her personal opinions or views or allowing them to be manifested in the interpretation (all codes except for AIIC).
- II. The content of the original utterance must not be altered by omissions, additions, distortions (all codes except for AIIC), explanations, embellishments/improvements, or paraphrasing (NAJIT).
- III. The intention and general spirit of the original message must be maintained and unaltered (all codes except for AIIC).
- IV. Ambiguous source-language-specific features should be clarified before being rendered in the target-language (CIP).

3.3 *Fidelity As Considered in the Academic Literature: The Need for an Expanded Categorization*

Although the above-cited professional codes of ethics certainly share some common threads in their definitions of fidelity and accuracy (with the notable exception of AIIC's), they certainly differ in the degree of nuance. For this reason, a basic framework of what constitutes fidelity taken from the academic literature is worth bearing in mind as a backdrop to the ethics codes to establish a certain degree of common language in order to develop clearly defined criteria for the questionnaire.

As Setton and Dawrant (2016) point out, instances under ideal circumstances in which the maintenance of fidelity in interpreting, or the lack thereof, is debatable or ambiguous often have to do with what they call "optimization" (p. 350). Since the introduction of power-decentralizing language or the alteration or omission of power-centralizing language would be viewed as a form of optimization, at least from the activist interpreter's point of view, a brief discussion of the gradients of optimization is warranted. According to Setton and Dawrant (2016), optimization is one of three basic categories of interpreting from the point of view of fidelity. The other two are the "default goal of interpreting" to guarantee "basic fidelity" of the speaker's message even if it is slightly modified, and "constrained interpreting," which results from limits deriving from the interpreter's qualifications, unideal working conditions, and the like (pp. 351-353). The idea of a default goal to maintain the essence of a speaker's message is of course not unique to these authors; Gile (2009), for example, refers to a roughly homologous concept which he calls the "minimum fidelity principle" (p. 62).

While the improvement of form and process entail interesting discussions, it is content optimization that is of most interest in the context of this work. According to the same Setton and Dawrant's classification system, content optimization can take one of three forms: clarifying/explaining, correcting, and filtering, each of which implies certain costs, risks, and benefits when it comes to ensuring a faithful rendering of the speaker's message (pp. 356-364). For our purposes, the filtering variety of content optimization would be most pertinent.

Setton and Dawrant distinguish an important dichotomy within this subcategory which is key to our purposes. Namely, they indicate that deliberate omissions or modifications can either increase fidelity by dodging misunderstandings, or they can serve to dilute or censor offensive or intense language and tone, which is clearly more controversial. The acceptability of softening of offensive, harsh, or intimidating language has a hazier boundary and is likely often done spontaneously to save face, whether of the interpreter or the participant in question. Doing so in the cases presented by Setton and Dawrant, however, is clearly in violation of the ethics codes presented above (except for AIIC's), as it is a paraphrasing distortion that may serve as an implicit form of cultural mediation.

That said, the first form of content-optimizing filtering through deliberate alterations — those which retain the speaker’s intended message faithfully— is generally less of an issue in the context of activist interpreters who make use of power-decentralizing language when they sense or deduce with good reason that it coincides with the speaker’s views, though this could still pose an ethical dilemma according to some standards, especially in legal interpreting. To return to an earlier example, interpreting into Spanish a statement about “children” in general using “niñas y niños” would likely be less problematic, more appreciated, and perhaps even more faithful, than using just “niños” in many progressive third sector NGOs, for example, while the same tactic can be and is at odds with some court interpreting ethics codes (including those cited above), since information and nuance is introduced which may reflect the interpreter’s personal opinions and views. In either case, however, this use of power-decentralizing language could be considered fidelity-compliant provided that it coincides with what the interpreter understands to be the speaker’s dispositions with regards to gender equality in language use: if other elements of the English speaker’s verbal and non-verbal communication indicate such a position, such as the use of she/her/hers as a generic third person, the “niñas y” could constitute an addition called for by fidelity standards in all but strict legal contexts. The second type of content-optimizing filtering —the toning down of offensive language— constitutes a case that is clearly more at odds with fidelity than the previous one. In the case of intentionally employed, explicit hate speech, racial slurs, sexist or homo- or transphobic language, and so on, basic fidelity would clearly not be upheld. Furthermore, the systematic toning-down of such offensive language, while it may be used for face-saving, could perhaps be perceived as counterproductive by many activist interpreters, who may see such behavior as a form of legitimization or facilitation as it does not give the other party or parties an opportunity to call out or address the unacceptable behavior. It therefore is of little concern in this paper and does not qualify as activist interpreting for our purposes. Filtering is nevertheless relevant to activist interpreting in some cases, namely through register alteration, which will be developed further on.

In the realm of activist interpreting there exists a third type of content-optimizing filtering that Setton and Dawrant do not take into account in their classification system. This third type would be understood as the systematic power decentralization of language in those cases where it is neither clearly in line with other indicators of the speaker’s language and behavior nor clearly in disharmony with them. For example, if an English speaker with whom the interpreter is not familiar and whom the interpreter has not yet psychologically typified takes the floor at a multilingual conference on secondary school grading and begins with

“secondary students in Latin America today...” an activist Spanish interpreter in this case would opt for “las alumnas y los alumnos,” “las alumnas,” “les alumnes,” and the like, with the intention not of face-saving, but rather of disseminating the use of such phrasings in general. The intention would not and, in this case, could not be that of diluting either, since “students” is not marked by grammatical gender. Furthermore, this would not fit Setton and Dawrant’s notion of mediation, since the aim is not “to act on or influence the participants’ intentions,” but rather to generally promote power-decentralizing language at large (p. 367). For these reasons a new subcategory of content optimization perhaps warrants consideration.

In all of these cases, what is clear is that information is introduced. Depending on the motive for doing so—to maintain fidelity or to generally promote power-decentralizing language—activist interpreters are, to use Gile’s (2009) terminology, adding either “Framing Information” (to enable comprehension) or “Personal Information” (in this case linked to the interpreter), respectively, which are not mutually exclusive (pp. 57-59). To continue with the same example, the rendering of “children” as “niñas y niños” or “niñes” would necessarily include framing information (to enable the comprehension that the original was not referring to a single gender) and possibly personal information as well (signifying, intentionally or not, personal views held by the interpreter regarding how mixed-gender or gender-ambiguous plurals should be expressed in Spanish). What this leaves us with is that, in certain cases, activist interpretation as defined here constitutes a new category to be added to Setton and Dawrant’s taxonomy of content-optimizing filtering, which we may call ambiguous content-optimizing filtering, as opposed to fidelity-maintaining or content-diluting filtering. It is ambiguous since it is not obvious to the original audience nor to the interpreter whether the introduction of power-decentralizing language in this sort of context differs from the speaker’s intention.

Furthermore, if we consider the recurring theme among the literature and professional codes of ethics of fidelity being defined, at least in part, as eliciting a similar impression and response among the target language audience as those received by the source language audience, we again find ourselves in a gray space. Here, several sociological factors of the audience come into play, such as the age, socioeconomic status, gender identity, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and political inclinations, among many others. Such factors will determine whether “niños” “niñas y niños,” “niñas,” or “niñes” will elicit the same impression that the same listener would here if she were a native speaker of English hearing “children.” The non-isomorphism of languages and cultures obviously renders the determination of which option will fit the bill for eliciting the equivalence, especially in cases of culturally, politically,

ethnically, generationally, etc. diverse audiences and widely spoken languages like English and Spanish. That is, for some individuals, “niñes” may be heard without drawing excessive attention to the word choice, while this clearly may not be the case for others who could find themselves in the same audience and dependent on the same interpretation services. The same goes for the case of “madame *la* ministre” (as opposed to “madame *le* ministre”) in French mentioned earlier. In this sense, ambiguous content-optimizing filtering is not only ambiguous in terms of the original speaker’s intention, but also in terms of the equivalency or non-equivalency of impressions left in source language and target language audiences.

3.3.1 *Synthesis*

The essential axiom of fidelity according to this theoretical review, based on Gile and Setton and Dawrant’s work, that differs from fidelity as framed in the ethics codes is as follows:

- I. The interpreter may strategically carry out additions and omissions only when they serve maintain or optimize fidelity to the original message (i.e., to elicit of the same reaction in the target-language audience as in the source-language audience) (Setton and Dawrant’s fidelity-optimizing content filtering and Gile’s minimum fidelity principle).

This key difference between fidelity as understood in the academic literature as opposed to ethics codes served as the criterion by which the maintenance of theoretical fidelity was measured in the developing of the questionnaire below.

4 **METHODOLOGY**

4.1 *Questionnaire*

In order seek answers to the three questions posed in the introduction (to determine I. whether interpreters consider themselves activist interpreters, II. if they do, what aspects of their profiles correlate to that self-perception, and III. if they do, whether they follow through with their convictions to serve as agents of social change even when doing so clashes with the precepts of fidelity as defined in the ethics codes and academic literature analyzed above), a 25-question questionnaire consisting of three sections was developed using Google Forms. The questionnaire was then distributed via email and social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, and WhatsApp) to interpreters meeting the required profile (i.e., having English and Spanish as active languages, due to the language-specific questions, and a minimum of two years of professional experience working as interpreters, to ensure that respondents had had sufficient

time working to realistically gauge their responses). Participants were also encouraged by word of mouth to pass the questionnaire link along to pertinent colleagues and acquaintances. The questionnaire active for 24 days, from April 6th to April 30th, 2022.

4.1.1 Section 1

The first section consisted of profile identification questions, the responses to which were later compared with responses in the second and third sections. These identification questions included items such as age, gender, number of years of professional interpreting experience, language combination, and main interpreting settings in which the respondents work. The complete list of questions can be found in Appendix I.

4.1.2 Section 2

The second section consisted of four questions that aimed to determine whether the respondents consider themselves advocates of the four forms of activism examined in the third section in their work. These four forms of activism were selected personally by the author on the mere basis that they relate to current hot social topics which can cause challenges while interpreting from English to Spanish and from Spanish to English. Each question consisted of a statement, and respondents indicated the degree to which they agreed with it using a five-point Likert scale. The statements in the second section are as follows:

1. I consider myself a feminist and support feminist language use movements (such as using the feminine plural for mixed-gender groups in Spanish or using she/her/hers as a generic third person pronoun in English), including in my work.
2. I support the use of language that promotes gender equality (such as repetitions like “amigos y amigas” in Spanish when addressing a mixed-gender group, or using gender-neutral terms in English, like “humankind” instead of “mankind”), including in my work.
3. I support the use of non-binary pronouns and use them when asked to by people who identify as non-binary, including in my work.
4. I adjust linguistic register to the needs of others (for example, as a means to show my sympathy and comfort people in distress), including in my work.

4.1.3 Section 3

The third section consisted of eight questions that aimed to determine the degree to which participants agreed with concrete examples of activist interpreting. Two aspects of

activist interpreting (the insertion of power-decentralizing language use where absent in the original and the decentralizing of power-centralizing language where present in the original) were examined across the four forms of activism laid out in Section 2 (feminism, gender equality, gender neutrality and non-binary pronoun use, and register alteration), yielding a total of eight questions. Each included a brief context followed by an invented utterance in either English or Spanish and a proposed rendition which would be in keeping with activist interpreting. For the purpose of developing a questionnaire specific enough to include measurable and concrete hypothetical situations, participants were limited to interpreters with English and Spanish as A and/or B languages, which is to be borne in mind by the reader along with the representative limitations that this implies for the profession of interpreting in general. After each context and hypothetical utterance, participants selected a response on a 5-point Likert scale to indicate the degree to which they agreed with the appropriateness of the proposed rendition in the other language.

A balance was sought between questions with answers that conflict and do not conflict with the fidelity criteria according to both the sample of ethics codes and the academic literature review above. In two cases, ambiguous content optimization was sought as well to see whether such situations correspond to greater degrees of hesitancy and neutrality. These different categories of the presence, absence, or ambiguity of conflict with the ethics codes and academic literature were developed in order to determine whether some interpreters who perceive themselves as activists who promote sociolinguistic change follow through with their convictions only when it is not in conflict with professional and/or scholarly expectations of fidelity, or rather if they do so even when it is in conflict with those expectations. A balance was also sought between questions of into-English and into-Spanish prompts.

The responses were then analyzed with particular interest in those questions which are not in keeping with fidelity as it is defined in the ethics codes and the theoretical framework established above. The questions in the third section are compiled in the following table. The information in italics shows whether the proposed utterance is an error according to the codes of ethics and academic literature. This information was not shown to questionnaire respondents but is listed below for clarification.

Table 1: Questionnaire Section 3 Questions

Form of activism	Introduction of power-decentralizing language where absent in the original	Decentralization of power-centralizing language where present in the original
Feminism	<p>1) Context: A male politician of a far-right party is giving a speech in a campaign for public office. The following statement is made in reference to the population of his constituency as a whole.</p> <p>“We are proud of our culture.”</p> <p>></p> <p>“Estamos orgullosas de nuestra cultura.”</p> <p><i>Error according to ethics codes?</i></p> <p>Yes (almost certainly changes the spirit of the original)</p> <p><i>Error according to the academic literature?</i></p> <p>Yes (same reason)</p>	<p>2) Context: You are interpreting at an informative conference on prehistoric cave paintings. A speaker with whom you are not familiar begins the first talk by making the following statement:</p> <p>“No cabe duda alguna de que el cavernícola que pintó el Bisonte de Altamira, quienquiera que fuese, veneró a estas bestias majestuosas.”</p> <p>></p> <p>“There is absolutely no doubt that the cave-dweller who painted the Altamira Bison, whoever she was, revered these majestic beasts.”</p> <p><i>Error according to ethics codes?</i></p> <p>Yes (addition of nuance which is not clarified with the speaker)</p> <p><i>Error according to the academic literature?</i></p> <p>Ambiguous (depends on the perceived general spirit and intention of the original, which is unknown)</p>

<p>Gender Equality</p>	<p>3) Context: The first speaker of an international biochemical research conference, with whom you are unfamiliar, begins her introductory remarks.</p> <p>“Dear colleagues, friends, I welcome you to the sixth edition of...”</p> <p>></p> <p>“Queridos colegas, amigos y amigas, les doy la bienvenida a la sexta edición de...”</p> <p><i>Error according to the ethics codes?</i></p> <p><i>Yes (addition)</i></p> <p><i>Error according to the academic literature?</i></p> <p><i>Ambiguous (depends on the perceived intentions of the original speaker)</i></p>	<p>4) Context: You are interpreting at an international bank’s annual assembly. Today votes are being cast to elect the head of the board of directors. The spokesperson officiating the proceedings announces:</p> <p>“Ahora procederemos a la votación del próximo presidente de la junta ejecutiva.”</p> <p>></p> <p>“We will now proceed to vote for the next chairperson of the board of directors.”</p> <p><i>Error according to the ethics codes?</i></p> <p><i>No (general spirit of message is maintained)</i></p> <p><i>Error according to the academic literature?</i></p> <p><i>No (same reason and same reaction elicited)</i></p>
<p>Gender Neutrality and Non-binary Pronoun Use</p>	<p>5) Context: You are interpreting in a court hearing and a Spanish-speaking witness begins a testimony. You are aware that the witness’s sibling Luis identifies as non-binary and prefers the non-binary pronoun <i>elle</i>.</p> <p>“Esa mañana Luis me prestó su auto porque el mío no arrancaba.”</p> <p>></p> <p>“That morning lent me their car because mine wouldn’t start.”</p> <p><i>Error according to the ethics codes?</i></p> <p><i>No (no alterations, intention is maintained)</i></p> <p><i>Error according to the academic literature?</i></p> <p><i>No (fidelity is maintained despite a nuance of difference in the cognitive effects produced in each audience)</i></p>	<p>6) Context: You are interpreting in a hospital during a medical visit for a woman and her child who identifies as non-binary. Both you and the doctor are aware of this, but the doctor keeps using “she/her/hers” and the word “daughter” in reference to the child while speaking in English. You are aware that the child prefers the pronoun <i>elle</i> and the ending -e on gender-marked nouns and adjectives. Addressing the mother, the doctor says,</p> <p>“We got the blood test results back from the lab and they show that your daughter is allergic to peanuts.”</p> <p>></p> <p>“Hemos recibido los resultados del análisis de sangre del laboratorio y muestran que su hijo es alérgico a los cacahuets.”</p> <p><i>Error according to the ethics codes?</i></p> <p><i>Yes (the general spirit of the doctors message is not maintained)</i></p> <p><i>Error according to the academic literature?</i></p> <p><i>Yes (same reason)</i></p>

<p>Register alteration</p>	<p>7) Context: You are interpreting for an asylum-seeker in an asylum hearing. The official conducting the hearing is speaking with an increasingly irritated and intimidating tone, and you sense that this is causing the asylum-seeker undue stress. The official sternly demands,</p> <p>“Sign here.”</p> <p>></p> <p>“Sólo tiene que firmar aquí, no más.”</p> <p><i>Error according to the ethics codes?</i></p> <p>Yes (general spirit of message is altered and additions are introduced)</p> <p><i>Error according to the academic literature?</i></p> <p>Yes (the additions and alterations do not serve to maintain or increase fidelity)</p>	<p>8) Context: You are interpreting in a court hearing for an individual with a low level of education and who is clearly having trouble understanding much of the legal language being used. Your impression is that the plaintiff’s lawyer is trying to overwhelm the witness for whom you are interpreting with technical jargon. The witness is not asking for clarifications and is clearly lost. About the defendant, Muñoz, the lawyer says, addressing the witness,</p> <p>“Your alibi is not consistent with the probation officer’s account of the defendant’s activities that evening.”</p> <p>></p> <p>“Su explicación no coincide con lo que contó el agente acerca de lo que hacía esa tarde el señor Muñoz.”</p> <p><i>Error according to the ethics codes?</i></p> <p>Yes (general spirit of message is altered and information is omitted)</p> <p><i>Error according to the academic literature?</i></p> <p>Yes (the alterations and omissions do not serve to maintain or increase fidelity to the speaker’s intended meaning)</p>
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5 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The full results of sections 1, 2, and 3 of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix I. Below, general results, impressions and analyses are given for each section. A total of 27 responses were received.

5.1 Section 1

The age groups of the respondents were more or less evenly distributed between each 10-year category from 20 to 59, with a minority (3 responses) in the category 60-69 or 70-79. A significant majority (74.1%) of respondents marked their gender as “female” and all but one

of the remaining respondents marked “male,” and the one exception marked “I prefer not to say.”

When it comes to the country in which participants carry out the bulk of their work, responses were nearly evenly split between countries in Europe and North America. All responses from North America (approximately 52% of respondents) do so in the United States, and of the remaining respondents, all but two do so in Spain. The two exceptions indicated Belgium.

Most respondents (23) have a single A language, either English or Spanish. The remaining four have two As, three of whom have an English-Spanish double A and the other an English-Italian double A. Of those respondents who have a single A language, most (approximately 74%) have Spanish as their A, and the remainder have English as their A. Most respondents (21) have a single B language, and of the remaining six, four have two Bs and two (the two double As) have zero Bs. English (in 17 cases) and Spanish (in 8 cases) were, naturally, the most commonly reported Bs, and there were also respondents with Italian as a second B and French as a second or only B. There was a considerable range of C languages, the quantity of which in a single profiled ranged from zero to five. French was the most commonly reported C, and others included German, Greek, Portuguese, Catalan, Galician, Russian, Polish, and Italian. A minority (five respondents) reported zero C languages.

Of the respondents who carry out the bulk of their work in Europe (Spain or Belgium), 100% marked conference interpreting as source of the bulk of work, and in a few cases diplomatic and/or migration were also marked. Of the respondents who carry out most of their work in the United States, all but one marked “legal and court,” while “migration,” “education,” “healthcare/medical,” and “social work” were marked with less frequency. Of the settings listed, only “conflict zones” and “police” were never marked.

As far as years of experience, respondents were nearly evenly distributed among the three categories (“2-5,” “5-10,” and “10+”). A slight majority (55.6%) of respondents have a postgraduate degree in interpreting, one respondent has only an undergraduate degree, and the training of the remainder (40.7%) have only short course(s)/workshop(s) as their training. Most (approximately 60%) of respondents hold an academic degree in other fields, which are several and include, philology, international relations, law, and history, among others. The full list is available below in Appendix I. Importantly, a vast majority (over 80%) of respondents hold some form of professional certification or accreditation, including accreditation with the European Union, AIIC membership, accreditation as a sworn translator-interpreter in Spain, CHI medical interpreter certification, California Judicial Council certification, United States

federal court interpreter certification, Kentucky state court interpreter interpretation, and unspecified state-level court interpreting certifications in the United States. The full list of reported certifications/accreditations is available below in Appendix I.

As for how respondents receive the bulk of their work, a significant majority (77.8%) marked “freelance work,” while 25.9% reported that they are staff interpreters, and 14.8% marked “volunteer work.” Almost all respondents indicated that they either do not do volunteer interpreting work (22.2%) or that they do so rarely (74.1%). A single respondent reported to do volunteer interpreting work monthly, and zero reported that they do so weekly.

In general, then, the most common interpreter profile for respondents who work mostly in Europe is that of young, highly educated and qualified, female, Spain-based, freelance Spanish-A conference interpreters with several years of experience who rarely volunteer. Of those based in the United States, the main settings of work were various forms of community interpreting with a clear dominance of legal and court settings, and there was a greater age range. Various aspects of respondents’ profiles were common threads among all participants, however, regardless of the location and settings that dominate in their work: the gender (female), A language (Spanish), nature of most work (freelance), and volunteer frequency (rare) were common trends among the entire group of respondents.

5.2 Section 2

5.2.1 Feminism

Just over half of respondents (14) marked “neutral” as their degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement on linguistic feminism. Of the remaining 13, five marked “agree” and five “disagree.” Two of the remaining three marked “strongly agree” and one “strongly disagree.” On the whole, the support of feminist language use movements was seen neutrally, and slightly more saw it positively than did negatively. More than half of Europe-based respondents marked “agree” or “strongly agree.”

I consider myself a feminist and support feminist language use movements (such as using the feminine plural for mixed-gender groups in Spanish...person pronoun in English), including in my work.
27 respuestas

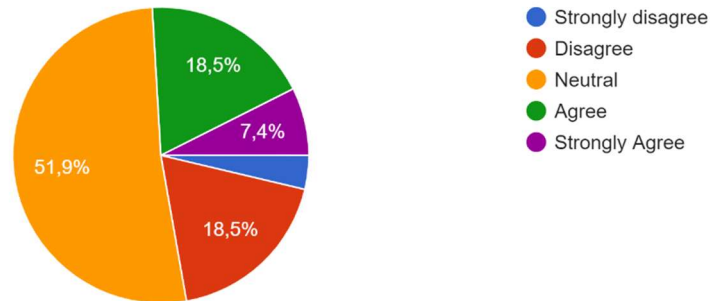


Figure 1: Questionnaire Section 2 Results: Feminism

5.2.2 Gender Equality

Responses to the statement regarding the support of gender equality promotion through language use were also marked by agreement and neutrality, with a stronger presence of agreement than in the case of feminism. In this case 44.44% marked either “agree” or “strongly agree,” and another 44.4% marked “neutral.” The remainder (three respondents) marked either “disagree” (two) or “strongly disagree” (one). Again, more than half of Europe-based respondents marked “agree” or “strongly agree.”

I support the use of language that promotes gender equality (such as repetitions like “amigos y amigas” in Spanish when addressing a mixed-gender...nd” instead of “mankind”), including in my work.
27 respuestas

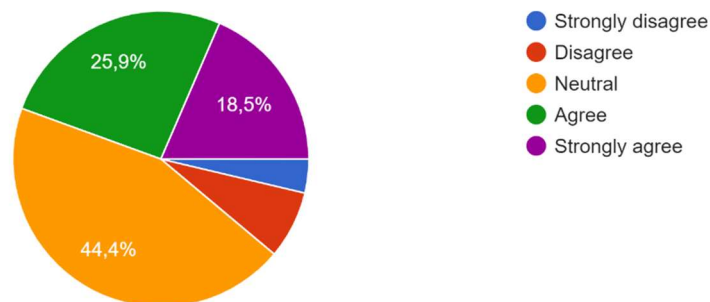


Figure 2: Questionnaire Section 2 Results: Gender Equality

5.2.3 Gender Neutrality and Non-binary Pronoun Use

Once again, support in the realm of non-binary pronoun use was marked by agreement and neutrality. 44.4% of respondents marked either agree or strongly agree, 40.7% marked

“neutral”. The remaining respondents who did not mark neutral marked “disagree.” Here too, more than half of Europe-based respondents marked “agree” or “strongly agree.”

I support the use of non-binary pronouns and use them when asked to by people who identify as non-binary, including in my work.

27 respuestas

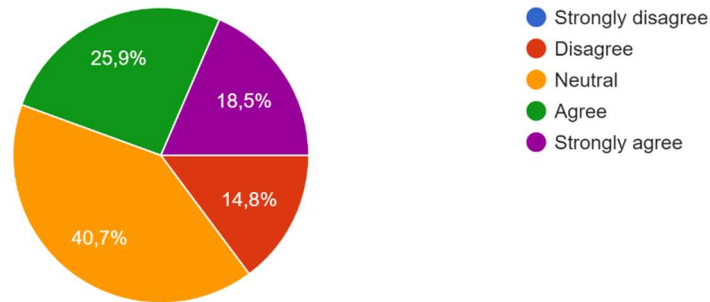


Figure 3: Questionnaire Section 2 Results: Gender Neutrality and Non-binary Pronoun Use

5.2.4 Register Alteration

The responses to this statement were the most mixed. Just over a quarter of respondents (seven) marked “strongly agree” and just over a quarter (also seven) marked “strongly disagree.” Of the remainder, most (eight) marked “agree,” while three marked “neutral” and two, “disagree.” Again, in the case of community interpreters, over half marked “disagree” or “strongly disagree,” and among conference interpreters over half marked “agree” or “strongly agree.” In general, it is noteworthy that over half of respondents support the use of register alteration to comfort others or otherwise meet their needs in and out of work, but it is also worth bearing in mind that of the remainder, most felt the contrary strongly.

I adjust linguistic register to the needs of others (for example, as a means to show my sympathy and comfort people in distress), including in my work.

27 respuestas

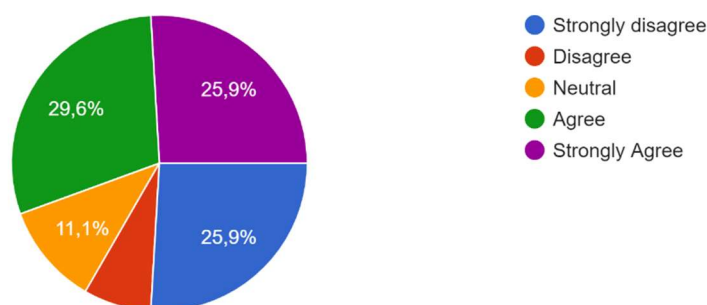


Figure 4: Questionnaire Section 2 Results: Register Alteration

5.3 Section 3

5.3.1 Feminism

5.3.1.1 1) Scenario Involving the Far-Right Male Politician and Generic Feminine Plural in Spanish

As stated in the Table 1, which may be consulted for all questions in Section 3, the proposed utterance in this question can be considered an error both according to the ethics codes and academic literature consulted. Curiously, however, results were very split among the Europe-based conference interpreters, who marked all options except for “agree” with a relatively even distribution. Overall, however, “disagree” or “strongly disagree” was marked by the vast majority of respondents (just over 85%). It is interesting that this was the case despite the much stronger presence of neutrality in the corresponding statement in Section 2. Here it would seem that, for these interpreters, the self-perception of neutrality towards or support of feminist language movements as being present in their work is not reflexive of how they report that they would behave in a real-life interpreting situation, perhaps due to the fact that the proposed rendition is such a glaring error according to both the ethics codes and the academic literature, such that opting for it would make for a more clear and potentially divisive mark to be placed on the interpreter’s reputation.

