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Language assessment in Catalan local television: the model adopted by the Local Television Network

The author, who played a role in creating a language assessment service for the Xarxa de Televisions Locals (Local Television Network) in Catalonia, assesses the organisational philosophy behind public television language services, with specific reference to Catalonia, and from this standpoint proposes an assessment model which is appropriate to local television. This is the background to the formation of the Unitat de Dinamització i Assessorament Lingüístics (Unit for the Promotion and Assessment of Language) for which the author was responsible. The article reveals the line of reasoning used for assessment and the principles implemented in organising this Unit. In contrast to the language services for autonomous public television, which are structured mainly (but not exclusively) around an assessment model which focuses on end products, the author proposes and justifies an assessment model for the local television stations which form part of the Local Television Network, focusing on the process, one which emphasises the training of media communications professionals in order for them to acquire the necessary degree of autonomy for managing language quality in their audiovisual products.

Taalassessering in die Katalaanse plaaslike televisie: die model wat deur die plaaslike televisienetwerk aanvaar is

Op grond van haar rol in die skep van 'n taalassesseringsdiens vir die Xarxa de Televisions Locals (die plaaslike televisienetwerk) in Katalonië, assesseer die outeur, met verwysing na Katalonië, die filosofie waarop die organisasie van die openbare televisie se taaldienste gegrand is. Vanuit hierdie uitgangspunt stel die outeur dan 'n gepaste assesseringsmodel vir die plaaslike televisie voor. Dit bied die agtergrond vir die skep van die Unitat de Dinamització i Assessorament Lingüístics (die Eenheid vir die Promosie en Assesering van Taal) waarvoor die outeur verantwoordelik is. Die artikel bespreek die uitgangspunte onderliggend aan die assesseringsmodel, asook die beginsels wat gebruik word om hierdie Eenheid te organiseer. Die taaldienste van outonome openbare televisie word hoofsaaklik, hoewel nie uitsluitlik nie, gestruktureer rondom 'n assesseringsmodel wat op die finale resultate fokus. Hierteenoor stel die outeur 'n assesseringsmodel voor en regverdig dit, vir die plaaslike televisiestasies wat deel vorm van die plaaslike televisienetwerk wat op die proses konsentreer. Hierdie model beklemtoon die opleiding van mediakommunikasiebeamptes wat hulle in staat stel om die vlak van outonomie te bereik wat vir die bestuur van die taalkwaliteit van oudiovisuele produkte noodsaaklik is.

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Linguists have always attributed an important role to the media, and to television in particular, with regard to the process of linguistic standardisation, in conjunction with the role played by school and family. Hence the importance of the creation of *Televisió de Catalunya* (Catalan TV), which came about because of the desire to create a public audiovisual space operating exclusively in Catalan. Catalan TV (CTV) therefore assumed the role of a fundamental tool for the standardisation of language, available to the whole of Catalonia. One of the historic markers of this process was the commencement of regular broadcasts on TV3, the first CTV channel, on 16 January 1984.

The *Comitè per a la Normalització Lingüística* (Language Standardisation Committee) was created at the outset, with the inception of CTV. For many years, the only linguistic assessment services specialising in television were those of CTV and the state television company, *Televisión Española* (Spanish Television), which broadcasts several hours of television in the Catalan language to Catalonia. Indubitably, in terms of the many jobs, the number of staff working directly or indirectly in this area, and the diversity of the fields of assessment, CTV has the most impressive of all language assessment services pertaining to television, and is the point-of-reference service for Catalonia, as a result of its special mission: to create a model for a standard oral language.

1. The language assessment model focusing on the end product

1.1 How CTV organises its language service

The language assessment service of CTV¹ is the Language Standardisation Committee, which co-ordinates various areas of linguistic assessment:

- the information area, dedicated to news and information services;
- the internal production area, which is concerned with programmes produced by CTV, such as soap operas, entertainment and magazine programmes;

1 A general description of CTV's linguistic services was gleaned from Faura (1997). In addition, the author has drawn on her own experience of the Language Standardisation Committee's practices between March and July 2002.

- the foreign production area, where dubbed products are reviewed, and
- the commercial area, which reviews the company's administrative management documents, including letters and contracts, as well as advertising spots and translations of advertisements.

The chairman of the Language Standardisation Committee is the director of CTV. The service employs approximately twenty permanent assessors as well as a reliable group of external collaborators, coordinated through regular tests carried out by CTV. In cases where members of the permanent staff cannot handle the workload, the external collaborators participate as assessors in dubbing research, or in respect of programmes produced by CTV.

The majority of the corrections in respect of news and information, internal productions and commercial areas are made by means of a data-transmission system for sending texts. The news and information media professionals send the texts to the correctors, who then return the corrected texts to the originators. The process is carried out remotely, so there is seldom any relationship between the journalists and the linguists. Face-to-face relationships between the corrector or assessor and the person who drafted the text are rare. Consequently, the assessment task is focused mainly on achieving language quality in the end product, and not on training television media professionals (journalists, editors, presenters, writers) to produce texts of high linguistic quality.

There are some occasions on which the person carrying out the assessment is present when the programme is recorded, so that s/he can directly influence the correction of texts. However, the desired effect is the same: the objective is, first and foremost, to influence the quality of the end product, rather than to focus on assisting the television media professional to achieve autonomy in drafting texts which are competent and of high quality when assessed from a linguistic perspective.

