

Emotions in interpreting – Implications for people and process

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Emotions are expressed differently in texts of different cultures and languages. Especially in oral communication, emotions are expressed not only by words but also by non-verbal elements, such as gestures, facial expressions, and prosody (e.g. Ekman 1988; Quilis 1993; Ahrens 2004; Wendt 2007; Schiewer 2014).

Interpreting is a special type of oral communication in which the question of emotions and the way they are expressed in the language pair involved becomes even more complex. Since languages use different ways of encoding emotions verbally and non-verbally, interpreters have to render emotions of the source language text according to the verbal and non-verbal norms of the target language (Ahrens 2012).

In addition to the emotions expressed in the text (e.g. happiness or grief), there are also the emotions of the communication partners that have to be taken into consideration. Whereas the emotional set-up between the source text sender and the addressee(s) is critical in the interpreted communicative act, the interpreter's emotions should not interfere in the communication (Herbert 1952:62; Cary 1962: 5).

The paper will discuss emotions in interpreting on different levels: the text level but also the person-oriented level, i.e. the emotional set-up among the communication partners involved (Ahrens 2012; Ludwig 2016). The complexity of this emotional set-up may vary according to setting and situation.

The paper will describe the complexity and interdependence of the different levels. It will also discuss the implication of this varying complexity for people and the communication process in different settings. Concepts that are relevant to this discussion are neutrality, visibility, trust, state of anxiety, among others. The paper will draw conclusions about the emotional complexity of interpreting that might serve as a starting point for re-considering the topic in interpreter training as well as for future research into interpreting.

Key words: *emotions, interpreting, verbal communication, non-verbal elements,*

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