Survey on expectations of users of conference interpretation

Preface

Firstly, we would like to thank the AIIC Research Committee for having entrusted this study to SRZ Stadt + Regionalforschung in Vienna/Austria. In addition to the thanks addressed to all the members of the Research Committee, particular thanks go to Mrs Jennifer Mackintosh, the project leader. Not only did she tackle the organisational and administrative side of the project with great commitment but also handled discussions about the design and content of the survey with care and sensitivity. We could not have wished for better or warmer cooperation.

I wish also like to pay tribute to the many interpreters who were prepared to subject themselves to the stresses and strains of conducting interviews, often at the cost of their own well-deserved breaks.

For our part, we hope that this study will add to the sum of knowledge regarding user expectations, the basis of which has been laid by earlier case studies undertaken by a number of AIIC members. They were of great assistance in designing the present study.

Peter Moser
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A Aims of the survey

1 QUALITY: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND USER EVALUATION

Every professional association, and AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters) is no exception, seeks not only to guarantee members performance but also continually to improve standards. AIIC for example has an Admissions Committee (CACL) which applies a series of professional criteria to decisions on the admission of new members. Assessing the quality of a service can be
approached from two different viewpoints, usually mutually complementary rather than exclusive:

**interpreter expectations**
a) the providers of a service base themselves on their own set of self-imposed standards

**client expectations**
b) the quality of the service performed is measured against the judgements, needs and expectations of users of that service.

The present survey belongs in the second category. Using the methods of empirical social sciences research, it brings together the evaluations produced by a wide range of users of interpretation services and attempts to interpret their significance. User responses were obtained in the context in which the respondents were making use of the interpretation services and the data has been analysed against that background. In addition, and to the extent that the empirical data permits, account has also been taken of the degree to which respondents individual characteristics may have influenced their responses to or expectations of interpreter performance.

It is obviously a matter for individual interpreters to choose whether they wish to compare the results of the present survey with their own set of standards and expectations. It was not, and never could be, the purpose of this study to address AIIC's professional standards.

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