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SILENCE IS WHAT CAUSES ME ANXIETY - THE EXPERIENCE OF LANGUAGE ANXIETY AMONG TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION STUDENTS

Kulcsszavak: nyelvi szorongás; kommunikációs nehézségek; kommunikációs kudarc; tolmácsolás; nyelvi produkció gátlása

Anxiety nowadays has gained a great attention especially within the field of education and language teaching. Language anxiety (LA) is a form of anxiety that is related to oral language interaction (McCroskey and Beatty 1986). Interpreting students constitute “a specific group for which public speaking skills and control of anxiety constitutes a main component of the interpreting operation. Lack of both aptitudes may affect performance both at the academic and professional levels” (Ivars and Calatayud 2001: 107).

The aim of the paper is to gain insight how translation and interpretation students experience foreign language anxiety and how they deal with it since interpretation is a field where there is no room for freezing or blocking. The research consists of two main parts: a quantitative and a qualitative part. The quantitative part is based on a questionnaire assessing the language level and the foreign language anxiety level of the participants. The qualitative part is built up of three steps. Firstly, the subjects of the research performed an interpretation task. Then, using the idiodynamic method (MacIntyre and Ducker 2022), participants rated their anxiety level during their interpretation task. The last step was a face-to-face interview with the participants, discussing about their ratings.

Results have shown negative correlation between language proficiency and LA but positive connection between test anxiety and LA. It is also shown that the participants experience LA on different levels and that anxiety is triggered by different factors. While some feel anxious due to the speakers’ accent or speech rate, others experience anxiety solely because they need to produce a translation in a different language. The common factors that activated anxiety among the subjects are the spontaneous translation of unknown words or specialized terminology and the silence in case they freeze for a few seconds.