

# TV interpreting in Germany: the television broadcasting company ARTE in comparison to public broadcasting companies<sup>1</sup>

DÖRTE ANDRES AND SARAH FÜNFER  
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz/Germersheim

## Abstract

*TV interpreting is a special form of interpreting for several reasons. Not only the challenges interpreters are faced with, but also the expectations towards their performance as well as the technology involved differ greatly from conventional conference interpreting.*

*Unlike public broadcasting companies in Germany, the European culture channel ARTE (Association Relative à la Télévision Européenne) works with interpreters on a regular basis and has its own language service. A comprehensive survey was conducted amongst TV interpreters working both for ARTE and other broadcasters. Additionally, editors and TV interpreters from public television in Germany were questioned. These studies as well as insights gained from ARTE staff paint a clear picture of interpreting for public television in Germany and highlight the differences between ARTE and other broadcasting companies.*

## Introduction

Whether it be at press conferences with athletes at major sporting events or the Olympic Games, entertainment shows such as “Wetten, dass...”?, talkshows such as “SternTV” and “Kerner” or the televising of US President Obama’s inauguration, interpreters are needed whenever non-German-speaking guests/persons appear

1 Translated from German by James A. Turner.

and speak on the media of television in German-speaking countries in order to make communication possible first of all between the persons conversing on the television screen, but also above all with the audience sitting in front of their TV sets at home.

The term “media interpreter” has now arrived in Germany, as media interpreting – which in this article is limited to live interpreting for television programmes of all kinds – constitutes a special form of interpreting in many respects. It can also be viewed as a new occupation in the age of globalisation (cf. Riccardi 2000: 83).

Even though only a relatively low number of interpreters work for television, it is especially their interpreting which reaches the largest group of recipients, thus having a major impact on the image the public has of interpreters. For Jürgen Stähle, an experienced TV interpreter who works inter alia at ARD, ZDF and ARTE<sup>2</sup> and has been awarded the Adolf Grimme Prize<sup>3</sup>, simultaneous interpreting on television is the showcase of the profession (cf. Stähle 2009: 55). A similar view is expressed by Ingrid Kurz, also a TV interpreter for many years, working mainly for ORF<sup>4</sup>: “Ein Millionenpublikum [bekommt] ein unmittelbares Bild vom Beruf des Dolmetschers ins Haus geliefert [Millions of television viewers gain direct insight into the profession of interpreters]” (Kurz 2000: 89). She assumes that good interpreting enhances the standing of the profession (cf. Kurz 2000: 90). Vice versa this means that poor interpreting, in which the audience demand for a “satisfactory product” (Lerke 2010) is not met, has a negative impact on the image of the profession. This is confirmed by commentaries in various newspapers on the (poor) Arab-German interpreting on 10 February 2011 broadcast on ZDF’s *Heute-Journal*, covering President Mubarak’s address to the Egyptian people<sup>5</sup>.

In contrast to countries like Italy and Austria, where there have been numerous publications on TV interpreting since 1990 (summaries can be found in Straniero Sergio 2007; Kurz 2003, 2007; Pöchhacker 2007), there is a relative dearth of information on it in Germany. Only recently has the topic been addressed more intensively, especially in the form of academic theses and dissertations at universities (cf. Elsagir 1999; Fünfer 2009; Lerke 2010). Interpreters themselves have remained more or less silent on the topic to date with the exception of interviews with Sybille von Mühlmann (2002) or the “close-up inside” *Vom Übersetzen zum Simultandolmetschen* by Jürgen Stähle (2009).

All publications emphasise that television interpreting is of a rather impersonal nature all its own. This is attributed among other things to the group of recipients: on the one hand there are the *on-screen users*, who communicate with each other on various topics with the interpreter acting as a mediator between

2 ARD, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland; ZDF, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen; ARTE, Association Relative à la Télévision Européenne.

3 Prize awarded annually to major contributions to television broadcasting and production.

4 ORF, Österreichischer Rundfunk.

5 Cf. <<http://www.main-netz.de/nachrichten/kultur/kultur/art4214,1527953>>.

them, interpreting both in the foreign language and the mother tongue, and on the other hand viewers as *off-screen participants* in communication, i.e. a virtual audience with whom interpreters have no contact whatsoever, even if they act as mediators between this group and the *on-screen participants* (cf. Mack 2002: 205f.) – but generally only from the foreign language into the mother tongue in order to produce an interpretation which sounds as similar as possible to a news presenter. As the publications cited in the foregoing suggest, additional factors also contribute to the special nature of interpreting on television<sup>6</sup>: the special working conditions/technical aspects (cf. Mack 2002: 208), the high demands placed on quality (cf. Kurz 2000: 94f.), the need to complete the interpretation at the same time as the original (cf. Kurz 1997: 197), no influence on what is being shown on the TV, brief spoken passages and thus in most cases the impossibility of accustoming oneself to the style of the speaker. The task of TV interpreters and the whole dilemma they face has been aptly summed up by Sergio Viaggio (2001: 30):

[...] he is expected to be a consummate mediator with the psychomotor reflexes of the conference interpreter, the cultural sensitivity of the community interpreter, the analytical keenness and background knowledge of the journalist and the rhetorical prowess of the seasoned communicator.

