

# Polish-English Certified Interpreter's Psycho-Affectivity

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## Abstract

*The paper is an attempt at discussing the concept of the Polish-English certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity by drawing attention to its constituent components – the so-called psycho-affective factors, which can be defined as the certified interpreter's individual psychological features which are related to different thinking patterns, attitudes, emotional states, feelings or moods. The study covers seven such factors: anxiety, fear, language inhibition/language ego/language boundaries, extroversion/introversion/ambiversion, self-esteem, motivation and stress. The paper starts with some preliminary remarks concerning the subfield of interpreting studies dealing with the psychological phenomena observed during interpreting – interpreter psychology and its research theme – psycho-affectivity constituted by the psycho-affective factors. What follows is a discussion of the outcomes of a study carried out among 76 Polish-English interpreters on their subjective experience of the psycho-affective factors and their impact on certified consecutive interpreting performance and its final product – the output. Generally speaking, this paper attempts at demonstrating that the interpreter's psycho-affectivity is a continually active module of the interpreter's psychological construction, composed of the seven elements, the occurrence and activity of which are sometimes impossible to be consciously controlled.*

*Keywords: certified interpreting, interpreter psychology, psycho-affective factors.*

## Streszczenie

Koncepcja psycho-afektywności tłumacza przysięgłego (ustnego) w parze językowej polski-angielski

*Artykuł jest próbą omówienia koncepcji psycho-afektywności tłumacza przysięgłego (ustnego) języka angielskiego poprzez zwrócenie uwagi na jej elementy składowe – tzw. czynniki psycho-afektywne, które można zdefiniować jako indywidualne cechy psychologiczne tłumacza przysięgłego, które powiązane są z różnymi wzorcami myślowymi, postawami, stanami emocjonalnymi, uczuciami czy nastrojami. Badanie obejmuje siedem czynników: lęk, strach, zahamowanie językowe/granice językowe/ego językowe, ekstrawersję/introwersję/ambiwersję, poczucie własnej wartości, motywację i stres. Artykuł rozpoczyna się od wstępnych uwag*

*dotyczących działu badań nad przekładem ustnym dotyczącym zjawisk psychologicznych obserwowanych podczas tłumaczenia ustnego – psychologii tłumacza ustnego oraz badanego w jej ramach zagadnienia psycho-afektywności, na którą składają się czynniki psycho-afektywne. W dalszej części pracy omówiono wyniki badań przeprowadzonych wśród 76 polsko-angielskich tłumaczy przysięgłych (ustnych) na temat subiektywnie doświadczanych czynników psycho-afektywnych oraz ich wpływu na przekład ustny konsekwentny (poświadczony) oraz jego produkt – ustny tekst docelowy. Ogólnie rzecz ujmując, w niniejszym artykule podjęto próbę wykazania, że psycho-afektywność tłumacza jest stale aktywnym modulem konstrukcji psychologicznej tłumacza, składającym się z siedmiu elementów, których występowanie i aktywność nie zawsze może podlegać świadomej kontroli.*

*Słowa kluczowe: tłumaczenie poświadczane ustne, psychologia tłumacza ustnego, czynniki psycho-afektywne*

## 1. Introduction

Interpreting studies is a continually developing branch of widely understood translation studies. It might also be postulated that at times interpreting studies transgresses the long-established scientific borders, thereby becoming more and more interdisciplinary. One of such truly interdisciplinary subfields of interpreting studies is *interpreter psychology* – a branch dealing with a variety of psychological phenomena of cognitive and psycho-affective nature occurring during the process of interpreting. Among the aspects studied within interpreter psychology is the interpreter's psycho-affectivity constituted by the so-called psycho-affective factors (*i.e.* anxiety, fear, language inhibition/language ego/language boundaries, extroversion/introversion/ambiversion, self-esteem, motivation and stress).

The paper starts with a few remarks concerning interpreting psychology, with particular attention paid to its psycho-affective strand and the constitutive elements of the interpreter's psycho-affectivity – the psycho-affective factors. The major part of the article is devoted to some considerations concerning the certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity, which are based on the conclusions drawn from the study carried out among 76 Polish-English certified interpreters performing consecutive interpreting. All of the above-mentioned psycho-affective factors are discussed with reference to how they are subjectively experienced by the certified interpreters and how they affect consecutive interpreting performance in certification-requiring contexts. It seems that even though certified interpreting is typically a highly formalised activity, the studied certified interpreters *do* experience a variety of affects – emotions, feelings and states and the psycho-affective factors indeed influence the way in which certified interpreters perform consecutive interpreting. It also transpires that the interpreter's psycho-

affectivity is a continuously active module which is perhaps impossible to be totally “switched off” during interpreting.

