

## TEACHING INTERPRETING IN TIMES OF COVID: PERSPECTIVES, EXPERIENCE AND SATISFACTION

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**Abstract:** *Technological tools have complemented face-to-face instructions at university from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, COVID-19 pandemic forced many faculty members to switch rapidly, and without any specific training, to an emergency remote teaching. The aim of this paper is to analyse the impressions of Spanish faculty members teaching interpreting in an online mode. A total of 65 faculty members answered a semi-structured online survey, covering the 80.8% of all the Spanish universities where interpreting subjects are taught. The results revealed some pitfalls derived mainly from the lack of physical issues (booth, body language evaluation), absence of human contact, lack of suitable technology, more teaching hours, cognitive load, lack of concentration, and students monitoring. However, the benefits detected were more self-practice, more attendance to sessions, and the preparation of students for a remote interpreting, taking into account that this will be the future of professional language interpreting practice.*

**Key words:** *interpreting, teaching experience, teaching satisfaction, online teaching, remote teaching.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic forced faculty members to teach in almost exclusive online learning circumstances. Indeed, a new concept has emerged to describe this urgent situation, i.e., *Emergency Remote Teaching* (Hodges *et al.*, 2020; Torras Virgili, 2021; Zawacki-Richter, 2020).

Many studies have tackled the improvised teaching situation according to the new circumstances of the imperative moving online (Rapanta *et al.*, 2020) and how this has inevitably influenced the teaching and learning process, despite being familiar the use of digital technologies in higher education (Daumiller *et al.*, 2021). Interpreting faculty members were no exception: they were also required to switch from a traditional on-site teaching environment to a remote interpreting (RI) teaching (Midões, 2021).

However, it is worth noting here that the practice of RI — also referred to as distance interpreting (Braun, 2019a; ISO 20108, 2017) — is not new. RI is defined as the type of interpreting where the interpreters are physically separated from the other interlocutors in the communication (Amato *et al.*, 2018; Braun, 2019a, 2019b; Diriker, 2015; Donovan, 2017; Fantinuoli, 2018; Napier *et al.*, 2018). It has become such an important type of interpreting that, as Baigorri-Jalón (2015) points out, “after the simultaneous revolution, conference interpreting was undergoing a second revolution, namely remote interpreting” (p.23).

The growing importance of technology in interpreting becomes a necessity in RI. RI technology is developing extremely fast, allowing the compliance of the technical requirements addressed by the ISO 20108 (2017) and by AIIC (2019). Some basic parameters and functionalities shall be considered applicable to distance interpreting in the simultaneous mode: microphone management, frequency response, prevention of acoustic feedback and acoustic shock, acoustic echo cancelling, external sources, image quality, lip sync, latency, etc. Besides, regarding interpreting technology, it is relevant to indicate that some specific platforms or software (KUDO, Interprefy, Interactivo, VoiceBoxer, Olyusey, among others) or computer-assisted pronunciation (CAP) (PRAAT) (Jiménez Serrano, 2019; Perramon, 2020; Rojo-López *et al.*, 2021) emerged before the pandemic in the professional practice.

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Focusing on the study we present in this paper, despite the above and the terminological controversy around distance, virtual, remote, etc., in the area we are concerned, we will use the terms *face-to-face sessions/teaching/learning* to refer to the traditional teaching or learning occurring in university physical settings (as we had before the COVID-19 situation), as well as *online sessions/teaching/learning* to refer to the type of teaching or learning taking place via the Internet.

Besides, for translation subjects, the use of distance or remote tools are more frequent, as this is part of the home workplace of the freelance translators. Nevertheless, for interpreting subjects, the traditional booths seemed to be irreplaceable. At least, until now.

In the literature some studies focused on distance interpreter training (Xu *et al.*, 2021), on the design of teaching modules through computer-assisted interpreting (CAI) (Fantinuoli & Prandi, 2018), on the implementation of technologies into interpreting practice before and during pandemic (Braun, 2019a & 2019b; Corpas & Gaber, 2020; Fantinuoli, 2018; Wulansari *et al.*, 2021, to mention a few), and even on a local analysis (one university context) of the trainers and students' perspectives during pandemic but with a very reduced sample of those agents: Afolabi and Oyetoyan (2021) (14 students and 6 trainers in Africa); Ahrens *et al.* (2021) (21 MA students and 15 trainers in Cologne); Mirek (2021) (30 MA students in Poland); and Vidyantari (2021) (5 MA students in Indonesia). Nevertheless, no research including a significant sample of interpreting trainers so as to explore their perspective and impressions towards the online teaching experienced during the pandemic situation has been found.

This study aims to analyse faculty members' experience, perceptions and satisfaction towards the online teaching of subjects or modules of Interpreting in times of COVID-19. To reach this main objective the following research questions (RQs) were posed:

- RQ1. What are the faculty members' experience regarding the technology and resources for their online teaching of interpreting?
- RQ2. How does online teaching of interpreting affect the development of interpreting-related skills in university students, according to faculty members?
- RQ3. What are the faculty members' impressions in their online teaching of interpreting?
- RQ4. Which are the positive and negative aspects of the online teaching of interpreting according to faculty members?
- RQ5. What are the faculty members' attitudes towards the online teaching of interpreting?

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Participants

A total of 27 Spanish universities offering interpreting undergraduate or postgraduate studies were contacted via email. Sixty-five faculty members (73.8%, n=48 female; 26.2%, n=17 male) teaching subjects or modules of Interpreting subjects participated voluntarily in this study. This sample covers the 80.8% of the centres (n=21 universities), being a very representative sample, very close to the whole population of Spanish scenario of interpreting studies. The participants' ages ranged from 24 to 60 years old (mean age = 42.43 years, standard deviation, SD = 9.98), being the most numerous groups the age ranges between 35-39, 40-44, and 55-59 (18.5% each), followed by the age group between 24-29 years old (13.8%) and 45-49 years old (12.3%).

