
CYNTHIA GIAMBRUNO (ED.) 2014. ASSESSING LEGAL INTERPRETER QUALITY THROUGH TESTING AND CERTIFICATION: THE QUALITAS PROJECT. SANT VICENT DEL RASPEIG: PUBLICACIONES UNIVERSIDAD DE ALICANTE, 265 PAGES. ISBN: 978-84-9717-308-7.

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This book presents the results of the *Qualitas Project* funded by the European Commission and the Directorate General for Justice, in which experts from seven countries in the European Union were involved. This project comes as a continuation to other previous European projects like Grotius 98/GR/131, Grotius 201/GRP/015, Agis JAI/2003/AGIS/048, Agis JLS/2006/AGIS/052, and Agis JLS/2007/ JPEN/219, but, most of all, as a response to the European Directive 2010/64/EU on interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings.

Just as the title indicates, this collection of deliverables written by different experts and leading researchers in the field of translation and interpreting focuses on certification through testing and assessment, especially in the field of police and legal settings. Even though the publication is made up of nine chapters in which fundamental concepts and specific aspects are covered, they were all designed in such a way as to stand alone and not only as part of the whole book.

The first chapter, by Hanne Skaaden and Cecilia Wadensjö, begins with the concept of interpreting skills and other aspects related to the interpreting process. The notions of bilingualism and interaction are present throughout the chapter, and the idea that knowing two languages does not turn a person into a translator and/or interpreter is also insisted on. In this sense, the chapter covers an interesting debate on the necessity of testing interpreting skills, advocating for performance-based assessment and not through a written form, and further pointing out the complexity of designing specific tests and detailing the challenges in administering them, especially when it comes to languages of lesser diffusion.

The second chapter, written by Roelof van Deemter, Hilary Maxwell-Hyslop and Brooke Townsley, provides the necessary information regarding both the testing principles and the basic concepts that must be taken into consideration when tests are designed. In order to be able to make strategic choices and to ensure the quality of a test aimed at assessing interpreting skills, special importance should be given to concepts like test construct, performance-based assessment, test validity, authenticity, reliability and rating methodologies. The importance of test specifications is also highlighted and a sample is exposed at the end of the chapter.

In the third chapter, Juan Miguel Ortega, Annalisa Sandrelli and Brooke Townsley give more specific details of some of the concepts explained in the previous chapter. The perspective of different testing approaches is offered with an emphasis on the interpreting modes: monologue consecutive interpreting, dialogue consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting and sight translation. Each one of the interpreting modes includes a rationale and guidelines regarding the selection of text types and their characteristics like duration, length

or linguistic density. Some interesting discussions on the use of international or standardized approaches, the use of recorded role-plays versus live role-plays and the set of recommended performance criteria are considered for all the interpreting modes. The existence of sample scripts is of great help for the comprehension of all the information described. The chapter ends with the presentation of two different existing certification schemes including the combined competency testing (Antwerp Legal Interpreter/Translator Certification Scheme – Belgium) versus the discrete competency testing (Diploma in Public Service Interpreting – United Kingdom) and with the analysis of the use of abridged or bifurcated testing approach.

The following two chapters, written by Ann Corsellis and Yolanda Vanden Bosch and Erik Hertog, respectively, are interrelated as they both deal with two types of knowledge that need to be tested: the legal system and the code of ethics. The assessment of the knowledge of the legal context is fundamental for legal interpreters as they must have a full understanding of the legal context, the formal and informal legal terminology in the two working languages, the different interpreting modes and techniques and their limitations, and have the ability to use on-line legal resources. Some suggested strategies that can be used to determine the level of understanding of an interpreter of how the legal system works are detailed on the fourth chapter. On the other hand, the relevance of the full and effective comprehension of the codes of ethics is explained in detailed. The integration of the principles of the code of ethics is fundamental in professional performance, as they serve as guidelines that help interpreters in the process of decision-making in situations of ethical challenges. Given the importance and the implication that ethics play for the profession, the author explores different instruments and learning activities as well as several options (with samples) that can be used in order to test this specific competence.