Utterance: "We are proud of our culture." Rendition: "Estamos orgullosas de nuestra cultura."
27 respuestas

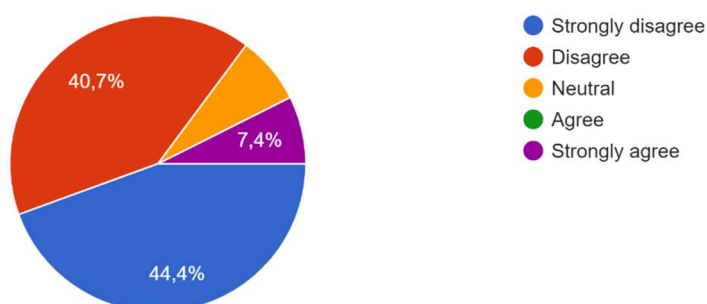


Figure 5: Questionnaire Section 3 Results: Generic Feminine Plural in Spanish

5.3.1.2 2) Scenario Involving the Conference on Cave Paintings and the Use of the Generic “She/Her/Hers” in English

In this case, the proposed utterance can be considered an error according to the ethics codes consulted, while it is ambiguous whether it is an error according to the academic literature as we lack enough context to determine the speaker’s intentions. Curiously, despite said ambiguity, responses to this question were once again marked by disagreement, with approximately two thirds of respondents having marked either “disagree” or “strongly disagree.” Of the remainder, two thirds marked “neutral” and the other third either “agree” or “strongly agree.” Perhaps this indicates that these interpreters feel slightly more in favor and/or tolerant of “she/her/hers” as general third person pronouns in English than they do of generic feminine plural in Spanish. This difference could be due to stronger feelings of conviction in the Spanish context, stronger feelings of the need to tread cautiously in the English context (which in turn could perhaps be reflexive of the predominance of Spanish-A interpreters in the pool of respondents), or other motives. Further interviews and research would be necessary to find out. In any case, here the results suggest that some interpreters reportedly perceive themselves to be in a position of neutrality or agreement with regards to feminist language use movements yet do not act accordingly when presented with a real-life situation.

Utterance: "No cabe duda alguna de que el cavernícola que pintó el Bisonte de Altamira, quienquiera que fuese, veneró a estas bestias maj... whoever she was, revered these majestic beasts."
27 respuestas

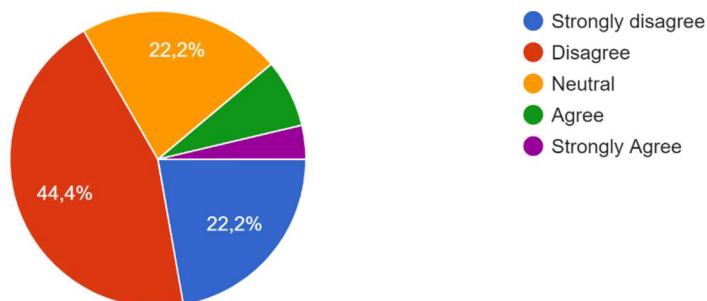


Figure 6: Questionnaire Section 3 Results: Generic "She/Her/Hers" in English

In light of both questions on feminism, then, the interpreters who responded to this questionnaire generally show an incongruence between their self-perceived convictions in this area and their reactions to these particular hypothetical scenarios, which were ethically compromising or ambiguous.

5.3.2 Gender Equality

5.3.2.1 3) Scenario Involving the Biochemical Research Conference and the use of "amigos y amigas" in Spanish

In this scenario, the proposed utterance in this question can be considered an error according to the ethics codes consulted, while it is a situation of ambiguity according to the academic literature as we lack sufficient context of the speaker's intentions. In this case, as opposed to the questions regarding feminist language use movements, the agreement and neutrality indicated in Section 2 was indeed reflected in the hypothetical scenario: over 75% of respondents marked "agree" or "strongly agree," and all but one of the remaining respondents marked "neutral," the one exception having marked "disagree." The explanation could perhaps be because the phenomenon of repeating gender-marked nouns and pronouns is so widespread in Spanish or because the stakes for doing so are not as high in a research conference as they may be in, say, a court of law. More research would be needed to confirm, rule out, or nuance this conjecture.

Utterance: "Dear colleagues, friends, I welcome you to the sixth edition of..." Rendition: "Queridos colegas, amigos y amigas, les doy la bienvenida a la sexta edición de..."

27 respuestas

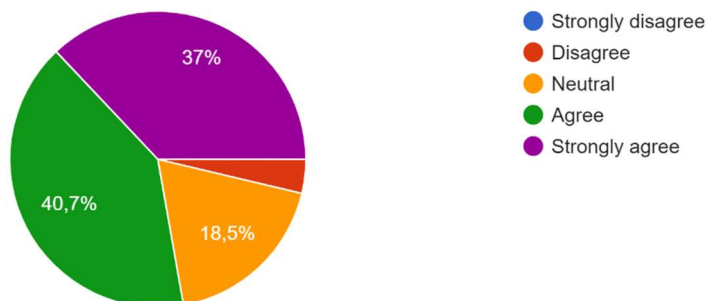


Figure 7: Questionnaire Section 3 Results: "Amigos y amigas" in Spanish

5.3.2.2 4) Scenario Involving the Bank Assembly and the Use of "chairperson" in English

Here, the proposed utterance would not be considered an error according to the ethics codes nor to the academic literature. It is perhaps then unsurprising that 100% of respondents marked "agree," "strongly agree," or "neutral," with only a single respondent having marked "neutral" and over half having marked "strongly agree." The readiness to opt for the proposed utterance is likely at least in part due to the fact that terminology of this sort is rather commonplace in English and does not attract excessive attention. In such cases, we see that, for these interpreters, gender equality language use is both self-perceived as supported and readily used in hypothetical scenarios when they are not at odds with ethical standards.

Utterance: "Ahora procederemos a la votación del próximo presidente de la junta ejecutiva." Rendering: "We will now proceed to vote for the next chairperson of the board of directors."

27 respuestas

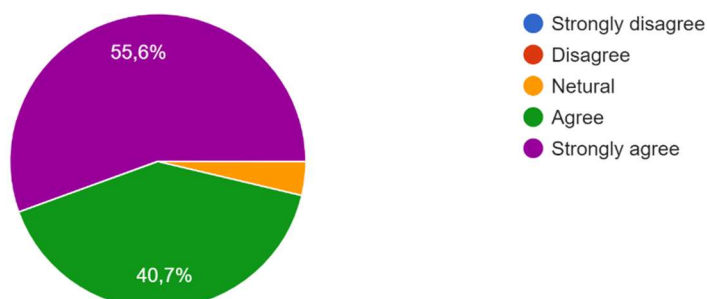


Figure 8: Questionnaire Section 3 Results: Use of "Chairperson" in English

It can be seen that in the case of gender equality, in both hypothetical scenarios more self-perceived conviction is observed in the hypothetical situation than in the self-perception statement in Section 2, likely due to the lack of conflict with fidelity. Since both of these cases involve hypothetical renderings with phrasings which are relatively frequent and non-controversial, whether the reported agreement is truly activism is open to debate. In other words, it would certainly be less provocative to opt for “amigos y amigas” in Spanish in the research conference situation than to opt for the generic feminine plural in Spanish in the far-right political rally when a male politician is speaking. In this sense it should be kept in mind that there are different gradients or degrees of activism in these interpreting scenarios. That said, since the determination of what constitutes a greater or lesser degree of activist interpreting is so dependent on the subjective vantage point of each individual and her sociocultural background, surroundings, and expectations which can vary from context to context or over time, it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish a clearly defined and measurable hierarchy of magnitudes of activism.

5.3.3 Gender Neutrality and Non-binary Pronoun Use

5.3.3.1 5) Scenario Involving Luis’s Non-Binary Sibling Mentioned in Court and the Use of the Singular “their” Possessive Modifier in English

The proposed utterance in this question would not be considered an error according to ethics codes nor to the academic literature. The results from the corresponding statement in Section 2 (predominance of neutrality and agreement) were reflected in this scenario. Curiously, two thirds marked “agree” or “strongly agree;” that is, agreement was more pronounced in this concrete situation than in the general statement in Section 2, where neutrality carried more weight. The legal nature of the scenario and the delicateness with which fidelity is known to be treated in legal interpreting may lead one to presume that legal and non-legal interpreters alike may therefore feel more bashful to introduce this singular “their” in English because of the potential high stakes and serious consequences for doing so in a court hearing. It would seem, however, that this is not necessarily the case, including among legal and court interpreters, perhaps due to the fact that the singular “they/them/their” pronoun usage is rather commonplace in contemporary English and that there is no glaring fidelity error in the rendition, as opposed to the other scenario in this category of activism.