What is television interpreting like on public television in Germany? What demands do broadcasters and interpreters place on media interpreting? In view of all this, what makes interpreting high-quality? Where do changes need to be made? These are some of the questions explored in the following. As a result of its special profile, the cultural broadcasting company ARTE plays a key role in the analysis as does the question as to whether and how work at ARTE differs from work at other media companies such as the broadcasting companies ARD, ZDF and PHOENIX.

#### 1. The broadcaster ARTE

As a result of the excellent contact between the School of Translation, Interpreting, Linguistics and Cultural Studies at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz/Germersheim and interpreters at ARTE and its Language Service, this broadcaster is the focus of attention in this article. By the same token, its situation is of course unique and is in some respects not representative of interpreting on television in Germany. For this reason, attention is also devoted to ARD, ZDF and PHOENIX.

In spite of the special requirements and the growing importance of TV interpreting, only ARTE<sup>7</sup>, which is headquartered in Strasbourg, has its own

6 A comprehensive overview of these special aspects is provided in Mack (2001).

7 “ARTE is a European cultural television channel targeting audiences from different cultural backgrounds, in particular French and German” (<<http://www.artetv.fr/2197470.html>>).

Language Service to date. The fact that the broadcasting and working languages are German and French not only means that two language versions are needed for each broadcast, but also for programme and administration texts as well. Internal meetings also have to be interpreted if need be, and the Internet site is multilingual. This means a considerable amount of language and cultural mediation, requiring a professional, systematic approach in order to ensure the desired high quality. It was for this reason that the Language Service was set up right away when the broadcasting company was founded. It is integrated into the company headquarters in Strasbourg and performs not only translating and internal company interpreting, but also organises and assists in the work with free-lance language mediators who among other things are used for TV interpreting (cf. Völker in Fünfer 2009).

The TV channel ARTE only uses self-employed TV interpreters. A total of 1,066 programmes were interpreted in 2008 (corresponding to 1,435 interpreting days) (cf. Völker in Lerke 2010). Since it began televising in 1992, four main different models of TV interpreting have developed at ARTE: (1) simultaneous spontaneous interpreting of a live broadcast; (2) live-on-tape interpreting, entailing the simultaneous spontaneous interpreting of a programme which will be broadcast at a later stage; (3) interpreting of previously recorded programmes, which offers the possibility of later corrections; (4) simultaneous interpreting of a live broadcast on the basis of scripts previously translated by the interpreters. New forms of interpreting have been added to this, such as the interpreting of Internet chats or videos (cf. Völker in Fünfer 2009). In contrast to public broadcasters in Germany, ARTE regularly uses TV interpreters, even if the number of spontaneous live interpreting performances is on the decline there. Live interpreting is used for televised festivals, e.g. broadcasts of the Berlinale or the Cannes International Film Festival, and at major media events such as presidential elections or royal weddings. Interviews with teleconnected guests, studio guests and live broadcasts with correspondents are also spontaneously interpreted live (cf. Krone 2006).

## 2. Surveys on TV interpreting in Germany

As there are at present very few publications on TV interpreting in Germany, a first comprehensive survey was carried out within the framework of a BA dissertation dealing solely with interpretation for the TV channel ARTE. A questionnaire with multiple choice and open-ended questions was sent by e-mail to 41 interpreters who work for ARTE on a relatively regular basis. This was made possible thanks to the support of the Language Service of ARTE who established contact with the interpreters. The decision to use a questionnaire was taken because of the geographical distance to the high number of respondents and in order to give the interpreters sufficient time to reflect on the questions posed. 18 responses were able to be used in the assessment (cf. Fünfer 2009). Excerpts from the analysis conducted in 2009 are presented in the following.

In order to learn more about TV interpreting for public broadcasters in Germany, a field which has been given scant attention up until now, the authors contacted the Director-Generals of seven major public broadcasters in Germany

(ARD, Bayerischer Rundfunk, MDR, PHOENIX, SWR, WDR, ZDF). Responses were disappointing but contact was made with three editors working at ARD and ZDF and six TV interpreters who were interviewed by phone in the autumn of 2010. This method was selected as it seemed appropriate in view of the small number of interpreters and the time pressure under which the programme editors work, which was reflected in the few responses. Those interviewed were given information about the project in advance and a preparatory questionnaire.

The responses provided by the six interpreters working for public broadcasters in Germany are compared with the answers given by the ARTE interpreters. Wherever appropriate, the statements are supplemented with the views of the three editors working at ARD and ZDF. Moreover, the views of two Language Service staff members of ARTE have also been taken into consideration.

In addition to general questions relating *inter alia* to the frequency and length of time of jobs, the interpreters were surveyed about their preparation, technical aspects, demands relating to quality, expectations and stress factors. The interviews with the editors ranged across topics such as the selection and preparation of interpreters, issues relating to target group orientation and quality assurance.

## 2.1 Frequency of assignments

As for the frequency of assignments performed by TV interpreters, it would appear that there are considerable fluctuations on the whole. These relate both to general as well as individual frequency of assignments. At ARTE it is notable that some interpreters are used very frequently, i.e. with 60-100 interpreting days/year, which is due to the interpreting of regular programmes such as *ARTEInfo*, in which one or two interpreters are assigned to a television presenter on a more or less fixed basis. Discontinuation of the programme or a change in television presenters can at the same time lead to a significant change in the general or even individual amount of assignments. A majority of the interpreters who work for public broadcasters (referred to in the following as PB interpreters) state that they work live as TV interpreters between three and twelve days a year (cf. interpreting model (1) of ARTE). Two male interpreters stated they worked 40 days. There is one female interpreter who in the past also worked approximately 40 days a year. This volume has dropped considerably since 2010 however and she indicated that she has assignments on twelve days a year at present. She attributed this drop to voice-matching, which is gaining in importance for public broadcasters.

## 2.2 Recruitment

It is in this connection that the question arises as to the recruitment criteria for interpreters. At ARTE a search for suitable interpreters is triggered by enquiries made by the editorial desk in charge of the Language Service, which supports the interpreting jobs. In selecting the interpreters, the Language Service uses a pool

of experienced free-lance interpreters and/or who have gone through a casting procedure which takes place at irregular intervals and in which interpreting skills and voice quality are tested. The precondition for an assignment at ARTE is first of all an excellent command of conference techniques. Additional “musts” include a pleasant voice and a fluent presentation. The Language Service also makes sure that the voice of the interpreter is appropriate for the person who is being interpreted. The criteria here are gender, age and voice tone, but also character traits and temperament, i.e. physical and psychological traits. It is also important, however, that voices are not overly similar. The voice of the interpreter should differ from the person being interpreted in order to help viewers readily understand what is being said (cf. Moreau in Fünfer 2009). Generally speaking, each person who takes part in a broadcast is interpreted by one respective interpreter. Television presenters at ARTE moreover often have their own “fixed” voice in the foreign language (cf. Völker in Fünfer 2009).

In contrast to ARTE, where the Language Service organises the wide-ranging assignments of interpreters and their recruitment, the editorial desks at public broadcasters in Germany are responsible for assigning appropriate interpreters for the various broadcasts. As the interviews with the editors showed, interpreters are used by public broadcasters especially for talk shows/interviews of all kinds, major media events such as the funeral of the Pope and for sporting events. Recruitment often focuses on people who have performed well in the past or who have been recommended. Interpreting agencies with a good reputation are also used frequently. If there is enough time, and no interpreters or not enough interpreters can be found using this procedure, casting events are carried out, with which broadcasters such as ARD have had positive experience.

### 2.3 Preparation and planning of assignments

With regard to the question as to preparation for the interpreting job, all ARTE and PB interpreters surveyed unanimously agreed as to the need for such preparation, although there are considerable differences with regard to the form and scope of that preparation, as this depends on the respective programme or the editors in charge.

The interpreters are generally notified about the broadcast and topic as well as the name of the person who is to be interpreted so that they can conduct their own research. In the case of entertainment and magazine broadcasts, PB interpreters in particular usually receive documents with information on the persons who are to be interpreted as well as a list of possible questions which may be asked – the same lists which are supplied to the television presenters and editorial desk. In some cases it is also possible to converse with the guest before the broadcast. In the case of news and sports events, editors assume that the interpreter is informed about the speaking style, pertinent terminology and current developments.

Nevertheless, even at ARTE there are differences depending upon the broadcast, the way in which it is produced and the manner in which the second language version is produced. In addition to basic information regarding the individual

and the broadcast, the interpreter is if possible provided information on the script, the moderation texts and given additional information in the form of dossiers, research material, notes and Internet links. Which material the interpreter receives ultimately depends on the respective editors, who are requested to transmit the documents to the Language Service for forwarding to the interpreters.

If television presenters are to be interpreted, interpreters can contact them directly via the Language Service in order to become acquainted with the way they speak and the content of the broadcast. In the case of guests, interpreters are in some cases able to discuss things with them by telephone directly before the broadcast. 22% of the ARTE interpreters surveyed lamented the fact that they are nevertheless in some cases insufficiently informed before the assignment, however.

The PB interpreters also noted that better preparation would be desirable in some cases, as an interpreter suggests: “When one has the material and time – that is half the battle, and this is no different for television than it is for conference interpreting”.

How much time in advance the interpreters learn about their assignment depends on the type of programme both at ARTE and at the public broadcasters. Notification is especially short-term in the case of news programmes, which is frequently due to unforeseen developments in the world. Sometimes interpreters are only ordered one hour before the broadcast. But also guests of entertainment programs and talk shows and thus their interpreters as well are invited on relatively short notice. In contrast, television presenters at ARTE and other events such as festivals, galas, presidential elections and sporting events are planned a relatively long time in advance by all broadcasters. Enquiries to interpreters are frequently made in the form of an option which can, however, also be cancelled on short notice. One example here is the World Cup, where the need for interpreters depends on whether a certain team advances.

Even though TV assignments on public television may last several hours or even an entire day, the net interpreting time in Germany is usually only between 10 and 20 min. The interpreters are frequently requested to arrive several hours before the actual beginning of the programme and they spend a lot of time waiting, whether it be at a press conference whose beginning is postponed again and again, or at assignments where they have to wait for different interview partners, i.e. at sporting events such as the Olympic Games. In the interviews with public television interpreters, it was noted that procedures could definitely be organised in a more efficient manner, and that several hours of waiting around, which fatigues the interpreters or contributes to their nervousness, should be avoided.

The length of assignments at ARTE also varies according to the mode and type of programme, ranging from a few minutes to over one hour.

## 2.4 Equipment

Major differences are evident with regards to the technology and equipment used at ARTE and the public broadcasters. ARTE interpreters at headquarters in Strasbourg have three sound-proof interpreting booths, each with three interpreting workstations available for TV interpreting. Each workstation is equipped with a monitor and an interpreting console with individual headsets and a microphone designed for television recordings. The interpreters can adjust the volume of the headsets individually, switch the microphone on and off themselves and see the picture being broadcast. There is even a “cough” muting key. Via an additional channel the interpreters have direct contact with the sound engineers, who are described as helpful and patient, but make significant demands on the interpreters in the sense that the interpreters are forced to adjust their microphones and modulate their voice levels in line with the instructions of the sound engineers. Thus it is important, for instance, to keep a constant distance to the microphone. The ARTE interpreters expressed their satisfaction regarding the equipment at the headquarters in Strasbourg.

There are no special booths exclusively used for interpreting by the public broadcasters. In the booths used the interpreter has a monitor with an image of the programme. The interpreting consoles are described by the interpreters *inter alia* as “home-made” or “makeshift”. In other words, the equipment and the operation of the equipment varies from assignment to assignment and broadcaster to broadcaster, which means that the interpreters have to be flexible and have an ability to adapt. On the whole, the interpreters depend to a high degree on the sound engineers and their willingness to take the needs of interpreters into account. Good communication with the sound engineers is therefore held to be important. This is in line with statements by the programme editors who for their part have an interest in close collaboration between the production team, the sound engineers and the interpreters.

Even if the public broadcasting interpreters interviewed indicated that they were on the whole satisfied with the technical conditions, two specific suggestions for improvement were made. One interpreter expressed a desire for interpreters to have more responsibility regarding technical issues, in particular the possibility of switching on the microphone and going live oneself. Especially when the sound engineers “are asleep at the wheel”, i.e. when they fail to switch on the interpreter’s microphone, more control and autonomy on the part of the interpreter would expedite and improve their work. It was furthermore suggested that standard operating consoles such as those used in conference interpreting be used.

The technical conditions at “field” locations, where the interpreter is for example in the driver’s cabin of the outside broadcast van or in a lorry standing next to it, appear to be more problematic both at ARTE and the public broadcasters. Generally speaking, technical problems tend to crop up more often in such situations. On the whole, technical problems cannot be entirely eliminated either at ARTE or the public broadcasting companies, however. These problems are therefore still considered one of the biggest stress factors in TV



interpreting, as the public broadcasting interpreters interviewed have confirmed: “additional excitement or stress is usually related to the equipment”, but:

Having to depend on the attentiveness of a sound engineer who occasionally switches the mike on too late is also stressful [...]. When the sound engineer is somewhere else, the first part is sometimes simply lost. That is annoying. It doesn't happen all the time, but it does every now and then. That means that you are already exasperated when you start working and still have to stay calm.

## 2.5 Skills and abilities

Although technical conditions definitely influence the quality of interpreting, it is primarily a function of the skills and abilities of the interpreters themselves. Both the interpreters at ARTE as well as those at the public broadcasters were therefore asked<sup>8</sup> what skills an interpreter who would like to work for ARTE or on public television should have. The answers provided by the ARTE interpreters can be divided up into six topical areas. Interpreters accordingly have to have an excellent command of the source language and target language, have a pleasant voice and presentation, good or excellent reactions – including in order to be able to minimize the time lag to the speaker (*décalage*) – an ability to withstand stress, the possession of cultural knowledge and on the whole an excellent command of simultaneous interpreting technique.

