

Introduction: Emotions, stress and related phenomena in public service interpreter and translator training


Carmen Valero-Garcés

Universidad de Alcalá, España

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5960-0236>

Elena Alcalde Peñalver

Universidad de Alcalá, España

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1606-4792>

The topic chosen for Volume 11 of the journal, *Emotions, stress and related phenomena in public service interpreter and translator training*, seeks to take a further step in the professionalization of PSIT by paying attention to the preparation of future translators and interpreters, with an emphasis on practical aspects that are increasingly frequent in working and everyday life. In the introduction to volume 10 of the journal (Valero-Garcés and Alcalde Peñalver, 2023) we commented that, at that time (March 2023), it had been three years since that fateful March 2020 when the world was paralysed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, significant events have continued to occur (Afghan conflict, war in Ukraine, earthquakes in Turkey and Morocco, armed conflicts in African countries, natural disasters caused by climate change, etc.) that have led, and continue to lead, to humanitarian crises with the consequent mobilization of people and the necessary involvement of translators and interpreters in situations of intense emotion and stress due to the urgency of the action and, often, the lack of resources. Having professional translators and interpreters who are well prepared to face and deal with emotions and stress in such situations is therefore not just a necessity, but also a challenge due to the variety of contexts, languages, and cultures involved.

How to cite this article?

Valero-Garcés, C. & Alcalde Peñalver, E. (2024). Introduction. *FITISPos International Journal*, 11(1), 5-8. <https://doi.org/10.37536/FITISPos-IJ.2024.11.1.398>

Emotion, stress and the psychological impact on interpreters' performance are not new issues (Valero Garcés, 2005), although a growing number of studies pay attention to the influence of emotions on their professional practice as the situation requires them to go beyond a simple transfer of information from one language to another and they often find themselves in situations where they are interpreting for people who are emotionally distressed (Bontempo and Malcolm, 2012; Creeze et al. 2015; Lai et al., 2015).

Many of these studies indicate that empathy offers a way to improve interactions and is a value that public service workers are expected to offer. There are also initiatives that bridge the a priori irreconcilable differences between professional conduct and empathetic behaviours and propose ways of acting more openly and in accordance with the context in which translators and interpreters must act (Delgado Luchner and Kherbiche, 2019; Federici and O'Brien, 2019; Tesseur 2018; Tipton 2019; O'Brien and Federici, 2023).

The conclusions of the literature review on the role of emotions and empathy in PSIT carried out by Valero-Garcés and Alcalde (2021) highlight issues present in professional practice such as: the variety of contexts and situations in which its practice occurs and the different profiles of its practitioners; the coexistence of professional and sometimes unorthodox practices and attitudes (children as interpreters, family members who barely know the language, husbands as interpreters for wives who are victims of gender violence); the different roles that interpreters can play; or conflicts between codes of conduct of different professions. These are issues that need to be incorporated into PSIT training. Providing guidelines and practising emotionally charged situations that generate stress and other psychosocial effects in class from a very early stage in students' training could help them to perform their role professionally in situations of distress without this affecting the service provided.

In short, the central importance of emotions and stress in the context of PSIT accentuates the need for further research and the introduction into training of topics such as motivation management, self-esteem, stress and emotional self-regulation skills or approaches that prepare trainees to respond to emotionally charged situations or topics related to vicarious trauma and self-care. Including these topics in the growing availability of training courses for translators and interpreters or in the development of training-the-trainers courses in the most appropriate formats to the specific situation (workshops, seminars, non-academic short courses, formal training at undergraduate or postgraduate level, etc.) will contribute to advancing the professionalisation of PSIT. The experiences in this issue are just one example of the many initiatives that are underway.

The articles in this volume attempt, from different perspectives, to respond to these different challenges, considering the variety of situations and tasks that can be encountered in PSIT.

