

Modelling Competence in Community Interpreting: expectancies, impressions and implications for accreditation

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ABSTRACT

The aims of this thesis are to propose and explore a competence model for community interpreting, and to discuss implications of the model for accreditation of community interpreters in the UK. The thesis first focuses on selected approaches to translation competence and interpreting competence in order to show that translation and interpreting studies fail to offer foundations for a model of community interpreter competence. The deficiencies identified in these approaches concern mostly a prevailing tendency to discuss the question of competence in terms of components. This, in turn, seems to result in prescriptive views on competence in translation and interpreting studies.

With a view to overcoming those deficiencies, the thesis discusses achievements of intercultural communication studies, arguing that scholarly contributions within this discipline are helpful in seeking theoretical foundations for a new model. Having shown the applicability of the model of intercultural communication competence (Spitzberg 2009) to the current project, the thesis puts forward a model of community interpreter competence. Drawing on relevant assumptions, the proposed model postulates approaching the question of competence as a matter of subjective impressions governed by fulfilment of individual expectancies.

This correspondence between competence impressions and expectancy fulfilment (Heise 2007) is claimed to constitute the decisive factor in the process of impression formation. For this reason, the assumptions and propositions of the model are used to derive a principle which describes the correspondence concerned. This principle is then tested through analysis of transcripts of interviews conducted with all three participants of interpreter-mediated encounters. The analysis successfully points to the correspondence between competence impressions and expectancy fulfilment.

Finally, the thesis explores the conclusions and implications of the analysis by proposing enhancement to the framework of interpreter accreditation in the UK (IoL 2007). The proposals aim to enrich the framework by widening the range of individuals, methods and sources used to assess a candidate's competence. This enrichment acknowledges the expectancy-based nature of impressions related to community interpreter competence.

KEYWORDS: competence, community interpreter, expectancies, impressions, accreditation.

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Completion of Thesis

Place: The University of Manchester, U.K.

Year: 2010

Supervisor: Dr Maeve Olohan