## **2. Interpreter psychology and the study of the psycho-affective factors in interpreting**

The interest in the psychological phenomena occurring among interpreters while they interpret is not new since there is already an ample body of research in this area with such prominent scholars as David Gerver (who was involved in researching information processing (*e.g.* 1975)), Danica Seleskovitch (who, among others, studied note-taking and its impact on memory retention and retrieval (*e.g.* 1975)), Daniel Gile (whose interpreting efforts models accentuate the interpreter’s cognitive effort made while interpreting (*e.g.* 2009)) or Kilian G. Seeber (whose scholarly interests centre around cognitive load (*e.g.* 2011)) representing the cognitive strand of interpreter psychology. However, it seems that the other strand – the psycho-affective one – is still underrepresented in the community of interpreting scholars for there are still many lacunae in our understanding of how the interpreter’s psycho-affectivity works and of the way(s) in which it may affect interpreting performance. It does not mean that the topics of the interpreter’s psycho-affectivity have not been touched upon. Perhaps, one of the first aspects studied within the framework of the psycho-affective strand of interpreter psychology was stress, its causes and manifestations in interpreters’ verbal and non-verbal behaviours (*e.g.* Sanz 1931; Kurz 2003; Korpál 2017). There have been attempts at constructing the psychologically informed profile of trainee interpreters (*e.g.* Brisau, Godijns, Meuleman 1994). Some scholars have also observed that interpreting quality may be affected by interpreters’ emotional stability (*e.g.* Bontempo, Napier 2011; Valero-Garcés 2005). An interesting thread of psycho-affective research on interpreting is the issue of interpreters’ psychological properties, often commonly referred to as “soft skills”, verified prior to interpreting training within the framework of interpreting aptitude tests (*e.g.* Timarová, Ungoed-Thomas 2008; Timarová, Salaets 2011). Interestingly enough, there have also been attempts at constructing interpreting models which make some references to the psychological conditioning of the interpreter – the central figure in the interpreting process (*e.g.* Colomonos 2015; Walczyński 2019).

The above sketch points to the fact that there is a growing interest in the psycho-affective dimensions of the interpreting process. Perhaps, one of the key notions in such psychologically

oriented interpreting studies is the concept of the interpreter's psycho-affectivity. Generally speaking, it may be construed as part of the interpreter's psychological makeup constituted by the so-called psycho-affective factors – individual psychological properties which may manifest themselves in a variety of subjective emotions, feelings, moods, states or attitudes (*i.e.* affects) which guide interpreters' behaviours (*e.g.* Arnold, Brown 1999). It means that the psycho-affective factors can condition the manner in which interpreters work by influencing the interpreters' way of thinking, approaching a given interpreting situation or its participants or delivering the output. Moreover, those factors "(...) are interpreter-intrinsic and depend on the interpreter's own perception of himself/herself in the context of interpreting" (Walczyński 2019: 155-156).

Among several psycho-affective factors which are of relevance to interpreting are anxiety, fear, language ego (with language inhibition and language boundaries), extroversion/introversion/ambiversion, self-esteem, motivation and stress. All of them have the potential of affecting the interpreter's performance by either hindering the interpreter's capabilities of dealing with an interpreting task or reinforcing them and thereby increasing the overall interpreting quality. Furthermore, it seems that the experience of those factors is a complex and multi-directional phenomenon as one factor, being the response to some stimulus, can trigger off the activation of another, which can manifest itself in both the interpreter's verbal and non-verbal behaviours as well as in the interpreter's uncontrolled bodily reactions like, for example, pupil dilation, shaking hands or increased breathing pace. Such a multifaceted network of relations may be referred to as "the psycho-affective sequence".

The first factor which needs a brief discussion is *anxiety*. Generally speaking, anxiety can be defined as "(...) a socio-psycho-biologic phenomenon experienced as a foreboding dread or threat resulting from the individual's appraisal of a situation and of their capacity to deal with it" (Piechurska-Kuciel 2008: 28). In other words, this psycho-affective factor can be explained by the set of emotions, feelings and states which are experienced by people who see some threat in a given situation although objectively this situation is not really threatening. The general concept of anxiety has several subtypes, the experience of which may manifest itself in the interpreters' way of performing their services. The basic two types are *archaic anxiety*, which is related to the events of the past which were in some way negative for interpreters, and *existential anxiety*, which is related to the present or future events in which the interpreter is to participate (*cf.* Heron 1989). *Existential anxiety* can be further divided into *acceptance anxiety*, which may come to the fore in relation to the interpreter's doubts concerning whether he/she

will be accepted as a legitimate participant of the interpreting act, *orientation anxiety*, which is linked to whether the interpreter will know how to deal with the interpreting task, *i.e.* when to start interpreting, when to pause, whom to interpret first *etc.*, and *performance anxiety* which is directly related to interpreting skills and the concerns about how to exploit them to make the interpreting act communicatively successful.

Secondly, there is *fear*. Although it is often explained by cross-references to anxiety, there is a major difference between those two factors: anxiety is invoked by the subjectively perceived threat while fear is caused by the objectively existing threat. To put it differently, what is clearly different is the character of the stimulus. Fear is triggered off by some identifiable stimulus while anxiety by something that is rather difficult to identify (*e.g.* Strongman 2003). Because of the nature of this psycho-affective factor, it may be assumed that interpreters do not experience fear too frequently. However, there are clear examples of the contexts in which fear can emerge as a psycho-affective response. One of them is definitely interpreting in war and conflicts zones or interpreting in concentration camps (*e.g.* Tryuk 2010) where people's lives were endangered. For this reason, interpreters working in such settings risked their lives. As a consequence, this could have greatly contributed to their experience of fear, which – in turn – could have affected the manners of interpreting between the Nazi soldiers and camp prisoners.

*Language ego* is another psycho-affective factor which is of relevance to interpreters. This concept was developed by Alexander Z. Guiora (1972) as a response to Freud's concept of body ego. Generally speaking, this factor is "(...) the identity a person develops in reference to the language he or she speaks" (Brown 2007: 69). Having a great command of languages which they interpret from and into, interpreters often realise that the language learning process is never complete and because of this, they identify some deficits in their language competence, thereby developing their language ego. If they are aware of some insufficiencies of their lexicon, grammar or pronunciation, they establish what is known as *language boundaries* – the limits to which they can exploit their language resources. Crossing those limits may often entail making some mistakes. In order not to make those mistakes, interpreters are likely to develop *language inhibition* – a psycho-linguistic mechanism which contributes to interpreters' reluctance to make use of those less internalised lexical, grammatical or phonetic patterns since each mistake in using them would mean threatening interpreters' language ego.

Another component of the interpreter's psycho-affectivity is personality dimension understood as one of the types: *extraversion*, *introversion* and *ambiversion*. On the whole,

those three types define the sources of people's positive states, feelings and emotions. Extroversion is related to deriving positive emotions from the surrounding world while introversion involves looking for positive stimuli in people themselves (e.g. Arnold, Brown 1999). Ambiversion is an intermediate type which combines the other two types. Moreover, the three dimensions have their more outward manifestations in greater openness to contact with other people, more speaking (for extroversion) or in a predilection for less intense social contacts resulting in solitude or withdrawal (for introversion). Those properties, stereotypically associated with two opposing personality dimensions, are known as *personality narrower traits* (e.g. Reevy, Ozer, Ito 2010). Theoretically, it could be assumed that because of the character of work and much speaking involved in the interpreter's profession, extroversion would be more desirable (e.g. Henderson 1980; Zannirato 2013). However, some studies (e.g. Schweda-Nicholson 2005; Bontempo *et al.* 2014) have demonstrated that personality type does not have to translate in the way interpreters work since their professional selves do not have to match their private selves. It means that while working, interpreters may demonstrate a set of properties which do not have to correspond to their real, *i.e.* private, personality dimension.

*Self-esteem* is yet another component of the interpreter's psycho-affectivity. It may be understood as a person's attitude to himself/herself as well as to his/her skills, competences and knowledge. Such attitude results from the self-appraisal with reference to the environment and its participants (e.g. Arnold, Brown 1999). In the scholarly literature, self-esteem is sometimes referred to as *self-regard*, *self-efficacy*, *self-image*, to mention just a few (Habrat 2013). Self-esteem can be further divided into several categories related to specific domains. For instance, interpreters can exhibit high/positive, natural or low/negative levels of *global/general self-esteem* (their general self-appraisal of themselves as people), *situational self-esteem* (their self-appraisal regarding a given interpreting situation), *task self-esteem* (their self-appraisal concerning a given interpreting task) or *intermediate self-esteem* (their self-appraisal of their interpreting or linguistic skills). It seems that all of the types can be experienced by professional interpreters since they are closely linked to what interpreters think of themselves in relation to external circumstances.