Utterance: "Esa mañana Luis me prestó su auto porque el mío no arrancaba." Rendition: "That morning Luis lent me their car because mine wouldn't start."

27 respuestas

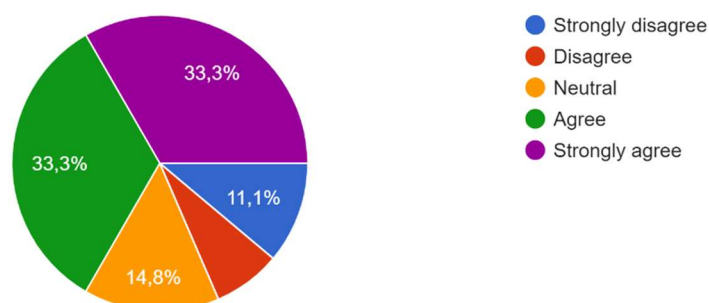


Figure 9: Questionnaire Section 3 Results: Use of Singular Non-binary "Their" in English

5.3.3.2 6) Scenario Involving the Non-Binary Child in the Hospital, the Doctor Saying "daughter" and the Use of the Non-Binary Pronoun "elle" in Spanish

In this scenario, the proposed utterance in this question can be considered an error according to both the ethics codes and the academic literature consulted. Here, responses were very mixed, although fewer respondents marked "agree" or "strongly agree" than "disagree" or "strongly disagree," albeit by a small margin. It is interesting and understandable that this case was more mixed and more marked by disagreement than Luis's sibling's case, given the relatively lower stakes in terms of legal consequences for diverging from strict fidelity expectations. The mixed response is perhaps because it is so obvious that using "hije" and "alérgique" would quite obviously not be faithful to the doctor's use of "daughter," whereas nothing in the context about Luis's sibling suggest that Luis would refer to them with marked feminine or masculine gender. Generally speaking, "agree" and "strongly agree" were more popular responses among Europe-based (and therefore, in this case, conference) interpreters, while "disagree" and "strongly disagree" were more popular among United States-based interpreters, although even in both breakdowns responses were mixed.

Utterance: "We got the blood test results back from the lab and they show that your daughter is allergic to peanuts." Rendition: "Hemos recibido lo...uestran que su hija es alérgique a los cacahuetes."
27 respuestas

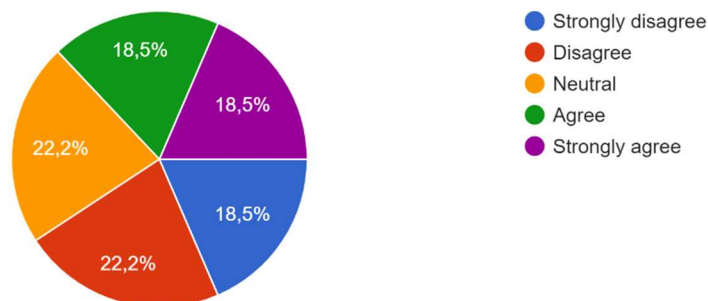


Figure 10: Questionnaire Section 3 Results: Use of "elle" in Spanish

The general trend of neutrality and agreement expressed in Section 2 is carried over to these hypothetical situations, though it is seen that more disagreement arises when the utterance does not maintain fidelity. That greater fragmentation of reactions in the scenario that does not maintain fidelity (the one in the medical appointment) could indicate various sentiments among interpreters. It may be that those who agree or strongly agree with the use of "hije" and "alérgique" consider the general advocacy, dissemination, and normalization of these morphological inflections to be a greater priority than that of reflecting the doctor's tone. However, it also may be that, imagining themselves in the scenario, they would feel too uncomfortable reflecting the doctors insistent use of "daughter" and feminine pronouns in the Spanish interpretation. Or perhaps they fear that the woman and her child would think that the use of "hija" and "alérgica" were a choice of the interpreter and not necessarily of the doctor and therefore opting for "hije" and "alérgique" would seek to avoid losing trust or damaging rapport. Perhaps they would feel too shameful or rude reflecting the doctor's female-marked word choice and would opt for "hije" and "alérgique" simply to save face or reduce their cognitive load by bypassing the attentional and emotional efforts of observing the patient and their mother further distressed by the female-marked noun and adjective. As for those who marked "disagree" or "strongly disagree," the most likely explanation is the obvious conflict with fidelity, although it could also be the case that personal views against the use of "elle" and its corresponding morphological inclinations could also be in play. All these motives are possible, and further interviews or research would need to confirm them or rule them out.

5.3.4 Register Alteration

5.3.4.1 7) Scenario Involving the Stern Assylum Hearing Official and the Use of “*sólo tiene que firmar aquí, no más*” in Spanish

The proposed utterance in this question can be considered an error according to both the ethics codes and the academic literature consulted. The responses to this question were very mixed, with “disagree” or “strongly disagree” accounting for over half of responses. “Strongly agree” was marked by only one respondent. It is interesting that respondents showed an overwhelming agreement with this kind of activism (over half of whom marked “agree” or “strongly agree”) in the corresponding statement in Section 2 and that, when presented with this situation, there was such a wide variety of reactions. In this question, more than half of Europe-based conference interpreters marked “neutral” or “agree,” and had a more pronounced tendency to mark “neutral” as a response to this question than in the corresponding question in Section 2. More than half of United States-based community interpreters marked “disagree” or “strongly disagree.” In any case, the tendency for more respondents to answer “neutral” to this specific question than to mark “neutral” in the corresponding general statement in Section 2 was observed.

The explanations could be various. Neutrality could be understood as a sort of ambiguity or bashfulness. That is, it may be that for those who marked neutral it would really depend on the situation, how stressed the asylum-seeker in question is, and how much the interpreter thinks that the register alteration could facilitate communication and/or meeting the goals of the person in question. It is worth noting that the respondents who marked legal/court interpreting as their main source of work showed a tendency to mark “disagree” or “strongly disagree” to this question. Generally speaking, when it comes to register, at least for the non-legal interpreters, the concrete situation and more contextual detail may be of more pressing importance than a desire to generally alter the register used in the type of setting presented in order to decentralize power dynamics for non-legal interpreters, while legal interpreters abide more strictly by the stipulations of ethics codes, as they are more acutely aware of the potential consequences for not doing so. However, more research would be necessary to confirm, discard, or nuance this inference.

Utterance: "sign here." Rendition: "Sólo tiene que firmar aquí, no más."
27 respuestas

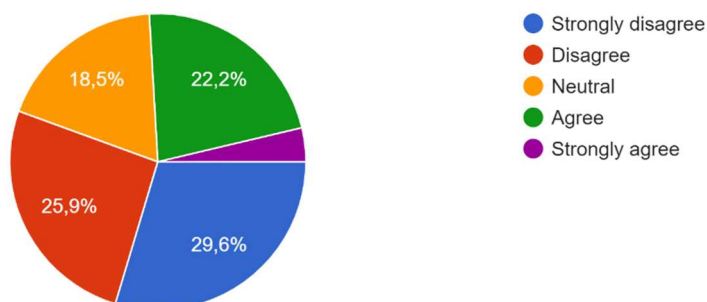


Figure 11: Questionnaire Section 3 Results: Use of "no más" in Spanish

5.3.4.2 8) Scenario Involving the Court Hearing and Simplification of Legal Jargon in Spanish

The proposed utterance in this question can be considered an error according to both the ethics codes and the academic literature consulted. Here, the responses from Section 2 showed a different trend than in this response: while in Section 2 six more respondents marked either "agree" or "strongly agree" than did "disagree" or "strongly disagree," in this question "disagree" or "strongly disagree" together had more one more response than "agree" or "strongly agree" together. There were also twice as many neutrals as in Section 2.

The neutrals may be explained with the same conjecture as the previous question, or perhaps respondents felt a greater sense of uncertainty and reluctance due to the fact that a slight majority of respondents do not regularly work in court or legal settings, making them feel unsure of how serious the consequences could be of this sort of register alteration in that setting. Here again, most legal interpreters marked "disagree" or "strongly disagree," which is consistent with the expectations held of them in most legal settings. Interestingly, one legal interpreter, who has more than 10 years of professional experience and is a staff interpreter, marked "strongly agree." This interpreter reported not to have professional accreditations or certifications, and the highest level of training marked was "short course(s)/workshop(s)." This lack of certification and training may be at the root of the response selected, or it may simply be due to the personal preferences of the individual. "Agree" was once again more popular among conference interpreters, perhaps due to a generally greater laxity in conference interpreting training than in legal interpreter training when it comes to adherence to fidelity in the strictest of senses, thereby explaining their greater disposition to agree with register

simplification to address the needs of others while working in general, and perhaps also to redress institutionalized power imbalances. In any case, more research would be necessary to debunk, confirm, or nuance all of these conjectures.