In the interviews the PB interpreters in particular emphasise the need for a smooth, even flow of speech, without fillers or interruptions and a calm, pleasant voice with clear pronunciation and an intonation and emphasis appropriate to the situation. In their opinion as well, a short *décalage* and thus the ability to react quickly are important, as is a broad general education and curiosity. According to the interpreters, TV interpreters should be aware that they are “in the limelight” and feel good in such a situation. Keeping cool is held to be another key trait.

In conclusion one can say that both ARTE and PB interpreters interviewed were in agreement concerning the skills required for TV interpreting.

## 2.6 Quality-related criteria

Following the study by Kurz/Pöchhacker (1995) on quality criteria from the perspective of *inter alia* persons in charge of television programming, the questionnaire for the ARTE interpreters (cf. Fünfer 2009) contains a list of five criteria<sup>9</sup>, whose importance is rated on a scale from 1 (most important criterion) to 5 (least important criterion). Respondents were only allowed to use each number once. This rule was only observed by ten interpreters, however. Four interpreters evaluated some of the criteria in accordance with the rule, while

8 The questions concerning the skills and abilities were in both cases open questions.

9 Pleasant voice (angenehme Stimme); fluency of delivery (flüssige Wiedergabe); logical cohesion of utterance (logisch zusammenhängender Text); sense consistency with the original message (inhaltliche Übereinstimmung); native accent (Muttersprachler).

assigning the same weight to others because they did not feel that they were able to assign a ranking sequence. Four other interpreters thought that all the criteria were equally important (cf. Fünfer 2009). The latter were not taken into account in Diagram 1.

The interviews conducted with the public broadcasting interpreters and editors did not stipulate such a ranking scale, instead merely requested a “relative” weighting of fluency, voice and sense consistency<sup>10</sup>. These three criteria were selected in order to gain an overall view of the weighting of form and content. In this analysis we only focussed on the above mentioned three criteria in order to ensure comparability.

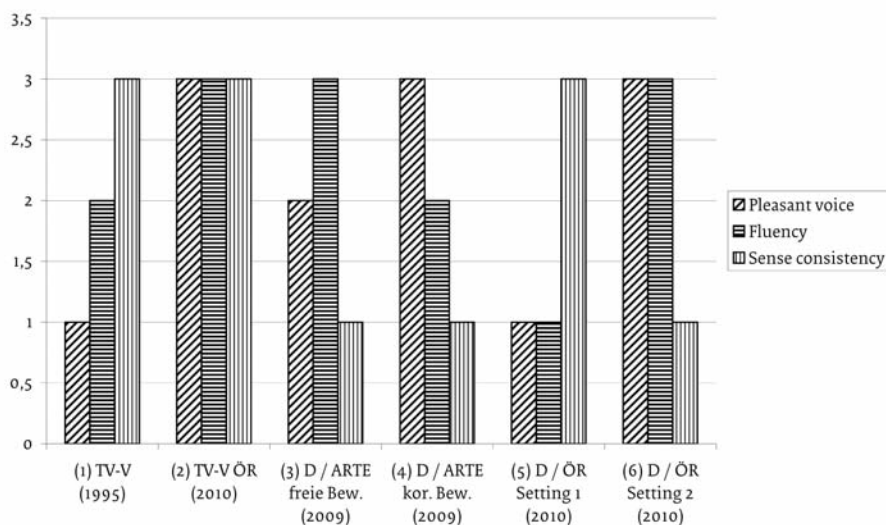


Diagram 1: Assessment of the quality criteria *pleasant voice*, *fluency*, *sense consistency* by persons in charge of television programming (Kurz/Pöchhacker 1995), ARTE interpreters (Fünfer 2009), persons in charge of public broadcasting programming (data collected for the present paper by Andres/Fünfer 2010-2011) and public broadcasting interpreters (data collected for the present paper by Andres/Fünfer 2010-2011). Overview of the relative weighting of the quality criteria. The higher the value, the more important it is.

1. Persons in charge of TV programming (1995) surveyed within the framework of a study by Kurz/Pöchhacker.
  2. Persons in charge of TV programming at public broadcasting television companies in Germany (2010).
  3. TV interpreters surveyed on their work at ARTE (2009). Ranking rules were not observed.
  4. TV interpreters surveyed on their work at ARTE (2009). Ranking rules were observed.
- 10 The PB interpreters were asked to weight the importance of content and form, whereby fluency and pleasant voice were considered as form and sense consistency as content in order to ensure a better comparability.

5. TV interpreters interviewed on their work on public broadcasting television in Germany (2010). The answers relate to a setting which is of a more political or informative nature.
6. TV interpreters surveyed on their work on public broadcasting television in Germany (2010). The answers relate to settings in which priority is assigned to entertainment (entertainment shows, sporting events).