Another psycho-affective factor which can be examined with reference to interpreters' work is *motivation*. It is generally known that any activity people engage in is driven by internal or external forces which often result from people's objectives they wish to achieve, from what is known as *achievement motivation*. This is perhaps one of the most extensively studied psycho-affective factors, with many competing theories of motivation (e.g. Gorman

2005). Indubitably, interpreters at large are guided by their motivation. As aforementioned, it can have either internal sources (interpreters' own intrinsic needs like, for instance, the sense of professionalism or the internal need for perfection and excellence (*e.g.* Wu 2016)) or external sources, *i.e.* interpreters are motivated by the extrinsic factors such as a reward, remuneration or statutory obligation (in the case of certified interpreters).

The final aspect of the interpreter's psycho-affectivity is stress which, broadly speaking, can be defined as a set of psychological and physiological responses to a stimulus. In the psychological literature, it is often accentuated that stress is "(...) an arousal of body and mind" (Reevy, Ozer, Ito 2010: 543) and that it involves "(...) the physical, psychological and behavioural responses (such as nervousness, nausea, or fatigue) that occur in the face of stressors" (Bernstein *et al.* 2008: 32). In other words, stress may be perceived as "(...) a psychological reaction experienced when an individual feels an imbalance between task requirements and the resources available for coping with them" (Riccardi 2015: 405). Interpreters are often under the influence of stress; moreover, in terms of stress, the interpreter's profession is sometimes likened to the job of a pilot or an air controller, which both are unquestionably two of the most difficult occupations involving a lot of serious decision-making (*e.g.* Moser 1995; Kurz 2003). Stress in interpreting can be caused by a variety of the so-called stressors – external circumstances (*i.e.* events, situations or people) as well as internal thoughts and beliefs, attitudes feelings as well as emotions (*i.e.* the psycho-affective factors). There are two basic forms of stress: *eustress*, which gives interpreters some strength to cope with a given interpreting task, and *distress*, which is of inhibitory and debilitating nature and thus which lowers the interpreter's capabilities to successfully provide interpreting of decent quality (*e.g.* Riccardi 2015).

To sum up, the interpreter's psycho-affectivity, the research on which is reported in this paper, is composed of seven major psycho-affective factors which are likely to impact on interpreters and their way of delivering the interpretation. They may be facilitative, *i.e.* strengthening the interpreter's potential and skills and thus contributing to the increase in the quality of interpreting performance and the output, or debilitating, *i.e.* hindering the interpreter's skills and thereby lowering the quality of the interpretation rendered. In the further part of this paper, which presents some observations made in the course of the study carried out among Polish-English certified interpreters, it will become clear which of those factors are more facilitative than debilitating. An attempt will also be made at correlating the certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity components with some of their linguistic and extra-linguistic exponents.

### **3. Polish-English certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity: causes, exponents and potential impact on certified interpreting performance**

Certified interpreting is a special type of interpreting, performed typically in the sight mode or in the consecutive mode by certified interpreters who have obtained the status to practise the profession of a certified translator/interpreter from Poland's Ministry of Justice in the course of a demanding and difficult examination procedure. During the written test, the candidates are required to translate four texts and then, having passed this part, they are required to perform two sight and two consecutive interpretations. Only after passing this examination are they officially allowed to work as certified translators/interpreters.

Certified interpreters can be called in by courts, the police and other state institutions to interpret between the parties involved. The most common contextual settings for certified interpreters' work are courtrooms, police stations, border guard stations, notary's offices, registry offices *etc.* It may be postulated that those settings themselves are likely to evoke a panoply of different emotions, feelings, states, moods or attitudes. In other words, such institutional embedding can lead to the interpreters' experience of the psycho-affective factors.

The study, the results of which form the basis for the following discussion, was carried out in 2018 in the form of online surveying among 76 Polish-English certified interpreters practising consecutive interpreting in certification-requiring contexts. The respondents were asked to fill in a rather lengthy survey concerning their subjective experience of the psycho-affective factors discussed above (the extensive discussion of the study and its results is presented in Walczyński 2019). The questionnaire was composed of 46 questions, referring to factual, attitudinal and behavioural data. Thus, what was obtained was the respondents' answers concerning their statistical information as well as their attitudes, views and behaviours with reference to the studied psycho-affective factors. Among the questions were both closed questions, in which the certified interpreters selected their preferred options, as well as the open-ended ones, in which the respondents provided the textual input, thanks to which they could cast more light on their experience of the selected psycho-affective factors. Thus, the questionnaire addressed issues of both quantitative (*e.g.* age, experience) as well as qualitative character (*e.g.* the experience of the psycho-affective factors and its impact on interpreting performance). In the analysis of the respondents' opinions about their subjectively experienced psycho-affective factors and the way(s) in which those factors influence certified consecutive interpreting practice, two sets of factual (*i.e.* numerical) data have to be considered. The first set of data concerns the experience in the profession of a certified interpreter. The average



number of years of practising the profession was 14 (with 40 years being the longest experience in the certified interpreter's profession and several months being the shortest one). Equally important is the question concerning the experience in consecutive interpreting at large. The average length of this experience was 16 years. However, as many as 51 certified respondents (67%) declared that they had had more than 10-year consecutive interpreting practice. The longest experience was 43 years whereas the shortest one – several months. One person used the word “sporadically” to assess his/her length of experience in consecutive interpreting. Given those numbers, it might be speculated that the growing experience should potentially decrease the (typically negative) impact of the psycho-affective factors on professional activity. However, it seems that it does not necessarily have to work this way since the respondents' answers point to the fact that anxiety is experienced by 42 respondents (55%), fear by 20 (26%), language inhibition by 52 (68%), personality dimension by 58 (76%), self-esteem by 61 (80%), motivation by 69 (91%) and stress by 64 (84%). Those numbers may corroborate the statement that the certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity is a constantly working module of the psychological makeup which is hardly possible to totally “switch off” in professional life regardless of experience. In other words, the study has provided ample evidence to state that, in general, despite having experience in certified consecutive interpreting, many certified interpreters observe that their emotional states, feelings and attitudes (*i.e.* the psycho-affective factors) are likely to exert some kind of influence on their consecutive interpreting performance.

Before the presentation of how the certified interpreters viewed particular psycho-affective factors, what should be pointed out is that in the course of study it was revealed that in the study participants' opinions, the experience of those factors has both verbal (*i.e.* linguistic) and non-verbal (*i.e.* extra-linguistic) exponents. However, because of the inaccessibility of data (no access to the recorded outputs delivered by the certified interpreters) and the more linguistic than psychological approach to the study (*i.e.* no psychological tests were used to measure the experience of the psycho-affective factors), it is impossible to isolate the exponents and refer them to particular factors. For this reason, it seems safe to assume that the verbal and non-verbal manifestations concern the generally understood certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity. Among the most commonly mentioned linguistic aspects of the experience of the factors are lexical, phonetic and grammatical errors as well as zero renderings (*i.e.* not transferring the input information by means of linguistic equivalents in the target language resulting in omissions). The aspect which seems to be particularly prone to errors is output delivery fluency which, as declared by the study participants, tends to be

distorted by disfluencies – hesitations, silent pauses (“stalls”), filled pauses (“repairs”) – a phenomenon commonly occurring in interpreting (*cf.* Mead 2002). As regards the non-verbal manifestations of the experience of the psycho-affective factors, the certified interpreters observed a panoply of bodily reactions which they saw as stemming from the activity of those factors: increased body tension, elevated heartbeat, perspiration, the intensified use of gestures or the trembling of hands. While it is true that in most cases, the extra-linguistic exponents are unlikely to distort the overall quality of certified consecutive interpreting, there are some manifestations which can, rather indirectly than directly, contribute to some problems encountered by the certified interpreters during the process of interpreting. Among them are shaking hands, which may hinder note-taking, dry mouth, which may adversely impact on voice quality, or faster or shallower breathing, which may make it difficult to speak at an understandable pace.

In the case of the seven psycho-affective factors constituting the certified interpreter’s psycho-affectivity, they can be divided into two groups: anxiety, fear and stress form one category of such factors which are usually, though not only, triggered externally (*i.e.* external circumstances invoke them) while language inhibition resulting from language ego, personality dimension, self-esteem and motivation belong to another category since they are caused mainly by the certified interpreters’ internal circumstances (*i.e.* their views, attitudes and internal thinking about themselves; their self-appraisal). What was also brought to light in the study is that the factors of the first group are usually of adverse nature, which means that their impact is more often than not detrimental to certified consecutive interpreting practice. The activity of the factors classified into the other group is usually more positive than negative and, to some extent, is more facilitative during the process of interpreting.

As regards anxiety, the certified interpreters declared the experience of several types of this psycho-affective factor. First of all, the respondents mentioned several past events in which they participated as certified interpreters and which bring about some bad memories (*e.g.* the imbalance of power in the courtroom which they observed during some previous courtroom interpretations). Thus, it points to the experience of archaic anxiety. Perhaps the most common type of anxiety was performance anxiety which – in the case of the respondents – concerned their linguistic and interpreting skills which, in their opinion, were not properly developed to provide such interpreting services. What emerges from this is that the certified interpreters had perhaps very high expectations towards themselves, which could contribute to the emergence of performance anxiety. Likewise, orientation anxiety was also present among some respondents since they directly stated that what was problematic at times was knowing

how to behave in a given interpreting situation – when to start delivering the output, whether to pause the source-language speaker, who to turn to when interpreting *etc.* Finally, there were several mentions of the situations in which acceptance anxiety ensued. The certified interpreters expressed their concerns about whether the other participants of the interpreting act would recognise the importance of the interpreter. Such anxious feelings could also be related to the already mentioned imbalance of power observed, for instance, in judicial settings – at the police station, in the courtroom or in the notary's office, where one party is institutionally stronger than the other. What can be concluded from the respondents' responses concerning their views on the subjectively experienced anxiety is that there are two primary sources of such anxious feelings: their typically negative self-evaluation (*i.e.* they appeared to undervalue their expertise and skills) and the institutional settings with their actors who may not recognise the proper position of the interpreter, without whom the interpreting-mediated communication act may not be effective. Thus, anxiety is a strong negative factor.

Fear was another factor which the certified interpreters were asked to provide some information about. Interestingly enough, before the study, it was assumed that, because of its nature and origin, this psycho-affective variable would not be mentioned by the respondents. In fact, 26% of them declared the experience of fear. However, while it was true that in several cases the certified interpreters mistook fear for anxiety, there were a few clear examples of the circumstances, under which the study participants *did* experience fear. Those were usually the situations which could endanger, in the respondents' opinions, the interpreters' lives – interpreting a criminal (sitting next to him during the court proceedings, mentioning the interpreter's address in public), interpreting during court proceedings whose participants were aggressive and thus in some way dangerous and interpreting in an operating room where the interpreter assisted the doctor taking care of a woman in labour. Those circumstances are likely to evoke the certified interpreters' fear; however, they do not occur too often and, therefore, this psycho-affective factor, although nearly always negative, is not too common.

Stress is omnipresent in interpreting so there is no surprise that the certified interpreters provided much information on their experience of stress and its causes. Among the stressing circumstances, the respondents mentioned several internal stressors like, for instance, the certified interpreters' uncertainty related to their overall interpreting competence and its particular components. Thus, what stresses the participants of the study is their allegedly improperly developed interpreting subcompetence (*i.e.* the subcompetence related to the interpreting skills in its strict sense). In other words, the respondents did not feel too certain as regards their consecutive interpreting skills. Among the problems they saw was information

retrieval difficulties (*i.e.* they could not remember all the data of the input), note-taking and note-reading problems or input comprehension issues. Moreover, another stressing factor was the domain-related subcompetence. The certified interpreters stated that they experienced stress when they were faced with an interpretation in the domain which was not their specialisation. This might lead to problems with lexical choices, wrongly understood grammatical constructions (like in the language of law) or obscured pronunciation. Many stressors are directly linked to other psycho-affective factors like, for instance, language inhibition, negative self-esteem, anxiety or low motivation. External stressors were also mentioned in the respondents' answers. There were three major categories of such stressing agents: other participants of the interpreting act (*e.g.* judges, parties' representatives, witnesses, audience), the contextual embedding of a given interpretation (*e.g.* courtroom, police station) and working conditions (*e.g.* noise, discomfort, small space *etc.*). Although it may be postulated that the above-mentioned stressors are likely to invoke mostly distress – the negative, debilitating form of stress, it is not always the case. 24 respondents (31%) declared the experience of distress because it lowered their capacity to deal with the interpreting act, 31 certified interpreters (41%) mentioned eustress since it made them more motivated to successfully tackle a given interpretation whereas for 21 study participants (28%) stress was neither debilitating nor facilitative. Hence, even though from the study it does not transpire explicitly that, as was expected, stress is mostly negative, it is a strong psycho-affective factor whose activity may be of twofold nature: it can be either enhancing and stimulating or hindering and weakening.