Utterance: "Your alibi is not consistent with the probation officer's account of the defendant's activities that evening." Rendition: "Su explicación...e acerca de lo que hacía esa tarde el señor Muñoz."
27 respuestas

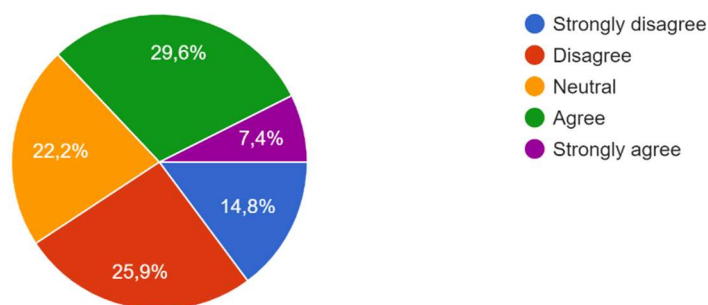


Figure 12: Questionnaire Section 3 Results: Terminological Simplification in Spanish

Register alteration is another case where actual behavior does not always align with reported sentiment; in the corresponding question in Section 2, over half of respondents reported to be in agreement or strong agreement, while in both hypothetical situations less than half reported the same, especially in the case of the addition of “no más,” perhaps since this addition clearly alters the aggressive tone described in the context, while in the second situation tone and intention are relatively unchanged and alterations are essentially lexical.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Different trends can be observed in each category of activism. In the case of feminist language use movements, most respondents said they were neutral or in agreement with supporting their use (with more pronounced agreement among conference interpreters), but curiously they turned out to be mostly in disagreement when presented with the hypothetical scenarios in Section 3. In these cases, the general trend was that activism was affirmed but not followed through with when it was at odds with ethics codes and the academic literature's conceptualizations of fidelity.

In the case of gender equality, activism was mostly either agreed with or seen neutrally, but then was followed through with in the hypothetical situation which was not in conflict with academic and ethics codes' notions of fidelity. When it was in conflict, responses were more mixed, but still a significant number of respondents decided to follow through with their activism despite it.

When it comes to gender neutrality and non-binary pronoun use, the expressed neutrality towards or agreement with activism was met by action in the scenario that did not conflict with ethics codes and notions of fidelity and by a wide range of reactions in the one that did, again with a fair number of respondents following through with their activism despite the conflict, a tendency more pronounced among conference interpreters than community interpreters.

Finally, in the case of register alteration, an expressed strong agreement with the use of register alteration to comfort others in stressful situations of power imbalances in Section 2 also yielded a wide range of reactions and more neutrality than in the other categories of activism, for which reason a general conclusion cannot be arrived at other than that it seems to depend on the individual interpreter, since this increase in mixed responses was observed across the board.

To return to the questions posed in the introduction, we can see that, at least for the interpreters who responded to this questionnaire, the main setting in which interpreters worked seems to be relevant. Namely, conference interpreters seem to agree more frequently with the types of activism presented while legal/court interpreting seem to disagree more frequently. As examined in the sections above, it seems that legal interpreters have a greater likelihood to disagree with activist utterances that infringe upon fidelity, likely due to the serious legal consequences that opting for them could have in many legal settings.

As far as other aspects of the profiles, there are clearly some common threads that may be related to the responses received. The significant dominance of “female” in gender self-identification, for example, is interesting. Further research could involve determining whether this female-dominant ratio is indicative of a similar ratio in the field of interpreting at large in all regions represented in this questionnaire and whether gender identification has an impact on reported levels of conviction in Section 2 or reactions in Section 3. The same can be said for the predominance of Spanish as an A language. Europe-based participants were generally mid-career, highly-qualified, female European freelance Spanish-A conference interpreters who rarely volunteer and who have several years of experience, while United States-based interpreters had wider ranges of age, training levels, and years of experience.

Because of the small number of questionnaire respondents, it is not possible to seriously correlate these profile aspects to answers in the following sections. This would be an area to explore further in later research: do these profile elements generally correspond, for example, to neutrality and/or disagreement to feminist language use in interpreting, or to neutrality and/or agreement to non-binary pronoun use in interpreting? Would results have been the opposite if the majority of respondents had been predominantly, say, novice male English-A

interpreters without postgraduate degrees in interpreting who volunteer weekly? It is difficult to say given the limited scope of this survey and without further research. In any case, as volunteering frequency as mostly rare or non-existent across the board yet yielded a variety of results, its lack seems not to bear a significant influence on the trends, though its presence very well could.

As for the question of whether interpreters who affirm their activism follow through with it even when doing so is at odds with fidelity as framed in ethics codes and the academic literature, both situations can be observed in these results: it rarely was in the case of feminism but was more frequently in the case of gender-equality-promoting language and non-binary pronoun use, while register alteration was more of a mixed bag. It would be interesting for further research to explore whether these disparities are related to the specific types of activism and/or the precise hypothetical scenarios presented (i.e., activism is generally less present in the form of feminism and generally more present in the form of non-binary pronoun use), or whether the inconsistencies across activism categories are reflexive rather of a general trend of significant variability from interpreter to interpreter. In the two cases of ambiguous content-optimization (questions 2 and 3 of Section 3), the initially expected upticks in neutrality as a reflection of hesitancy or uncertainty were not observed. Whether this is due to the nature of the concrete hypothetical situations or a lack of hesitancy in this kind of ambiguity in general would also be a topic for further research.

To answer these and other doubts, a significantly larger-reaching questionnaire would need to be carried out. The main issue in this case was the low response rate due to limited resources and time, for which reason an objective in further research may be that of nuancing the survey and acquiring responses from a larger pool of interpreters in order to carry out a statistical analysis and explore the possibility of statistically significant correlations. Looking at the situation not only in greater numbers but also in other countries and regions would be a topic for further research in order to observe whether differences in cultural traits in different places bear weight on the results. The same goes for other active language combinations. It would also be interesting to explore a comparison of pertinent ethics codes to individual responses, some ethics codes associated with professional accreditations and certifications held by respondents were represented (AIIC and CIP), while a long list of others were reported which may have their own associated codes with differing standards to those analyzed above. Another aspect of the questionnaire to examine in further research would be whether, all else being equal, there is a tendency for more activism to be carried out in ethically compromising situations in cases where power-centralizing language in the source language utterance is

decentralized in the interpretation as opposed to cases where power-decentralizing language is introduced in the interpretation where it is absent the source language utterance, since such tendencies were not clearly observable in the case of this work. At any rate, based on these results, it appears that there are indeed interpreters around the wide world who both consider themselves activists and who take on the role of agents of social change in their work to prioritize the construction and remodeling of the architecture of sociocultural narratives over fidelity compliance in some instances.

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8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix I: Full Questionnaire with Response Summary

30/4/22, 12:22

Thesis questionnaire for English/Spanish interpreters

Thesis questionnaire for English/Spanish interpreters

27 respuestas

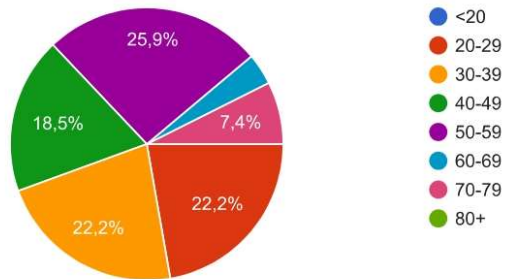
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Section 1

What is your age group?

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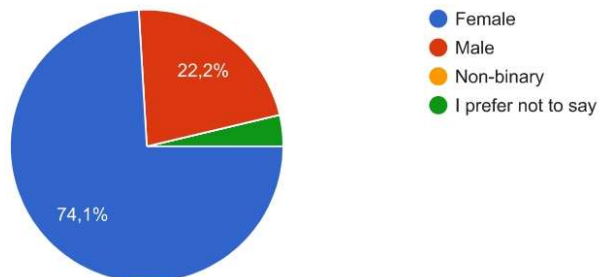
27 respuestas