The assessment by the ARTE interpreters who were only allowed to assign each weight once and those who in some cases assigned the same weight are not identical to the results of the study by Kurz/Pöchlhacker (1995). While persons in charge of television programming (1995) emphasised content, the ARTE interpreters considered the criteria of pleasant voice and fluency of the presentation to be more important. This could be related to the fact that interpreters at ARTE are integrated into everyday television production and a halting presentation over time would be very disturbing. What is not readily evident from Diagram 1 is that a majority of the ARTE interpreters were of the opinion that there is a difference compared to conference interpreting assignments in their weighting of the criteria – thus, they viewed sense consistency to be more important and the criteria involving the presentation such as pleasant voice or fluency to be less crucial. A distinction according to setting – even if within television interpreting and not between television interpreting and conference interpreting – was also made by the public broadcasting interpreters (2010), accordingly making different weightings (cf. Diagram 1). It is interesting that more than 20% of the ARTE interpreters surveyed did not or were not inclined to assign any weighting. This is mirrored by the weighting assigned by the public broadcasting editors who ranked the various factors equally, but also by the public broadcasting interpreters who made a distinction according to the setting (cf. Diagram 1). It is apparently difficult for all respondents to decide on a clear weighting. Hence if the interpreters are not able to successfully achieve sense consistency and fluency of presentation together, and if they are forced as a result of cognitive overload to make sacrifices of one sort or another, their decision depends on the genre of the broadcast or the discourse: in the case of an information programme or political declarations, the content is considered to be more important than with entertainment programmes or broadcasts of sporting events in which the “comfort factor” and “consumer capitalism” play a significant role (cf. Katan/Straniero Sergio 2003: 131). If there are any technical or acoustic deficits causing the interpreter problems in understanding what is said, there is a tendency to rely on intuition and, in case of doubt, as one interpreter states in the survey, “to say something which sounds good in the given situation”.

If one examines the statements made by the public broadcasting editors and thus those persons in charge of the TV programming (2010) regarding the same topic in detail, it becomes clear that an orientation towards the target group, i.e. a presentation which is appropriate for the media and thus a pleasant voice are considered to be absolutely imperative. The word “pleasant”, which was mentioned in each of the interviews, is by the same token a rubric for a broad range of adjectives such as lively, interesting, lovely, credible and clearly articulated. Fluency in speaking is also part of this. Hesitating noises, so typical of

spoken language, or slips of the tongue, etc., are frowned upon. At the same time, however, all of the persons interviewed attached great value to an accurate interpretation of the original. According to the statements made by the public broadcasting editors, no television broadcaster can afford to have an interpreter who interprets beautifully, but incorrectly.

The evaluations of the ARTE interpreters from 2009 who assigned all the criteria the same weight and those of the public broadcasting interpreters and the public broadcasting editors from 2010 show that the expectations of everyone involved have converged as a result of close collaboration in Germany, especially over the last 15 years – possibly as a result of the increase in TV interpreting. This was also confirmed by the statements made by the interpreters who were interviewed:

The broadcasting companies have become aware of interpreters. Everything depends on the various individuals involved, however. While in conference interpreting there are conference sound engineers, the staff at broadcasting companies usually do not have anything to do with interpreters. Good will and sensitivity to the situation of the interpreter are therefore needed as well. There is always a sympathetic ear to be found, however.

The answers provided by the interviewed public broadcasting interpreters and public broadcasting editors are, however, diametrically opposed to Mack's assertion, referring to the situation in Italy, that "Completeness and even sense consistency with the original seem to be considered as fairly secondary aspects. As long as the interpreter's output sounds coherent and plausible" (Mack 2001: 129f.). Apparently there are specific country-related differences. Audience appeal appears to play an even greater role in Italy than in Germany.

## 2.7 Stress factors

Statements made by 12 ARTE interpreters who have also worked for other broadcasters differed as far as expectations at ARTE regarding the quality of interpreting is concerned as well as with regard to the question as to whether they believe that the expectations on the part of ARTE are greater than those for other broadcasters. While some of the interpreters surveyed answered this question in the affirmative, others did not believe there was any difference, noting that demands on TV are greater on the whole.

There was greater unison with regard to the assessment of requirements at ARTE in comparison to conferences. Two-thirds of the persons surveyed stated that demands at ARTE are greater – with this applying to language, reactions, speed, pronunciation, voice, voice-leading, but also with respect to factors specific to ARTE such as reviews by the Language Service or the editors, who apply higher standards than conference audiences.

The amount of stress in live recordings was also held to be greater than at conferences: nine out of twelve interpreters who assessed work at ARTE as being stressful on the whole made explicit statements in this regard. The reasons they cited corresponded to those put forward in the literature (cf. Kurz 2002b): no contact with the audience, large numbers of listeners and no possibilities for corrections. Out of the five interpreters who described work at ARTE as not being

stressful, two of these attributed this to a generally constructive working atmosphere, a familiar work setting, familiar staff and the fact that performance on a particular day has less salience when there are regular assignments.