In the sixth chapter, which focuses specifically on the languages of lesser diffusion, Cynthia Giambruno deals with the major challenges of identifying and qualifying interpreters for some languages that are only used occasionally. Four specific phases are considered as part of the solution to try to give equal access to justice to those speakers of *minority* languages: (1) the identification of suitable candidates; (2) the provision of training and also guidance from experienced interpreters; (3) the assessment, including the development of evaluation tools that measure their interpreting skills; and finally, (4) the training or instruction of legal personnel on how to work with interpreters by using a slower pace of speech, shorter sentences and being aware of the ethical limitations set by interpreting as a profession. Special consideration is also given to those cases when untested or *ad hoc* interpreters are used as an ultimate solution, and a warning is made to clearly state that if the interpretation is of poor quality, thus putting into risk the right of the foreign speaking person, this measure should not be adopted. Following the same structure of the previous chapters, this one also explores different methods for evaluating untested interpreters of languages of lesser diffusion, namely the written screening exercise, the oral interview, the written translation and the interpretation exercise

The seventh chapter, by Sabine Braun, Annalisa Sandrelli and Brooke Townsley, sets a general overview on how different technologies can be used to administer certification tests. The choice of using technologies may be adopted in different phases of a certification test, starting from its design to its administration. It has been proven through different European Projects that the integration of technology in the field of interpreting testing and certification has a positive impact on the cost and efficiency. For this reason, and given the experience of the authors in researching the implication of IT, they outline, in a very detailed manner, the factors that must be taken into consideration: the nature of the test (authentic versus recorded material), number of candidates, number of languages, facilities, internet connection and IT assistance. Depending on the combination of different parameters, the authors discuss the possibility of developing synchronous and asynchronous tests either with live texts or

recorded ones. The discussion regarding the equipment used to assess candidates highlights the idea that each part of the test has its specific requirements. There is also a section of the chapter that focuses on videoconferencing and remote interpreting as a realistic possibility and the use of 3D virtual environments as an interesting future consideration. In addition to the useful and complex analysis including challenges and risks and recommendations, case studies are also presented together with their conclusions throughout the chapter.

The eighth chapter, written by Cynthia Giambruno, Hilary Maxwell-Hyslop, Roelof van Deemter and Han von den Hoff, focuses more on the administrative, organizational and operational aspects that are to be taken into account when designing and developing an assessment test. Three main organizational stages are identified: pre-testing, testing and post-testing, and each one of them is divided in a set of specific tasks. The first one of the stages (pre-testing) includes the establishing of time limits and financial procedures, the design of management strategy, the requirements for setting the test, the identification of suitable candidates, the creation of a candidate handbook and the design of general rules and regulation. The second stage (testing) implies the recruitment and training of the testing team, the preparation of the testing material and the monitoring of the test session. The last stage identified (post-testing) refers to the provision of scores and performance reports to candidates and if necessary to authorities in order to update their official databases. The chapter ends with the relevance of counting on an adequate security measures at all stages of assessment.

In the ninth and last chapter of the book, Cynthia Giambruno presents the current state of affairs in each Member State of the European Union. The necessary information to draw a brief profile of the Member States was provided by professionals and experts regarding the current legislation, the practices, the existence of registers, the existing certification and accreditation procedures and the transparency in the certification process. The analysis of the data gathered shows that there is a wide range of testing and certification approaches available except for those languages of lesser diffusion.

Finally, the book provides some full sample tests and exercises from certification schemes in the European Union and some sample code of ethics and assessment exercises in the form of appendixes. A glossary of terms and links of interest for on-line resources is presented as well.

In conclusion, the book *Assessing Legal Interpreter Quality through Testing and Certification: The Qualitas Projects* provides a large amount of extremely valuable information as well as very interesting discussions starting from the design of a test to the post-testing phase. The information is well organized and always accompanied by recommendations, samples of test specifications, exercises or tests. There are several aspects which characterize this book and turn it into an extremely useful resource. First, the successful collaboration between all participants in the Projects, second, the well written articles by leading researchers from all over Europe (Cynthia Giambruno, Sabine Braun, Ann Corsellis, Erik Hertog, Hendrik Kockaert, Hilary Maxwell-Hyslop, Juan Miguel Ortega Herráez, Annalisa Sandrinelli, Hanne Skaaden, Sarka Timarova, Brooke Townsley, Roelof van Deemter, Yolanda Vanden Bosch, Han von den Hoff and Cecilia Wadensjö) and third, the complexity and the wide range of specific areas covered. Thus, it stands as an important tool not only for test designers, trainers and university professors, researchers, interpreters, students, stakeholders but also for any person interested in interpretation, assessment process and certification and in the transposition of the European Directive 2010/64/EU on interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings.