

## BIO

Elena Aguirre Fernández Bravo is Interpreting Assistant Professor at the Translation, Interpreting and Multilingual Communication Department of the *Universidad Pontificia Comillas*, with experience as a professional translator and interpreter. She holds a BA in Translation and Interpreting from this same institution and a double MA in Intercultural European Studies from the *Universität Regensburg* and the *Universidad Complutense de Madrid*. She obtained her PhD in 2015, with a doctoral thesis on the interpreter's metacognitive competence and its acquisition process. Her research areas of interest are cognition and interpreter training, discourse analysis and intercultural mediation in interpreting.

## ABSTRACT

**Keywords: self-assessment; self-concept; interpreter training**

***“Is this really worth the effort?” The role of introspection and self-assessment in interpreter training***

Research on learning has long emphasized the importance of paying attention not only to high-level processes, but also to the individual's affective system: motivation, self-concept, and affective self-regulation. The decision-making processes involved in interpreting take place in an immediacy context that requires not only resourcefulness, but self-consciousness and self-confidence; hence the importance of helping future interpreters develop an accurate professional self-concept from the very beginning of their training. This can be accomplished by cogently integrating introspection and self-monitoring in syllabi. In spite of the potential presented by tools such as portfolios, feedback rubrics and/or self-assessment forms, they tend to be unpopular and their effectiveness is often doubted: On the one hand, interpreter trainees fail to see their purpose, find forms tedious and annoying or can never find the time to fill them in; on the other, interpreter trainers find it difficult or wearisome to assess students' progress through such forms, and many of them would rather focus on their raw performance. This can make both groups of stakeholders ask themselves the question: *“is this really worth the effort?”*

We will argue that the answer to this question is yes, and we will try to prove so by analyzing the evolution, in terms of metacognition and introspection, of undergraduate Translation and Interpreting students at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas on the course of a one-semester Interpreting course. Our sample is made up of over 250 undergraduate students that were enrolled in *Interpretación I: Comunicación oral y análisis del discurso* during academic years 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, and 2017-2018. This course was selected because it is students' first contact both with interpreting techniques (consecutive without notes) and with interpreting-performance-related self- and peer-assessment dynamics. Throughout the semester, students submit up to 5 self-assessment forms; the first and last ones will be compared

to obtain data of two types. Focusing on the quantitative level, we will see whether there is a comparative increase in the use of the interpreting professional metalanguage at the end of the semester. Besides, from a more qualitative perspective, we will try to ascertain whether there has been an improvement in students' levels of introspection that is noticeable in the forms in semantic terms. Both quantitative and qualitative elements could predict a better degree of understanding the nature of those cognitive and metacognitive processes involved in interpreting, which could, in turn, imply a higher degree of empowerment and autonomy in learning, a core element of expertise in interpreting.