Most participants held the BA of Translation and Interpreting (78.5%), while very few declared to hold the BA of English Studies (16.9%) or other Philology degrees (4.6%). As for postgraduate studies, more than half had obtained their MA on Translation and Interpreting or a PhD on the field (53.8% and 50.8%, respectively), while a few owned an MA or a PhD on English Studies (4.6%, each), or a PhD on other Philologies (3.1%). Other MA of the respondents, but with very few answers, were MA on conference interpreting (3.1%), MA on teaching training (6.2%), MA related to language in multilingual context or related to cultural aspects (3.1%), and other non-related degrees (Psychology, Tourism, Philosophy) (9.2%).

Many respondents declared to have worked as a professional interpreter but not at the moment of answering the survey (33.8%); others (46.2%) were still working as a professional interpreter (46.2%). Very few of them never worked as a professional interpreter (20%). Regarding university teaching experience, the year mean is 12.31 (SD = 8.48).

The foreign languages from or to which they teach interpreting were: English (58.5%; n=38); French (16.9%; n=11); German (6.2%; n=4); Italian (3.1%; n=2); Greek and Arabic (1.5%; n=1, each); or a combination of more foreign languages such as English and French (9.2%; n=6) or English, French and German (3.1%; n=2). The mother tongue was Spanish, Catalan or Galician.

## 2.2 Instrument

The main instrument was a semi-structured survey. Apart from an introductory section of personal and professional information (age, academic background, undergraduate or postgraduate studies in which they were teaching, years of teaching experience, language/s from or to which they teach interpreting subjects or modules, among others), some other dimensions were proposed (see the complete instrument and how it was categorised in Appendix A):

- Dimension 1. Teaching issues, resources and training.
- Dimension 2. Development of students' interpreting-related skills.
- Dimension 3. Faculty members' impressions towards the online teaching of interpreting subjects.
- Dimension 4. Attitudes and personal opinion.

## 2.3 Procedure

As the instrument was a semi-structured survey, the methodology followed in this study was mixed: quantitative and qualitative (Cresswell & Clark, 2018). The quantitative analysis led us to a descriptive study so as to obtain participants' information related to academic background, training, behaviour, knowledge, and ideas (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). The qualitative analysis shows a more ethnographic study based on beliefs to obtain data related to activities, perspectives, satisfactions and impressions of participants which led us as well to extract some explanations delimiting behavioural patterns (Mendoza, 2011; Trigo *et al.*, 2020).

First of all, we used the Spanish database *Registro de Universidades, Centros y Títulos (RUCT)* (Registry of Universities, Centres, and Degrees) to track down the undergraduate and postgraduate official studies on Translation and Interpreting in Spain. Once the list of official studies had been elaborated, we contacted the heads of departments and the MA coordinators so that they could distribute the online survey among the faculty members teaching interpreting subjects. The online survey was administered from March to June to collect all the participants' responses as possible. The survey was closed on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

## 2.4 Data analysis

The statistical packages used were SPSS for Windows v.23 (IBM SPSS Statistics, Chicago, IL, USA) and Microsoft Office Excel 2016 (Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA, USA). Descriptive statistics included frequencies, mean and standard deviation.

Some of the qualitative responses were categorised to analyse with SPSS; others were codified and examined with the qualitative software Atlas.ti, v.9 for Windows (Scientific Software Development GmbH, Berlin, Germany), as well as Lingmotif v. 1.0 (a sentiment-analysis tool for discourse analysis).

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 Dimension 1: Resources and training

#### 3.1.1 Responses for the use of videoconferencing platforms (item 1.1.), materials (item 1.2.) and additional software (item 1.3.)

Participants confirmed to have used one videoconferencing platform to teach interpreting subjects online (item 1.1), but others stated to have employed two or even three platforms. None of the platforms were used by more than half of the respondents; the most frequent platform during online teaching was BBC (Blackboard collaborate) (46.2%) while the least frequent was Webex (7.7%).

Other platforms option was answered by seven respondents (10.8%) which, in fact, referred to the following platforms: Adobe Connect, BBB (Big Blue Button) and Sanako (n=1, each), Discord (n=2), and Own virtual platform (non-specified) (n=2). Table 1 shows all the frequencies and percentages of the platforms employed by respondents in their online teaching of interpreting:

Table 1. Platforms used by respondents.

Platform		Yes	No
BBC	N	30	35
	%	46.2	53.8
Google Meet	N	9	56
	%	13.8	86.2
Teams	N	12	53
	%	18.5	81.5
Zoom	N	12	53
	%	18.5	81.5
Webex	N	5	60
	%	7.7	92.3
Other platforms	N	7	58
	%	10.8	89.2

Faculty members were asked to select the type of materials used in their online teaching of interpreting (item 1.2.):

- Materials from specialised websites.
- Materials created genuinely.
- Materials created by experts and shared through digital platforms.
- Materials with training exercises from external websites
- Materials created by students.

The greatest percentage was obtained in Materials created genuinely (96.9%). Many others declared to have employed Materials from specialised websites (78.5%) and Materials created by experts and shared through digital platforms (65.6%). With less than half of the participants, there was the option Materials with training exercises from external websites (44.6%), while just one participant selected Materials created by students.

The type of software used as a complement for online teaching of interpreting (item 1.3.) also obtained some relevant frequencies. More than two thirds of participants did not use any additional program (70.8%). The rest shared very similar percentages with very few faculty members' answers: *Software for glossary creation* (10.8%), *Software for term extraction* (9.2%), *Software for podcast recording or for audio edition* (7.7%), *Software for voice recognition* (4.6%), and *Software for note-taking* (3.1%). Very few participants indicated *Other software* (10.8%), which included tools from Moodle, an interpreting platform, consecutive-symbols website, and transcription websites. None of the participants used *software for automatic summarisation*.

### 3.1.2 Responses for interpreting software/platform knowledge (item 1.4.) and frequency of use (item 1.5.)

Two other questions were devoted to the knowledge of certain software/platforms for RI (item 1.4.) and the use frequency of those platforms/software (item 1.5.). For both items a 4-point Likert scale was used. Figure 1 illustrates the responses for these two items:

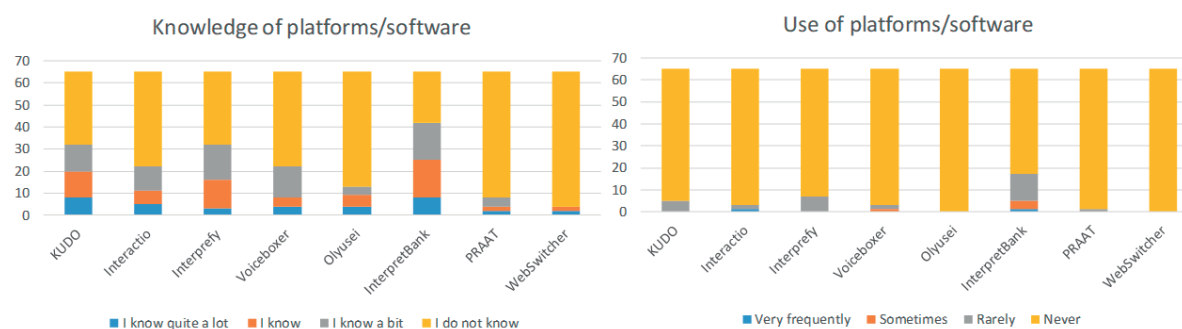


Figure 1. Knowledge and frequency of use of platforms/software for interpreting.

As observed in the above figure, the most known platforms/software were KUDO, Interprefy and InterpretBank (n=32, n=32, n=42, respectively). However, they were not frequently used in their virtual sessions: participants rarely used KUDO in 7.7% (n=5), Interprefy in 10.8% (n=7), and InterpretBank in 18.5% (n=12). The latter was sometimes employed in 6.2% (n=4) or very frequently in 1.5% (n=1).

With similar responses, participants declared to know Interactio (n=22), Voiceboxer (n=22), and Olyusei (n=13). But, as occurred in the previous three cases, they were not frequently used in virtual sessions: Interactio and Voiceboxer were rarely used by 2 (3.1%) and never used by 62 respondents (95.4%) and Olyusei was not used at all. Just one respondent indicated very frequently in Interactio and another marked sometimes for Voiceboxer (1.5%, each).

According to faculty members' answers, the least known platforms/software were PRAAT (n=8, 12.3%) and WebSwitcher (n=4, 6.2%), and, consequently, they were never used by participants in their online sessions (1 rarely used PRAAT and 64 never used it, and all of the respondents indicated to have never used WebSwitcher).

### 3.1.3 Responses for technological devices (items 1.6. and 1.7.)

The survey contained some questions related to the technological devices faculty members considered important for their students in interpreting online sessions (item 1.6.) and if they thought those technological devices were at their students' disposal (item 1.7.).

The common elements asked in both items were: Good Internet connection (GIC), Noise-cancelling microphones to reduce background noise (NCM), High-quality headphones (HQH), High RAM memory usage computers (RAM), High resolution monitor (HRM), Two monitors with standard resolution (2MSR), Windows operating system (Windows), Mac operating system (Mac), Linux operating system (Linux).

The analysis for item 1.6 was made on a 4-point Likert scale with the following degree of importance: Very important, Important, A bit important, Not important. For item 1.7., response options were Yes/No/I do not know. Figure 2 shows the faculty members' responses to item 1.6. and item 1.7.:

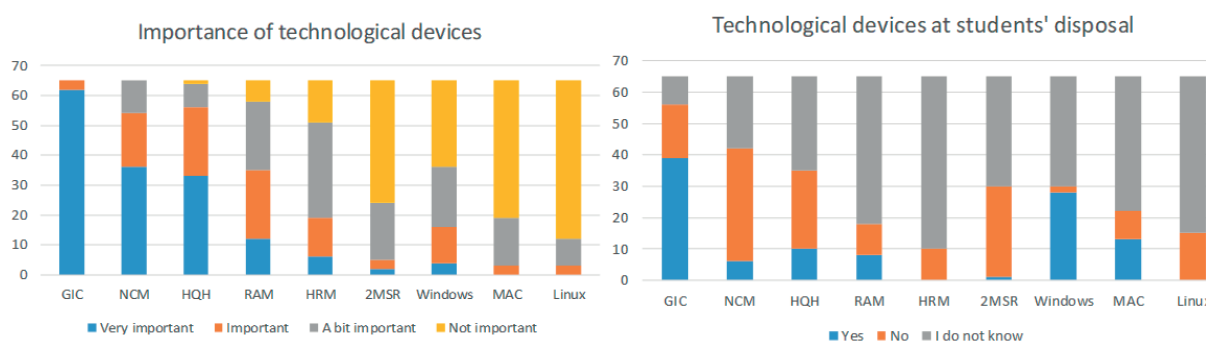


Figure 2. Technological devices in online sessions of interpreting (items 1.6. and 1.7.).

All faculty members considered very important (n=62) or important (n=3) having a GIC; however, this unanimity was not found when reflecting their impressions of what their students actually had during online sessions, as 39 thought they had a GIC, 17 did not think they had a proper one, and 9 did not know.

A very high number of participants considered very important (n=36) or important (n=18) having NCM or having HQH (n=33 for very important; n=23 for important). On the contrary, for these devices in item 1.7., faculty members thought that their students had none of them (n=36 for NCM, n=25 for HQH), or did not know (n=23 for NCM; n=30 for HQH).

The technological devices considered important or a bit important with a high frequency were RAM (n=23, each) and HRM (n=13, n=32 each relevance degree). Regarding having 2MSR, participants regarded this a bit important (n=19) or not important (n=41). As for operating system, most respondents placed their answers into not-important option: Windows (n=29), Mac (n=46), and Linux (n=53), being, however, Windows, the one with more variety of answers in the rest of the importance degree: very important (n=4), important (n=12), or a bit important (n=20).

Regarding the rest of technological devices faculty members thought their students had at their disposal during online sessions, as observed in the above figure, more than half did not know if their students had RAM, HRM, 2MSR, or the operating system, Windows, Mac or Linux. Two surprising results were found in 2MSR and Windows, since, considering the tendency of previous answers for 1.7. ('I do not know' option), respondents stated that their



students did not have two monitors (n=29) but, contrary to that, they thought they had Windows as operating system (n=28).

### 3.1.4 Responses for feedback to students (item 1.8.) and training to faculty members (item 1.9.)

Feedback related to students' interpreting tasks was provided using different forms (item 1.8.). A great number of faculty members revealed to have provided oral feedback in the online session (89.2%) or via written report (69.2%). Some feedback was carried out through audio recordings (24.6%), but very few through video recordings (10.8%). Lastly, a minor percentage was found in those providing feedback through chat of the online classroom and during tutoring hours (3.1%, each).

On the other hand, participants indicated the type of training they received for teaching interpreting subjects online (item 1.9.). Most respondents confessed to have learnt in a *self-taught way* (86.2%), followed closely by *shared materials/resources of partners (with them or with other faculty members)* (69.2%). With less percentage than previous ones, we found training through *events organised by professional associations* (30.8%) and *specialised courses or webinars organised by private enterprises external to their institution* (29.2%). Finally, the responses showing the least percentage were in the option *specialised courses or webinars organised by their institution* (26.2%).

### 3.2 Dimension 2: Development of students' interpreting-related skills

Participants were inquired about the degree of difficulty they considered their students could encounter for acquiring certain skills related to the interpreting practice. A 5-point Likert scale was applied for this dimension. The items asked under the umbrella of this dimension were (see Figure 3 for frequencies): 2.1. *Concentration, listening and memory skills*, 2.2. *Documentation skills*, 2.3. *Pronunciation, diction, and voice modulation*, 2.4. *Terminology-management skills*, and 2.5. *Note-taking skills*.

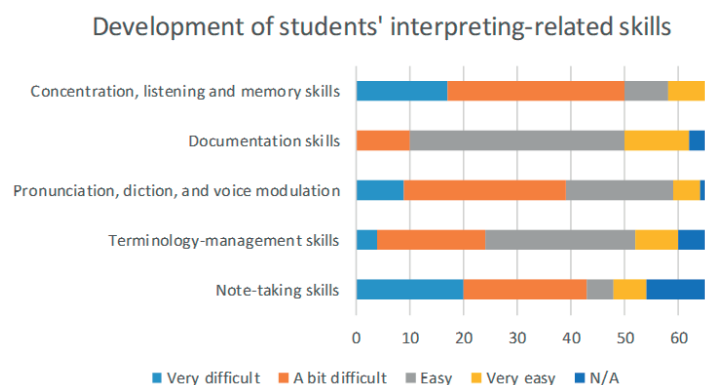


Figure 3. Degree of difficulty to develop interpreting-related skills.

The most difficult skill for students, according to faculty members, was 2.1. *Concentration, listening and memory skills*: the highest frequency was found in a bit difficult option (n=33, 50.8%) followed by very difficult (n=17, 26.2%). The second most difficult skill was 2.5. *Note-taking skills*: considered a very difficult skill (n=20, 30.8%) or a bit difficult (n=23, 35.4%) in online settings.

With more balanced results according to faculty members' responses, we found that in 2.3. *Pronunciation, diction and voice modulation* the responses tended to be framed under difficult polarity (n=9, 13.8% for very difficult; n=30, 46.2% for a bit difficult), while in 2.4. *Terminology-management skills* the answers tended to move towards easiness polarity (n=28, 43.1% for easy; n=8, 12.3% for very easy).

Finally, the least difficult skill for students, according to faculty members, was 2.2. *Documentation skill*, considered easy (n=40, 61.5%) or very easy (n=12, 18.5%). This skill was the unique not considered very difficult by participants.

### 3.3 Dimension 3: Faculty members' impressions towards the virtual teaching of Interpreting studies

A total of eleven items inquired about the impressions of faculty members when pointing out their agreement towards certain statements. The 4-point Likert included the following options: Totally disagree, Disagree, Agree and Totally agree. Table 2 shows all the results per item:

**Table 2.** Statements for detecting respondents' impressions.

Item		Totally disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally agree
3.1 I spent more time in preparing my online sessions of interpreting.	N	4	9	21	31
	%	6.2%	13.8%	32.3	47.7
3.2 I had to help my students in their interpreting more than in face-to-face sessions.	N	8	10	28	19
	%	12.3	15.4	43.1	29.2
3.3 Technical difficulties did not allow me to have standard sessions during online teaching.	N	9	21	22	13
	%	13.8	32.3	33.8	20.0
3.4 I could assist and listen to all my students in online teaching with equal duration as in a face-to-face teaching.	N	15	25	15	10
	%	23.1	38.5	23.1	15.4
3.5 I think my students prefer online sessions rather than face-to-face settings.	N	34	20	6	5
	%	52.3	30.8	9.2	7.7
3.6 I devoted enough time to each student when listening to their discourses during online teaching of interpreting.	N	8	18	14	25
	%	12.3	27.7	21.5	38.5
3.7 It was not easy to find alternative resources or software to teach online my interpreting subjects.	N	13	27	19	6
	%	20.0	41.5	29.2	9.2
3.8 Cognitive load in online teaching was greater than in a face-to-face setting.	N	10	17	14	24
	%	15.4	26.2	21.5	36.9
3.9 I felt more confident when teaching interpreting in face-to-face settings rather than in online teaching.	N	10	22	17	16
	%	15.4	33.8	26.2	24.6
3.10 I would like to receive more technological training to learn software and applications related to RI.	N	2	5	22	36
	%	3.1	7.7	33.8	55.4
3.11 I would like to receive more training to learn techniques to teach RI.	N	2	7	20	36
	%	3.1	10.8	30.8	55.4

The most frequent answer was encountered in items 3.10. and 3.11., in which the respondents totally agreed in receiving more training to learn both specific technology and techniques to teach RI (55.4%, each). In these two items, the responses for totally disagree were equal, but some discrepancy was found in 2 cases preferring to receive more technological training instead of specific techniques training for teaching RI.

The second most frequent response was found in item 3.5., in which respondents indicated that they totally disagreed (52.3%) or disagreed (30.8%) denoting that their students preferred booth or on-site interpretation rather than online. Besides, in item 3.1., participants revealed to have spent more time in preparing their online interpreting sessions (47.7% for totally agree; 32.3% for agree).

A great number of faculty members alleged, in item 3.2., to have helped their students more in online sessions (29.2% totally agreed; 43.1% agreed). On the other hand, respondents were not able to assist and listen to all their students in online sessions with equal duration as in a face-to-face one (item 3.4.) (61.6%), but they think they devoted enough time to each student discourse in online interpreting (item 3.6.) (60.0%).

Also, for some faculty members, it was not easy to find alternative resources or software to teach interpreting online (item 3.7.) (n=25). The great cognitive load of online sessions (item 3.8.) seemed not to be equally noticed by faculty members, as 38 agreed or totally agreed, but 27 disagreed or totally disagreed with the statement.

Finally, we found similar number of responses for item 3.3. and for item 3.9. On the one hand, technical difficulties did not allow 35 respondents to teach their lessons normally compared to 30 faculty members who declared the contrary (item 3.3.). On the other hand, 33 faculty members confessed to have felt confident when teaching interpreting online, compared to 32 who did not feel the same (item 3.9.).

### 3.4 Dimension 4: Attitudes and personal impressions

This dimension includes two quantitative questions and three open questions whose qualitative analysis was carried out with different software.

The codification used to indicate respondents' comments stands for the following: FM, faculty member; I, interpreting; and the number of the participant, as names and surnames were preserved in this study. Thus, FMI4 corresponds to faculty member four teaching some interpreting subject/module.

#### 3.4.1 Responses for words related to the online teaching of interpreting (item 4.1.)

Respondents listed three words that the concept of online teaching of interpreting in times of pandemic evokes for them. For this analysis, we employed sentiment analysis (SA), also known as opinion mining (Dave, Lawrence & Pennock, 2003; Liu, 2010), that is, the process of determining the emotional tone behind words so as to understand attitudes, opinions and emotions expressed by users in online format. Thus, a traditional SA on the basis of opinion polarity (positive, negative or neutral) was made through the use of Atlas.ti. Once we had created the codes for SA (Positive, Negative, and Neutral) and selected the codes for the automatic coding of sentiments, all the faculty members' responses were uploaded into the corresponding option of the software. The automatic proposal was thrown, and the results showed that, out of 65 instances (respondents' answers), 14 instances were positive, 2 neutral and 49 were negative. The tone is clearly negative.

However, not all the three words listed by respondents were negative, as some of them were positive or even neutral. The automatic system recognised the overall of the tone as negative. A detailed analysis of words suggested by the participants led us to extract a wordlist and a wordcloud so as to visualize the most frequent words. Figure 4 shows the wordcloud thrown by the qualitative software:



Figure 4. Cloud of words extracted from Atlas.ti.

As simply seen in the cloud, the most frequent words denote negative tone in the faculty members words. To see the frequency of all the words, we selected the wordlist option of Atlas.ti and, once applied a stoplist in Spanish to exclude the function words that do not convey any particular meaning, we sorted all the words. Then, we lemmatised and gathered the words from the list thrown by the system so as to include in the same row the words denoting the same meaning or concept —for instance, adjective and noun: *difícil* and *difficultad*, or synonym words: *falta* and *carencias*). Table 3 lists the words in original language (Spanish) together with its translation into English with a frequency higher than 3.



Table 3. Frequent faculty members' words thrown by Atlas.ti in item 4.1.

Word-ES	Translation-EN	F
Dificultad	Difficulty	14
Falta	Lack	9
Adaptación	Adaptation	8
Atención	Attention	8
Esfuerzo	Effort	6
Reto	Challenge	6
Cansancio	Tiredness	4
Distancia	Distance	3
Improvisación	Improvisation	3
Ansiedad	Anxiety	3

For a detailed analysis of single words, we used Lingmotif. The analysis of the word tone with this software denotes that *dificultad* (difficulty), *falta* (lack), *cansancio* (tiredness), and *estrés* (anxiety) tend to move into negative polarity (a total of 30 cases). The words *adaptación* (adaptation), *atención* (attention), *esfuerzo* (effort), *reto* (challenge), *distancia* (distance) and *improvisación* (improvisation) could stay into neutral area (a total of 34 cases). Despite these outcomes (more neutral than negative), this is a top-ten word analysis; however, the astonishing aspect is that no positive emotions were detected by the software.

#### 3.4.2 Responses for advantages (item 4.2.) and disadvantages (4.3.) of the online teaching of interpreting

Some sub-categories were proposed for the qualitative data analysis of these two items' responses. However, before naming the sub-categories, it is worth mentioning that only in item 4.2. there was a group of answers indicating *No advantages* (15.4%), while in item 4.3. no-disadvantage option was found among respondents.

The sub-categories for the **advantages** (item 4.2.) were the following ones: Development of skills for a professional RI, Economic and time saving, Maximise time, More collaborative and participative sessions, More self-practice and less stress, No advantages, and Tool and technological benefits. The sub-category with more answers was Development of skills for a professional RI (n = 19, 29.2%): FMI9 "Permite preparar a los estudiantes para la realidad actual del mercado profesional". [it allows preparing students for current situation of job market]; FMI34 "adaptación a los nuevos tiempos donde la interpretación remota es una realidad". [adaptation to new circumstances where RI is a reality]; FMI48 "Los alumnos ya están preparados para hacer frente a la interpretación simultánea remota". [The students are now ready to face a simultaneous RI].

With similar percentages, the other three sub-categories were Tool and technological benefits (16.9%): FMI14 "Aprender otras vertientes de la interpretación como la interpretación remota. Conocer herramientas que hacen que sean profesionales más versátiles en su ámbito." [Learning other types of interpreting, i.e. RI. Knowing tools allowing them to be flexible professional in their area]; More self-practice and less stress (15.4%): FMI54 "[...] todos los alumnos pueden practicar de forma individual en casa." [all the students can practise individually at home], FMI65 "Se ha fomentado mucho la práctica autónoma [...]" [we have fostered self-practice]; and More collaborative and participative sessions (13.8%): FMI30 "Mayor asistencia a las clases por parte del alumnado." [More students' attendance].

The least frequent answers were towards Maximise time (6.2%): FMI40 "[...] Posibilidad de uso de dispositivo para grabaciones y de realizar el trabajo en horarios más flexibles" [Possibility of using a device for recordings and for working in more flexible schedules]; and Economic and time saving (3.1%): FMI12 "Ubicar clases que no se pudieran impartir en horario oficial; atender a alumnos que pudieran tener problemas económicos derivados de la presencialidad" [Placing sessions not suitable to teach in official timetables; assistance to students with economic problems derived from face-to-face options].

The sub-categories related to the **disadvantages** (item 4.3.) were: Cognitive load and lack of concentration, Human contact, Lack of suitable technology and technological problems, More teaching hours, Physical issues, and Student monitoring or control of attendance.

The most frequent answers were found in Physical issues (26.2%), many of which related to specific modality of interpreting. For example, with regard to simultaneous interpreting some booth-related skills were highlighted: FMI42 "La imposibilidad de hacer simultánea en cabina." [the impossibility of performing a booth simultaneous];

as well as for the consecutive one: FMI17 “[...] el lenguaje corporal es más difícil de evaluar.” [body language is more difficult to evaluate].

Equal percentage (20%) was detected in Lack of suitable technology and tech problems: FMI33 “[...] el alumnado en la mayoría de casos no dispone en su casa de conexión a internet ni equipos optimizados para la interpretación remota.” [the students do not frequently have good Internet connection and optimised equipments for a RI at their places]; as well as Student monitoring or control of attendance: FMI12 “Es enormemente difícil contrastar si los alumnos están realmente siguiendo la clase, si pueden extraer provecho de ella, o si quedan como meros convidados de piedra.” [it is extremely difficult to contrast if the students are actually following the session, if they take advantage of them, or if they are mere guests].

Similar percentages were encountered in the sub-categories Human contact (15.4%): FMI22 “Falta de contacto directo entre el/la docente y los alumnos.” [Lack of direct contact between the teacher and his/her students]; and More teaching hours (13.8%): FMI38 “más difícil las correcciones, se invierte más tiempo que en las modalidades presenciales [...]” [corrections are more difficult; we spent more time than in face-to-face contexts].

Finally, the least popular answer was towards Cognitive load and lack of concentration (4.6%): FMI36 “Falta de interés y concentración por parte del alumnado” [lack of interest and concentration in students].

### 3.4.3 Responses for the implementation of online teaching of interpreting (item 4.4.) and teaching type preferred by faculty members (item 4.5.)

Faculty members were asked if they thought that this non face-to-face type of teaching has emerged to stay (item 4.4.). More than half of the respondents rejected that idea (61.5%), being in accordance with the most frequent response towards indicating the preferred type of teaching (item 4.5.): face-to-face (69.2%).

Besides, some of them declared to be more comfortable with blended learning (online and face-to-face) (20.02%), while very few confessed with exclusively virtual (3.1%). Just five respondents claimed to be comfortable with all of them (7.7%).

## 4. DISCUSSION

Some studies have been published around how COVID-19 and the rapid adaptation to new circumstances in education (Hodges *et al.*, 2020; Rapanta *et al.*, 2020; Zawacki-Richter, 2020). However, even though some research was found on how professional interpreters perceive RI (before pandemic) (see, for instance, Corpas Pastor & Gaber, 2020), none of the studies found have focused on the perceptions and satisfaction of interpreting faculty members when moving their subjects into an entirely online teaching mode.

Faculty members participating in our survey were inquired about the use of software to complement their online teaching. It is surprising that more than two thirds of them did not use any software (70.8%), and, particularly, that very few indicated the use of software for podcast (7.7%), due to the advantages as a flexible resource highlighted in studies related to foreign-language (FL) pronunciation (Fouz-González, 2019; Lord, 2008) and also in Interpreting studies research (Nieto & Alonso, 2008; Qian, 2009; Wulansari *et al.*, 2021).

As for specific platforms or software used in RI, faculty members declared to have known (quite a lot or a bit) KUDO, Interprefy (49.3%, each), InterpretBank (64.6%), Interactio and Voiceboxer (33.8%, each) and Olyusei (20.1%), but they did not use them so frequently, despite being platforms “to provide interpreting services”, according to the European Commission’s Directorate General for Interpretation (cited in Jiménez Serrano, 2019), or they never used them, as in the case of the Spanish Olyusei (Perramon, 2020). One of the least known software was PRAAT (6.2%), and, as occurred with the podcast, this software was proven to be beneficial for FL pronunciation improvement (Gorjian *et al.*, 2013; Le & Brook, 2011; Osatananda & Thinchin, 2021) and as a tool for assessing the practice of interpreting (Ahrens, 2005; Gieshoff, 2018; Rojo-López *et al.*, 2021; Yu & van Heuven, 2017).

As for the technological requirements and devices, in the literature the necessity of technology in RI has been remarked. In our study, we have extracted some of the technological devices highlighted in some relevant documents and papers (AIIC, 2019; Cases Silverstone, 2020; ISO 20108, 2017) for some questions of the survey administered to faculty members. To this respect, it has been noted in our study that faculty members considered very important, important or a bit important most of the devices collected in the survey (good internet connection, noise-cancelling microphones, high-quality headphones, RAM memory, high-resolution monitor, two monitors with standard resolution and even Windows operating system). However, the response percentages dropped down when confirming that their students had at their disposal many of the aforementioned devices, except for Internet connection and Windows operating system.

Faculty members' impressions towards their experience with the online teaching of interpreting led us to conclude that they prefer face-to-face settings (with booths and consoles) rather than online, as indicated by 69.2% of the respondents. This figure contrasts with the percentage of faculty members feeling more confident in face-to-face settings (50.8%), denoting that the other half could feel confident with another teaching mode. Despite this, the essence is to reject online context for this specific area (Interpreting), due to the difficulties encountered in it, and because of the tradition of on-site performance, which is not in line with the evolution that the market of Interpreting has followed in recent years with the promotion of RI (Baigorri-Jalón, 2015; Diriker, 2015; Jiménez Serrano, 2019; Perramon, 2020).

Besides, according to their attitudes, we noticed in the participants' responses some negative tone when describing their online teaching of interpreting —as seen in the analysis of the words from item 4.1. —, and the pitfalls listed by faculty members (item 4.3.). Some curious data highlighted above is that faculty members even indicated *No advantages* (15.4%) as an option, which is not encountered, for example, in the disadvantages. Nevertheless, as a future line of this work we contemplate a thorough analysis of the words from 4.1. so as to compare them with the emotions they felt when teaching under these circumstances.

Finally, faculty members think that their students prefer on-site interpretation teaching (83.1%). However, this is worth being analysed with another survey administered to students of interpreting in our Spanish university context so as to detect their satisfaction and perceptions, like some other studies have carried out with interpreting-course students, as the research conducted, but with very limited sample of students, by Afolabi and Oyetoyan (2021) (14 students in Africa), Ahrens *et al.*, 2021 (21 MA students in Cologne), Mirek (2021) (30 MA students in Poland), Vidyantari (2021) (5 MA students in Indonesia), and with other subjects and different contexts (Al-Salman & Haider, 2021, who studied the attitudes of Jordanian university students towards emergency online learning; Xhelili *et al.*, 2021, who concluded that university students preferred face-to-face sessions, but in the case of Albanian students, the authors concluded that students were not used to employing technology; Zawacki-Richter, 2020; whose study included a sample of Germany university students).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The entire world stopped its activities requiring human face-to-face interaction in every stage of the society last March 2020 due to COVID-19 outbreak. However, even though everybody was forced to stay at home, we have made a big effort for adapting to the unexpected circumstances to prevent transmission of the virus. In the field of education, all educative stages have invested time, effort, and energy to move the subjects to an online teaching and learning process. In higher education, though the use of digital technologies was familiar for faculty members and students before pandemic, it has been evident the difficulties encountered in the teaching and learning process due to the unplanned sessions in an online context.

In our study, we wanted to know the faculty members' global perspectives and satisfaction of their online experience in teaching their interpreting subjects. Attending to our RQ1, faculty members' responses towards the technology and resources employed for their online teaching of interpreting threw interesting conclusions. With regard to the materials used, apart from external materials from specialised websites and experts, almost all of them declared to have created their materials genuinely (96.9%), being the training exercises the least used external materials (44.6%). Besides, they indicated that their online teaching was carried out through BBC (Blackboard collaborate) platform (46.2%), which, we suppose, was because of being integrated into Moodle and because it could simulate an interpreting remote personal hub, which contrasts with the number of participants indicating the use of Zoom (18.5%), due to its ideal functionalities for a remote simultaneous interpreting (Ahrens *et al.*, 2021; Mirek, 2021; Vidyantari, 2021). As for the feedback provided to students in online settings, faculty members preferred oral feedback (89.2%) and written report indicating the corrections (69.2%). Finally, regarding training, respondents admitted having followed a self-training (86.2%) or thanks to the resources or materials shared by their colleagues (69.2%), and very few declared to have received training by their institution (26.2%). This is in line with studies in which participants responded not to have received enough training by their institutions or organisms responsible for that, above all during these weird circumstances (Torrado Cespón, 2021).