For the public broadcasting interpreters, the stress factors include fast and/or unclear speakers, the brief length of assignments, which makes it more difficult to “compensate” for a mistake, and dependence on the decisions of others, who determine when the broadcast goes live and when the microphone is switched on. Technical difficulties also cause stress. The rapid change in language from the foreign into the mother tongue and vice versa, the *décalage* and the need to “reduce” associated with this were also cited as factors. The fact that the interpreting can be followed by an audience in the millions, including other interpreters, is assessed differently by the interpreters. Two interpreters cited this as a stress factor, while two others stated that they had only perceived this as stressful at the beginning of their careers. Two interpreters see their work on TV in a positive light, on the other hand, and as a type of work which is especially fun as a result of the challenges involved. Their statements align with Kurz’ finding: “Fernsehdolmetschen ist für einen Konferenzdolmetscher immer spannend und befriedigend – vorausgesetzt, er mag Stress, verfügt über gute Nerven, geistige Wendigkeit und Schnelligkeit und besitzt daneben auch ein gewisses Improvisationstalent [TV interpreting is always exciting and rewarding for a conference interpreter – as long as he enjoys stress, has strong nerves, a quick and agile mind, and in addition possesses a certain talent for improvisation]” (Kurz 2002a: 164). Such an attitude is no doubt helpful in coping with stress. And live interpreting on television means stress, as measurements of interpreters’ pulses working live on TV in comparison to interpreters at a medical symposium have confirmed (cf. Kurz 2002b: 200).

## 2.8 Feedback and recognition

Interpreting of live broadcasts at ARTE, according to this broadcasting company, are always supported by a staff member from the Language Service who, however, is not able to directly intervene in the work. The interpreting performances are discussed internally in the Language Service afterwards (cf. Moreau in Fünfer 2009). The interpreters frequently receive feedback on their work, but not always. The latter is explained by one interpreter as follows: “interpreting is an everyday matter. It is assumed that everything will go well. Nobody comments on normal everyday work.” It is only when problems crop up repeatedly that the respective interpreter is approached following an internal discussion at the Language Service. The interpreters also usually receive feedback from the editors of the public broadcasters. How detailed this turns out to be depends on the relationship between the interpreter and the editors and the time pressure on the staff in general. One interpreter stated that the editors take the time for a briefing and/or debriefing of the interpreter approximately one out of every ten assignments. One interpreter also reported having been passed on the reactions from the audience. On the whole, the interpreters stated that television presenters and their contact partners express a lot of appreciation and recognition.

The representatives of the public broadcasting companies also consider feedback to be essential, as this improves the quality of interpreting. Moreover, they firmly advocate a survey of audiences on the quality of the interpreting on television in order to recognise the needs of the audience more precisely and to be able to react more effectively to these. But the interests of the interpreters are also important to them. A majority of those interviewed stated their interest in a brochure describing the most important aspects of work with TV interpreters in a short, concise and cogent manner. International rules such as those issued by the International Professional Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) on TV interpreting do not appear to apply in this context, as none of the TV editors surveyed were aware of them. This means that they are also unaware of the AIIC demand according to which “interpreters’ names and reference to AIIC must be shown – this is not a favor but a right, just as it is for electricians, camera-men etc.”<sup>11</sup>. Because with interpreting on public television the exploitation rights are sold as well, all of the interpreters stated that they thought it would be appropriate to insert the name of the interpreter or to mention them in the credits, as is generally the case at ARTE. This had already been recognised and put into practice as far back as 1994 by Horst Friedrich Mayer, the former Director of *Aktueller Dienst* at ORF (cf. Mayer 1994: 11). On the other hand, inserting the picture of the interpreter, as is sometimes the case with football commentators, is felt to be going too far by all the PB interpreters. They are even of the opinion that this would be disturbing in the case of a live insert. According to the statements of those persons in charge of TV programming, it is in the interest of the broadcasting company to have good interpreters, as they can definitely boost ratings considerably. That is why the public broadcasting editors interviewed were also very willing to mention the name of the interpreter “as a sign of appreciation and motivation”.

### 3. Prospects

On the whole, it would appear that both people in charge of television programming and interpreters have very high expectations regarding the quality of the interpreting product (on this cf. also Kurz 2000: 94). For this reason a majority of those interviewed also believe that it would be a good idea to institute an introductory course on TV interpreting in university studies programmes and in continuing education courses. TV interpreting apparently requires skills which differ considerably from those needed in conference interpreting. The interviews and the ARTE survey reveal that these skills are not solely related to the voice production as stated by Stähle (2009: 54), but also include a wide range of other factors. Perhaps it is thus time for educational and training institutes to finally notice which way the wind is blowing, as Ingrid Kurz suggested more than 20 years ago: “Serious thought will have to be given to the development of training programs for these new media translators/interpreters to help them meet the challenges of the future” (Kurz 1990: 173).