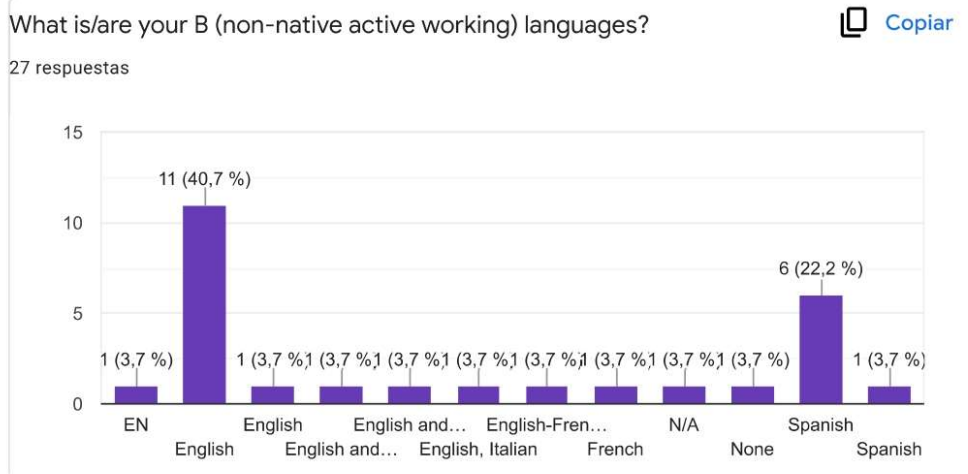
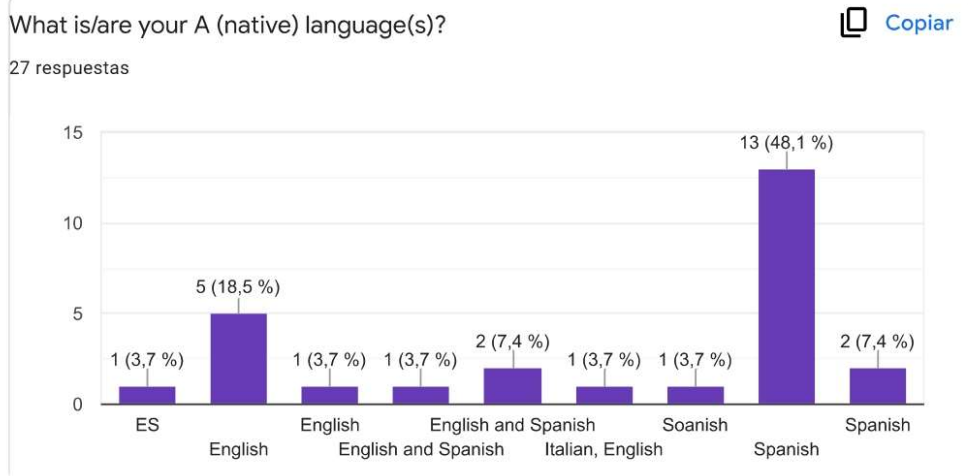
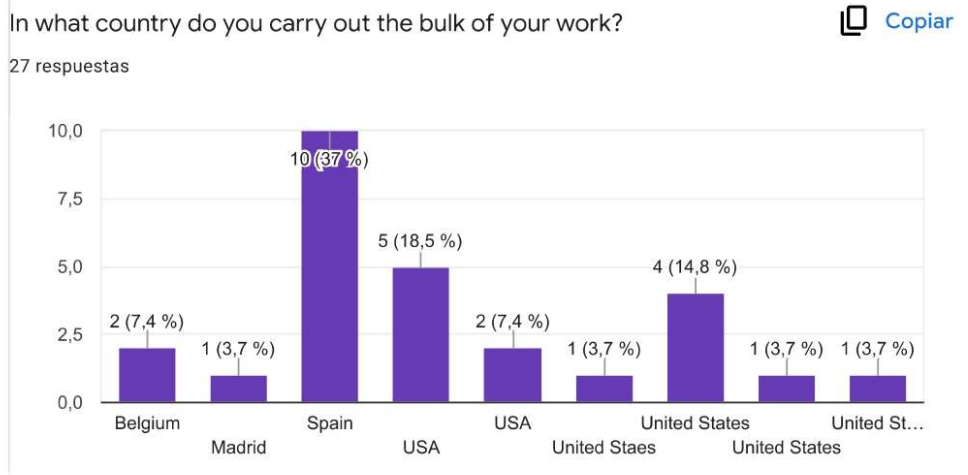


What is your gender?

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27 respuestas

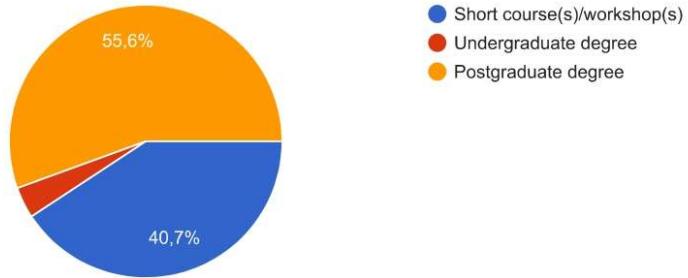




What interpreting training do you have?

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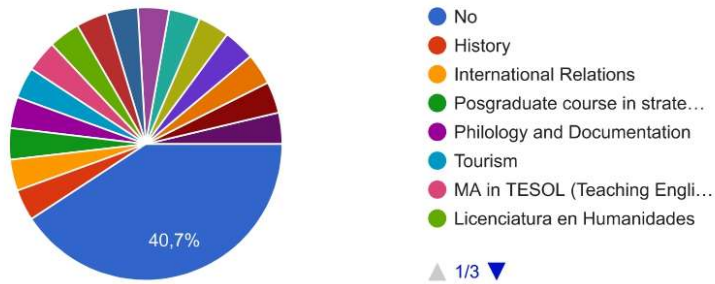
27 respuestas



Do you hold an academic degree in another field? (If yes, please specify the field selecting "other")

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27 respuestas

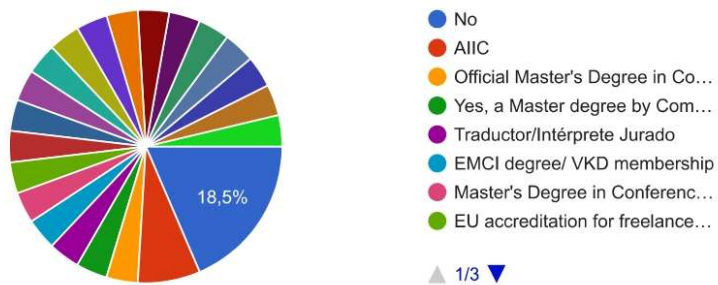


▲ 1/3 ▼

Do you hold a professional certification/accreditation in interpreting? (If yes, please specify selecting "other")

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27 respuestas



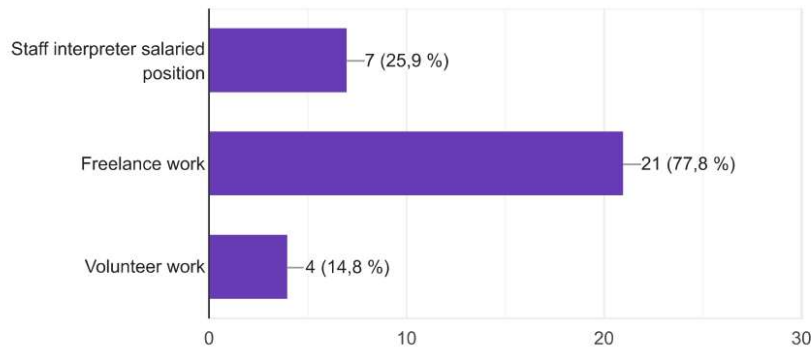
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How do you receive the bulk of your work? (Select all that apply)



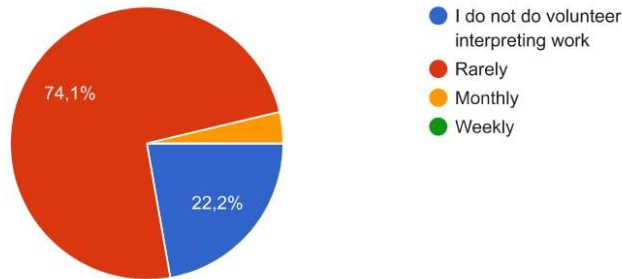
27 respuestas



How often do you do volunteer interpreting work?



27 respuestas

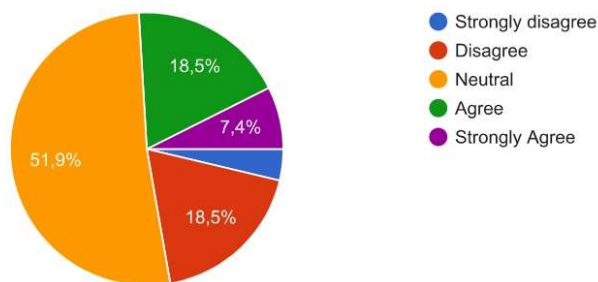


Section 2

I consider myself a feminist and support feminist language use movements (such as using the feminine plural for mixed-gender groups in Spanish or using she/her/hers as a generic third person pronoun in English), including in my work.



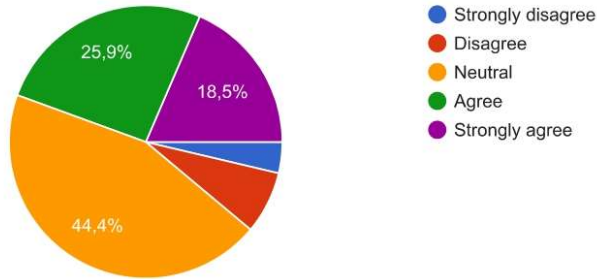
27 respuestas



I support the use of language that promotes gender equality (such as repetitions like “amigos y amigas” in Spanish when addressing a mixed-gender group, or using gender-neutral terms in English, like “humankind” instead of “mankind”), including in my work.



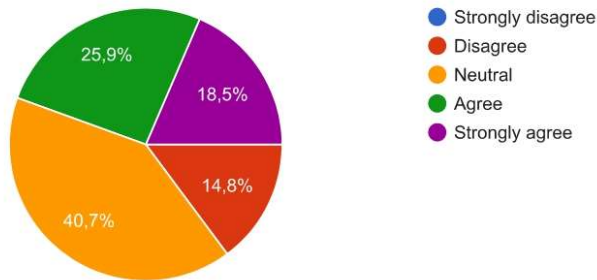
27 respuestas



I support the use of non-binary pronouns and use them when asked to by people who identify as non-binary, including in my work.



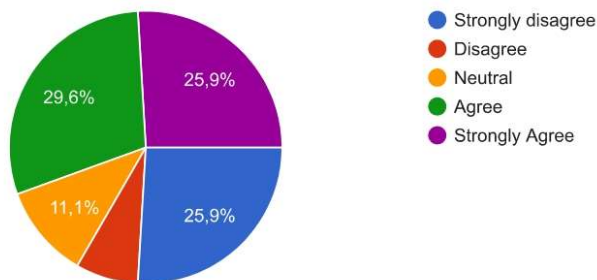
27 respuestas



I adjust linguistic register to the needs of others (for example, as a means to show my sympathy and comfort people in distress), including in my work.



27 respuestas




Section 3

30/4/22, 12:22

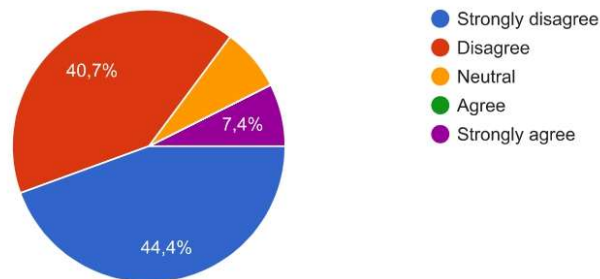
Thesis questionnaire for English/Spanish interpreters

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement "I would opt for this rendition in a real-life interpreting situation" for each of the following proposed renditions.

1) Context: A male politician of a far-right party is giving a speech in a campaign for public office. The following statement is made in reference to the population of his constituency as a whole.

Utterance: "We are proud of our culture." Rendition: "Estamos orgullosas de nuestra cultura."  Copiar

27 respuestas



2) Context: You are interpreting at an informative conference on prehistoric cave paintings. A speaker with whom you are not familiar begins the first talk with the following statement.



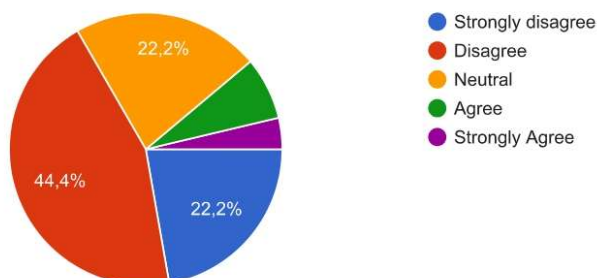
30/4/22, 12:22

Thesis questionnaire for English/Spanish interpreters

Utterance: "No cabe duda alguna de que el cavernícola que pintó el Bisonte de Altamira, quienquiera que fuese, veneró a estas bestias majestuosas." Rendition: "There is absolutely no doubt that the cave-dweller who painted the Altamira Bison, whoever she was, revered these majestic beasts."



27 respuestas

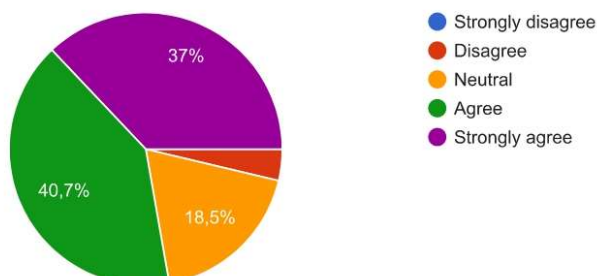


3) Context: The first speaker of an international biochemical research conference, with whom you are unfamiliar, begins her introductory remarks

Utterance: "Dear colleagues, friends, I welcome you to the sixth edition of..." Rendition: "Queridos colegas, amigos y amigas, les doy la bienvenida a la sexta edición de..."



27 respuestas



4) Context: You are interpreting at an international bank's annual assembly. Today votes are being cast to elect the head of the board of directors. The spokesperson officiating the proceedings announces,



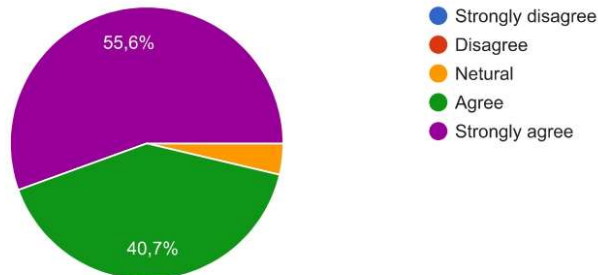
30/4/22, 12:22

Thesis questionnaire for English/Spanish interpreters

Utterance: "Ahora procederemos a la votación del próximo presidente de la junta ejecutiva." Rendering: "We will now proceed to vote for the next chairperson of the board of directors."



27 respuestas

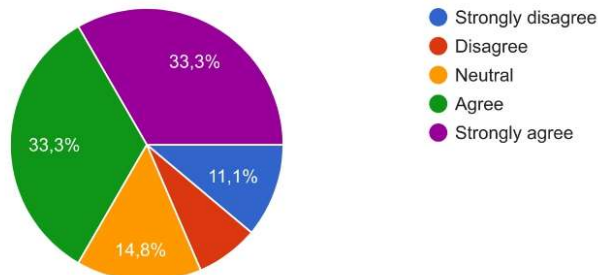


5) Context: You are interpreting in a court hearing and a Spanish-speaking witness begins a testimony. You are aware that the witness's sibling Luis identifies as non-binary and prefers the non-binary pronoun "elle".

Utterance: "Esa mañana Luis me prestó su auto porque el mio no arrancaba." Rendition: "That morning Luis lent me their car because mine wouldn't start."



27 respuestas



6) Context: You are interpreting in a hospital during a medical visit for a woman and her child who identifies as non-binary. Both you and the doctor are aware of this, but the doctor keeps using "she/her/hers" and the word "daughter" in reference to the child while speaking in English. You are aware that the child prefers the pronoun "elle" and the ending "-e" on gender-marked nouns and adjectives. Addressing the mother, the doctor says,



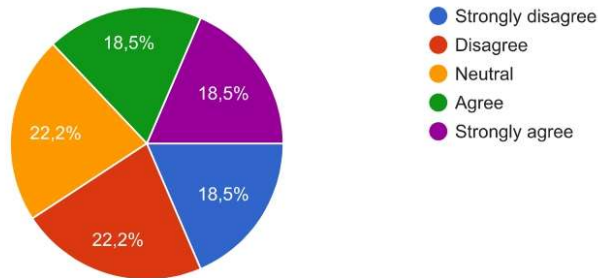
30/4/22, 12:22

Thesis questionnaire for English/Spanish interpreters

Utterance: "We got the blood test results back from the lab and they show that your daughter is allergic to peanuts." Rendition: "Hemos recibido los resultados del análisis de sangre del laboratorio y muestran que su hijo es alérgico a los cacahuetes."



27 respuestas

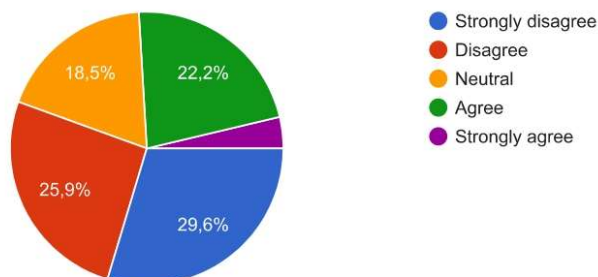


7) Context: You are interpreting for an asylum-seeker in an asylum hearing. The official conducting the hearing is speaking with an increasingly irritated and intimidating tone, and you sense that this is causing the asylum-seeker undue stress. The official sternly demands,

Utterance: "sign here." Rendition: "Sólo tiene que firmar aquí, no más."



27 respuestas



8) Context: You are interpreting in a court hearing for an individual with a low level of education and who is clearly having trouble understanding much of the legal language being used. Your impression is that the plaintiff's lawyer is trying to overwhelm the witness for whom you are interpreting with technical jargon. The witness is not asking for clarifications and is clearly lost. About the defendant, Muñoz, the lawyer says, addressing the witness,



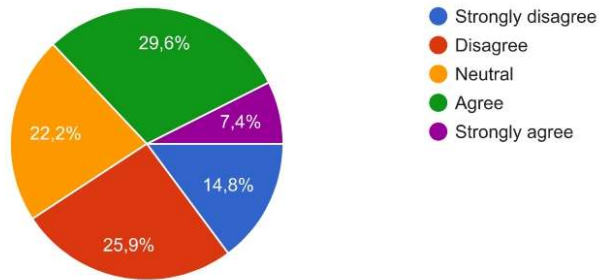
30/4/22, 12:22

Thesis questionnaire for English/Spanish interpreters

Utterance: "Your alibi is not consistent with the probation officer's account of the defendant's activities that evening." Rendition: "Su explicación no coincide con lo que contó el agente acerca de lo que hacía esa tarde el señor Muñoz."

 Copiar

27 respuestas



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11/11

Additional responses to question 9 of Section 1 not visible above:

Master's degree in Literary Translation, Phd candidate in English Linguistics, Communication, Law, Masters in Hotel Management, English studies and translation, Translation MPhil, Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership, Bachelors and Masters degree in Business Administration, and Bachelor's of Arts Degree

Additional responses to question 10 of Section 1 not visible above:

EU Accreditation, AICC membership; CHI, CA Judicial Council; Court certified interpreter at the state and federal levels; Certified Court interpreter; Yes, EMCI; State Certified Court Interpreter (State of Florida)-Federally Certified Court Interpreter; State and Federal Court Interpreter Certification, CCHI Certification; NBCMI/Court Registered; CCI; Certified court interpreter, certified Health Care Interpreter; Kentucky AOC; State Certified; Certified Healthcare Interpreter, Certified State Court Interpreter; and Court Interpreting Certificate