The second category of the psycho-affective factors includes language ego and the resultant language inhibition, personality dimension, self-esteem and motivation, all of which are triggered mostly by the interpreter-intrinsic circumstances.

In the course of the study, it became evident that the certified interpreters experienced the impact of their language ego and the resulting language inhibition. The fact that the respondents decide not to use certain lexical items, grammatical structures or phonetic patterns may be accounted for by their weaker language ego, firm language boundaries and language inhibition, which is visible in the interpreters' concerns about potential mistakes in using those elements of language. Thus, they mentioned their awareness of imperfections in their language competence, deficits in domain-related vocabulary and deficits in expertise in a given domain or, curiously enough, the presence of other people, mostly native speakers, who could allegedly monitor the certified interpreter's linguistic performance in the target language and express some negative judgment of it. It is mostly for those reasons that the certified

interpreters felt inhibited in their target language production and resorted to using only those language elements which they had firmly internalised. What was striking in the analysis of the respondents' answers to the survey questions was the scarcity of the certified interpreters who declared no language inhibition and high language ego. Perhaps, this could be justified by the fact that the certified interpreters realised that the command of a foreign language is an ongoing process which never ends and that linguistic performance (*i.e.* using the language) does not have to correspond to linguistic competence (*i.e.* knowing the language), especially under atypical circumstances which may bring about the experience of other psycho-affective factors such as anxiety, fear or stress. Concluding, it may be stated that the certified interpreters experienced language inhibition which results from their weaker language ego and firmer language boundaries. Therefore, this psycho-affective factor is rather strong.

Another psycho-affective variable belonging to the second group is personality dimension and many respondents saw its impact on the manner in which they performed certified consecutive interpreting. When asked to self-declare their personality dimension, the certified interpreters stated that they were extroverts (25 respondents, 33%), ambiverts (30, 40%) and introverts (21, 27%). The extroverted interpreters claimed that, when interpreting consecutively in certification-requiring contexts, they were more willing to interact with the interpreting act participants by offering additional explanations (*i.e.* by explicating), being more verbose and making sure that the information exchange is comprehended by the all participants. The ambiverts in this group seem to share some of the interpreting behaviours – they also tend to explicate when there is such a need and, generally speaking, they are more verbally expressive. The introverted certified interpreters claimed they are faithful and stick to the point, without adding any information which was absent from the input. They are also not very expressive verbally. However, quite many responses can be taken as representing ambiversion since they include the manifestations of both extroversion and introversion. What was interesting in the collection of the answers was that there were some direct references to the changing personality dimension, depending on the context. It all can be indicative of the fact that the real personality dimension does not have to be reflected in the certified interpreter's manner of delivering consecutive interpreting since for different occasions different "selves" can be adopted.

Interesting observations were made in the course of the analysis of the certified interpreters' answers concerning their levels of self-esteem (mostly global and intermediate self-esteem). Generally speaking, very few respondents admitted to having a low level of global self-esteem. Likewise, intermediate self-esteem related to language skills was also

mostly average and high (with 1 person declaring the low level) while interpreting subcompetence-related intermediate self-esteem level was slightly different because there were more respondents (10, 13%) who stated that this type of self-esteem was low. The generally high levels of both kinds of self-esteem, as the certified interpreters stated, manifest themselves in more confidence exhibited during interpreting practice: in loud speaking, better voice control, fewer pauses *etc.* However, the high levels of global and intermediate self-esteem are slightly confusing in light of the previously discussed psycho-affective factors, especially anxiety, stress or language inhibition, the experience of which many certified interpreters found more debilitating and thus negative than facilitative and positive. Such a state of affairs can be accounted for by the structure of the data-gathering survey, in which each section was related to one factor with no items allowing to cross-correlate the answers. Thus, more research needs to be done to analyse the interrelated nature of the psycho-affective factors since what is already known is that there is a network of interrelations among the factor but its character is still rather vague.