11 <<http://www.aiic.net/viewpage.cfm/article456>>.

## References

- Elsagir I. M. (1999) *Die Beurteilung von Dolmetschleistungen im Fernsehen aus Zuschauersicht: Eine empirische Untersuchung*, unpublished MA Thesis, Ruprecht-Karls-University Heidelberg.
- Fünfer S. (2009) *Dolmetschen bei ARTE*, unpublished Bachelor Thesis, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz/Germersheim, Fachbereich Translations-, Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft.
- Katan D. / Straniero Sergio F. (2003) "Submerged ideologies in Media Interpreting", in M. Calzada Pérez (ed.) *Apropos of Ideology*, Manchester, St. Jerome, 131-144.
- Krone E. (2006) *Dolmetschen bei ARTE*. Vortrag am Fachbereich Translations-, Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz/Germersheim, Freitagiskonferenz vom 15.12.2006.
- Kurz I. (1990) "Overcoming language barriers in European television", in D. Bowen / M. Bowen (eds) *Interpreting Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, Binghamton New York, Suny, 168-175.
- Kurz I. (1997) "Getting the message across – simultaneous interpreting for the media", in M. Snell-Hornby / Z. Jettmarová / K. Kaindl (eds) *Translation as Intercultural Communication*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 195-205.
- Kurz I. (2000) "Mediendolmetschen und Videokonferenzen", in S. Kalina / S. Buhl / H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast (eds) *Dolmetschen: Theorie - Praxis - Didaktik mit ausgewählten Beiträgen der Saarbrücker Symposien*, 2. Band, St. Ingbert, Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 89-106.
- Kurz I. (2002a) "Drahtseilakt ohne Netz? Live-Dolmetschen für die Medien" in I. Kurz / A. Moisl (eds) *Berufsbilder für Übersetzer und Dolmetscher. Perspektiven nach dem Studium*, Wien, 127-132.
- Kurz I. (2002b) "Physiological stress responses during Media and Conference Interpreting", in G. Garzone / M. Viezzi (eds) *Interpreting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Challenges and Opportunities*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 195-202.
- Kurz I. (2003) "Live TV interpreting – A high-wire act?", in A. Collados Ais / S.J.A. Pinilla (eds) *Avances en la investigación sobre interpretación*, Granada, Editorial Comares, 159-171.
- Kurz I. (2007) "The evolution of Media Interpreting: challenges and changes", in *The 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Translation and Interpretation Studies*, Seoul, Interpreting and Translation Research Institute, 63-74.
- Kurz I. / Pöchhacker F. (1995) "Quality in TV interpreting", in Y. Gambier (ed.) *Audiovisual Communication and Language Transfer. Proceedings of the International Forum Strasbourg. Translatio, Nouvelles de la FIT Newsletter* 14/3-4, 350-358.
- Lerke A.-K. (2010) *Qualitätsbeurteilung von Live-Medienverdolmetschungen aus Zuschauerperspektive am Beispiel Dolmetschen bei ARTE*, unpublished MA Thesis, Institut für Angewandte Linguistik und Translatologie, University of Leipzig.

- Mack G. (2001) "Conference interpreters on the air: live simultaneous interpreting on Italian television", in Y. Gambier / H. Gottlieb (eds) *(Multi)Media Translation: Concepts, Practices and Research*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 125-132.
- Mack G. (2002) "New perspectives and challenges for interpretation – the example of television", in G. Garzone / M. Viezzi (eds) *Interpreting in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Challenges and Opportunities*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 203-213.
- Mayer H. F. (1994) "Live interpreting for television and radio", *The Jerome Quarterly*, 9/2, 11.
- Pöchhacker F. (2007) "Coping with culture in Media Interpreting", in *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 15/ 2, 123-142.
- Riccardi A. (2000) "Die Rolle des Dolmetschers in der globalisierten Gesellschaft", in S. Kalina / S. Buhl / H. Gerzymisch-Arbogast (eds) *Dolmetschen: Theorie - Praxis - Didaktik mit ausgewählten Beiträgen der Saarbrücker Symposien, Band 2*, St. Ingbert, Röhrig Universitätsverlag, 77-86.
- Stähle J. (2009) *Vom Übersetzen zum Simultandolmetschen*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Straniero Sergio F. (2007) *Talkshow interpreting. La mediazione linguistica nella conversazione-spettacolo*, Trieste, EUT.
- Viaggio S. (2001) "Simultaneous Interpreting for television and other media: translation doubly constrained", in Y. Gambier / H. Gottlieb (eds) *(Multi)Media Translation: Concepts, Practices and Research*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, John Benjamins, 23-33.
- Von Mülmann S. (2002) "Dolmetschen im Medium Fernsehen", in J. Best / S. Kalina (eds) *Übersetzen und Dolmetschen: Eine Orientierungshilfe*, Tübingen/Basel, Francke Verlag, 279-286.