As for RQ2, the main outcomes around the acquisition of interpreting skills in students, our respondents noted that the three most difficult sets of skills were Concentration, listening and memory (77%), Note-taking (66.2), and Pronunciation, diction and voice modulation (60%). In the other two sets of skills (Documentation and Terminology management) difficulty percentages fall (15.4% and 36.9%); this might be because in translation practice these skills are more settled in a remote or distance modality.

Regarding our RQ3, the global perceptions of faculty members during their online teaching revealed us that they devoted more time in preparing their online sessions of interpreting (80%) and in listening to their students' discourses (61.6%), they had to help their students more (72.3%), they encountered technical difficulties that

prevented them to have a standard session (53.8%). Besides, even though 38.4% responded that it was not easy to find alternative resources and software for their online teaching of interpreting, many admitted the need of receiving more technological training (89.2%), as well as more RI techniques training (86.2%).

Finally, with regard to the positive and negative aspects detected by participants in our study (RQ4), together with their global attitudes (RQ5) towards the online teaching of interpreting, we used specific software to determine the tone of words of faculty members to describe their online teaching of interpreting. Even though the results of the most frequent ten words threw that the tone was neutral and negative, it would be interesting to contrast these data with the emotions felt by the participants during the pandemic to observe if the pessimistic view is predominant (Ávila-Muñoz *et al.*, 2020). Besides this, some disadvantages were listed by the respondents, being the physical issues (26.2%) the most frequent, as difficulties were derived, in fact, because they were not interpreting in a booth. However, they recognised as an advantage that students can develop skills for becoming a professional in RI (29.2%), taking into account that, according to several works (Baigorri-Jalón, 2015; Diriker, 2015; Jiménez-López, 2019), it will be the future of interpreting professional practice.

#### Ethical statement

After its initial development, the survey was independently audited by external researchers belonging to educational training and to translation and interpreting studies. During the pilot phase, the survey was reviewed by four interpreting faculty members in both its form (design) and content (questions). Experts and faculty members provided their feedback and their recommendations were followed for drafting the final online survey. The anonymity of the participants was maintained throughout the study.

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## APPENDIX A.

### Dimension and categorisation of the semi-structured survey

Dimension	RQ	Response type	Scale
Dimension 1. Teaching issues, resources and training			
1.1. Which platform have you used to teach your interpreting subjects online?	RQ1	Closed	Multiple-choice question
1.2. Which kind of materials have you employed for your online teaching of interpreting subjects?	RQ1	Closed	Multiple-choice question
1.3. Which software have you used to complement your online teaching of interpreting subjects?	RQ1	Closed	Multiple-choice question
1.4. Which of the following platforms/software do you know?	RQ1	Closed	Likert (1-4)
1.5. How often have you used the following platforms/software in your online teaching of interpreting subjects?	RQ1	Closed	Likert (1-4)
1.6. According to you, how relevant are the following technological devices for your students in online sessions of interpreting.	RQ1	Closed	Likert (1-4)
1.7. Which of the previous technological devices do you think your students had at their disposal during online sessions of interpreting?	RQ1	Closed	Single-choice question

(Appendix table continued on next page)

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Dimension	RQ	Response type	Scale
1.8. How have you provided feedback to your students during online sessions of interpreting?	RQ1	Closed	Multiple-choice question
1.9. Which kind of training have you received for your online teaching of interpreting?	RQ1	Closed	Multiple-choice question
<b>Dimension 2. Development of students' interpreting-related skills</b>			
2.1. Note-taking skills.	RQ2	Closed	Likert (1-5)
2.2. Terminology management skills.	RQ2	Closed	Likert (1-5)
2.3. Pronunciation, diction, oral expression and voice modulation.	RQ2	Closed	Likert (1-5)
2.4. Documentation skills.	RQ2	Closed	Likert (1-5)
2.5. Attention, concentration, listening and memory skills.	RQ2	Closed	Likert (1-5)
<b>Dimension 3. Faculty members' impressions towards the online teaching of interpreting subjects</b>			
3.1. I spent more time in preparing my online sessions of interpreting.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.2. I had to help my students in their interpreting during online sessions more than in face-to-face sessions.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.3. Technical difficulties did not allow me to have standard sessions during online teaching.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.4. I could assist and listen to all my students in online teaching with equal duration as in a face-to-face teaching.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.5. I think my students prefer online sessions rather than face-to-face settings.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.6. I devoted enough time to each student when listening to their discourses during online teaching of interpreting.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.7. It was not easy to find alternative resources or software to teach online my interpreting subjects.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.8. Cognitive load in online teaching was greater than in a face-to-face setting.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.9. I felt more confident when teaching interpreting in face-to-face settings rather than in online teaching.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.10. I would like to receive more technological training to learn software and applications related to RI.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
3.11. I would like to receive more training to learn techniques to teach RI.	RQ3	Closed	Likert (1-4)
<b>Dimension 4. Attitudes and personal opinion</b>			
4.1. Say three words the concept of online teaching of interpreting in times of COVID evokes for you.	RQ4 & RQ5	Open	
4.2. According to your experience, which advantages can you extract from the online teaching of interpreting?	RQ4 & RQ5	Open	
4.3. According to your experience, which disadvantages can you extract from the online teaching of interpreting?	RQ4 & RQ5	Open	
4.4. Do you think that online teaching of Interpreting has emerged to stay?	RQ5	Dichotomous	Yes/no
4.5. Which of the following types of teaching are you more comfortable with?	RQ5	Closed	Multiple-choice question