The final psycho-affective factor is motivation, or more precisely, achievement motivation. Since the great majority of the respondents declared the impact of their motivation on their certified interpreting practice, it is vital to examine its external and internal sources, *i.e.* extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. As regards the former, the obvious source is remuneration, which appeared in very many responses. Despite the relatively low official rates for certified interpreting in public institutions (*e.g.* courts, police station, customs offices), this seems to be a natural choice since people work for money and interpreters are not different in this respect. Moreover, for certified interpreting in other than public institutions, the Polish-English certified interpreters can charge more, using the free market rates. Another external motivator is the statutory obligation to provide interpreting services. This obligation results directly from the Polish law, which holds that, generally speaking, the certified interpreters may not refuse to provide interpreting services to public authorities. One predominating source of internal motivation is the certified interpreters' internal need for excellence and professional conduct. Others reasons include deriving pleasure from the job, having satisfaction with a successfully performed consecutive interpretation, willingness to help other people and, surprisingly, the internal need for respect, prestige and reputation. However, what should be stressed is that the certified interpreters mentioned both types of motivators that guided their manner of performing consecutive interpreting. When motivated externally and/or internally, the respondents spoke about paying more attention to the linguistic correctness of interpreting performance and its output or being more attentive during the comprehension phase, striving

to stay neutral, professional and reliable. To sum up, it appears that motivation is a strong and positive psycho-affective factor which conditions the way of interpreting.

To conclude, the study of 76 certified interpreters' experience of the psycho-affective factors revealed several interesting phenomena. Firstly, the analysis of the respondents' answers provided to the survey questions allowed categorising the seven factors into two groups: one group, consisting of anxiety, fear and stress, and another group including language ego, personality dimension, self-esteem and motivation. The psycho-affective variables of the first group tend to adversely affect the certified interpreter's performance while those of the second group are more positive and seem to be more facilitative. Secondly, fear was also experienced by the respondents although, in theory, fear-related feelings should not have ensued. From the responses emerged that in the professional life of a certified interpreter, there are some situations which are objectively dangerous so the experience of fear is well justified. Thirdly, it was rather surprising that the certified interpreters tend to underestimate their competences, especially their interpreting and linguistic skills. It would, therefore, be interesting to study whether those concerns translate into real-life practice, which, unfortunately, was unfeasible within the framework of this research project. Finally, the results of the study have shown that all of the seven components of the certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity have the potential of exerting some impact on certified interpreting performance, that they can manifest themselves in a variety of linguistic and extra-linguistic exponents and that only to some extent can their activity be consciously controlled since they are activated by an array of aspects inherent in the interpreting process. This may, at least partially, corroborate the view that the certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity is a continually active unit of psychological makeup whose total control is perhaps impossible.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This article has been an attempt at presenting the concept of the Polish-English certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity as a multi-aspectual, continually active module of the certified interpreter's psychological construction. This module is made up of seven major psycho-affective factors – anxiety, fear, language inhibition/language ego/language boundaries, extroversion/introversion/ambiversion, self-esteem, motivation and stress.

The first part of this paper has concentrated on presenting the research frameworks, within which the concept of the interpreter's psycho-affectivity can be studied – interpreter psychology. While there is more intensified research work on the cognitive dimension of the

interpreting process, it may be argued that the psycho-affective strand is gaining more and more popularity among interpreting scholars who study various facets of the interpreter's psycho-affectivity. For this reason, such aspects as the psycho-affective factors appear to become an interesting object of inquiry.

The major part of this article has been devoted to the discussion of some observations made in the course of a survey-based study among 76 Polish-English certified interpreters who provided a wealth of data concerning their experience of the psycho-affective factors. It turns out the studied psycho-affective factors can be divided into two groups – one encompassing anxiety, fear and stress, whose activity adversely affects the certified interpreter's capacity, skills and knowledge, and the other group with language ego, personality dimension, self-esteem and motivation which can help him/her successfully perform his/her job. Being aware of the twofold nature of the psycho-affective factors, interpreters at large can better exploit certain coping tactics to decrease the negative influence and/or to boost the positive impact of their psycho-affectivity on the interpreting process and output. Hence, the issues of the interpreter's psycho-affective factors should constitute an important element of interpreting training since, as has been shown in this paper, rarely do certified interpreters remain untouched by the investigated components of their psychological makeup.

All in all, it is hoped that this paper has shed some light on how the certified interpreter's psycho-affectivity works by emphasising that the experience of the psycho-affective factors can be triggered off by nearly all elements of the interpreting process (including interpreter's internal thinking, feelings and emotions as well as external circumstances and other people – the participants of interpreter-mediated communication), even the ones that theoretically should not have such an impact. Moreover, contrary to the stereotypical idealisation of the interpreter's profession as a neutral, unbiased and unfeeling agent of interlingual communication, the psycho-affective factors can affect the interpreter and, by extension, the entire interpreting process. Thus, it may be concluded that the interpreting process constitutes a network of interrelated elements, of which the figure of the interpreter and his/her psycho-affectivity are its prominent components.

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