First, the guest editors, Herring and Walczyński analyse in their article the topic of the special issue, *Emotions, stress and related phenomena in public service interpreter and translator training*, considering its background and context, and report on an explanatory activity to be conducted in the classroom so as to help students process emotions and stress related to on-site placement. In the next article, Delizée, Bennoun, Dutray, Pierard and Weber suggest introducing into the training of interpreters who work in mental-health contexts psycho-educational content with the aim of reducing the risk of vicarious traumatisation. González Campanella deals in her article with emotions in the context of PSI and how controlling these emotions affects the service provided and the welfare of interpreters. In the next article, Martin and Ruiz Rosendo the reactions of conference interpreters to understand

how they manage their positionality in the light of the complexities and challenges present in various interpreting contexts. The article of Paradowska focuses on the anxiety experienced by undergraduate and graduate translation students during the process of thesis writing. Biyu Du, in the next article, intends to investigate the emotional challenges interpreters experience in their daily work and how they cope during and after the interpreting assignments. In her article, Sultanić aims contribute to the growing body of literature on approaches to interpreting stress and emotion, with a focus on empathy as an important aspect of all interpreting pedagogy, and especially in interpreted events involving children. The last article that we can find in this section is authored by González Montesino and García who analyse the possibility that students and professionals of Spanish sign language interpreting experience episodes of anxiety during interpreting situations without it being a personality factor.

This issue's interview features the views of Małgorzata Tryuk, full professor of Translation and Interpreting Studies and head of the Department of Interpreting Studies and Audiovisual Translation at the Institute of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warsaw.

In the next section we include four reviews of some of the most significant new publications that appeared over the last year in the field of Translation and Interpreting.

In the Research Corner section, Cedillo Corrochano presents the latest scientific and academic advances in PSIT since the last issue of the journal was published.

Finally, the Working Papers section includes the study of Antequera Manzano, which aims to identify the key features of healthcare interpreting in Spain and the way they align with the concerns and training needs of interpreting students; and of Bayón Cenitagoya, in which she analyses corpus management tools to show the relevance of the documentation process in the translation process.

The authors are responsible for the content of their contributions, i.e., for the accuracy of the data, proper use of bibliographical references, as well as for the legal rights for the publication of the material submitted.

References

- Bontempo, K. & Malcolm, K. (2012). An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure: Educating interpreters about the risk of vicarious trauma in healthcare settings. In L. Swabey and K. Malcolm (Eds.), *In our hands: Educating healthcare interpreters* (pp. 105–130). Gallaudet University Press.
- Crezee, I., Atkinson, D., Pask, R., Au, P., & Wong, S. (2015). Teaching interpreters about self-care. *International Journal of Interpreter Education*, 7(1), 74–83. <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/ijie/vol7/iss1/7/>
- Delgado Luchner, C. & L. Kherbiche (2019), Ethics training for humanitarian interpreters working in conflict and post-conflict settings. *Journal of War & Cultural Studies*, 12(3), 251–67.
- Federici, F. M. & Sharon O'Brien (eds) (2019). *Translation in Cascading Crises*. Routledge.
- Lai, M., Heydon, G., & Mulayim, S. (2015). Vicarious trauma among interpreters. *International Journal of Interpreter Education*, 7(1), 3–22. <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1107&context=ijie>
- O'Brien, S. & Federici, F. (2023). *Traslating Crisis*. Routledge

- Tesseur, W. (2018). Researching translation and interpreting in Non-Governmental Organisations. *Translation Spaces*, 7(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ts.00001.tes>
- Tipton, R. (2017). "Interpreting-as-Conflict: PSIT in Third Sector Organisations and the Impact of Third Way Politics." In Valero-Garcés, C. & Tipton, R. (eds.). *Ideology, Ethics and Policy Development in Public Service Interpreting and Translation*, 38–62. Multilingual Matters.
- Valero Garcés, C. & Alcalde Peñalver, E. (2021). Empathy in PSI: Where we stand and where to go from here. *FITISPos-International Journal*, 8(1), 17-27. <https://doi.org/10.37536/FITISPos-IJ.2021.8.1.298>
- Valero-Garcés, C. (2005). Emotional and psychological effects on interpreters in public services. A critical factor to bear in mind. *Translation Journal*, 9(3) <http://www.translationjournal.net/journal/33ips.htm>