The only process which could more clearly influence the habits of television media professionals is that dealing with the linguistic continuity of programmes. In this case, the linguists review broadcast programmes and draw up an electronic database containing error files for each of the media professionals, mainly presenters. These files indicate the programme, date of transmission, errors made and corresponding improvements, showing the correct form. The presenter is informed in

writing by the expert in charge of language continuity of the problems observed and the improvements that must be implemented. This means that on certain occasions the linguists monitoring continuity could work on personal training with some presenters. Even so, the work carried out by the Language Standardisation Committee in the various areas is primarily focused on attaining an end product of high quality. It is not focused on training the television media professional in order to empower him or her to attain sufficient independence to produce linguistically competent texts.

Autonomy in producing linguistically competent texts is not an explicit aim of the *Corporació Catalana de Ràdio i Televisió* (Catalan Radio and Television Corporation), to which CTV belongs. This Corporation has different regulatory documents which express its principles and philosophy: Law 10/1983, regarding the creation of the Catalan Radio and TV Corporation (CCRTV); the Mission Statement for the CCRTV's Media Communications performances (1983), last revised in 2006; and the CCRTV Professional Status Rules, last updated in 2005. These documents establish organisational principles and ethics, indicate how to pass on information, and also detail the directives dealing with the corporation's media language policy.

In fact, neither language quality nor journalistic autonomy in producing linguistically competent texts are listed as aims in the institution's mission statement. However, the existence of the Language Standardisation Committee implies a desire to achieve language quality in television, and assessment focusing on the end product presupposes an educative effect, at the very least, because it implies a repetition of a corrected form. Nevertheless the current research reveals that the independence of journalists in producing high quality linguistic texts does not result from planned language training established as a fundamental organisational principle.

1.2 Justification for the choice of model focusing on the end product

The choice of an assessment model that focuses on the end product was not purely coincidental. In fact, language assessment focusing on the end product has been the model adopted by many language assessment services in many diverse fields. Thus, with the creation of television stations

broadcasting in Catalan, two basic priorities emerged: to create a standard oral language model and to guarantee that this model would be correctly delivered. In keeping with this belief, and in connection with the importance of guaranteeing a language model, Castellanos (1990: 30) states:

Unlike television stations in those countries where there is a standardised form of language, in our society television is not so much a reflection of language models which function normally in society where this media is disseminated, but more a false pretext for carrying out standardisation. In this case, the diffusion of these models accomplishes more of an educative function not purely for dissemination.

2. What is the future of language assessment in the modern audiovisual setting?

Undoubtedly, CTV has played a role in advancing the social circulation of the Catalan language and has both disseminated the language and played an educative role in terms of the language model. All in all, it could be said that the scenario of language standardisation and of the language promotion process has changed considerably over twenty years. The conditions that motivated CTV's choice of a language assessment model focusing on the end product are no longer completely relevant, partly as a result of the fragmentation of audiences due to the emergence of other types of television station. CTV is no longer the only Catalan television station viewed by the Catalan-speaking public, although it still has the largest audience. The new television stations cannot financially sustain an assessment model focused on the end product, since such a model implies the creation of a body of correctors/assessors, and also involves simultaneous editing.

Faced with such an impossible situation, many television stations broadcast their programmes without any form of assessment service. Therefore, as in 1984, there is now, twenty years later, only one television station guaranteeing the dissemination of a single language model. In addition to CTV, there are approximately 100 local television stations and one regional private channel broadcasting programmes. Because of new regulations concerning digital television, which are just coming into force, it is also anticipated that new television channels will emerge, which could imply a different language quality.

In addition, if we follow Costa's reasoning, that

... a language model is an ensemble of factors, more or less comprehensive, more or less defined, more or less stable, more or less discussed, with conventional choices, spelling, morphology, syntax or lexicon, apart from the geographic variation of language for a specific register ... (Costa 2005: 11),

we have to take into account that the majority of Catalan public television broadcasts are in the central dialect of the Catalan language, which implies a specific model of the Catalan language based in the central geographical variety. For Bassols *et al* (1995: 486) the reasons for this choice of language model related to the Catalan normative tradition and to the specific demographic and economic weight of the Barcelona region in Catalonia. Nevertheless, in certain Catalan areas there are some local television stations affiliated with LTVN that in fact broadcast exclusively in the north-western dialect, in line with the variety of Catalan spoken by their audiences. The north-western standard model has a less consolidated tradition in TV. What is more, it interferes with the central standard model. This situation has highlighted the need for more studies in relation to the north-western standard model.

As a consequence, the debate revolves around questions on what level of language quality and which language standard model is desirable for television, and what level of quality and which language standard model can actually be guaranteed. The central question in the debate is what kind of language service is needed for television in order to guarantee the effectiveness of language quality and the language standard model in the desired methods of communication.

3. Language assessment in local television

As has been mentioned, Catalonia has approximately 100 local television stations, the majority of which are local in nature. Approximately 70 of them are linked to LTVN, an association whose objective is to facilitate the sharing of audiovisual services and products among its associated stations, not only in order to ensure a reduction in costs, but also to achieve a better synergy among them.

In 2002 a study was carried out at the Pompeu Fabra University, in collaboration with LTVN, on language assessment in local television (Jardí 2002). This study confirmed the fact that, at the 33 television stations studied, which formed almost the entire membership of LTVN

at the time, no language assessment was carried out and no systems were in place for improving the quality of the Catalan language. In two years, LTVN doubled its membership. However, it is very likely that, in actual fact, the other data for 2004 are substantially similar to the data for 2002, since the majority of the new members of LTVN were small television stations.

This fact reveals an imbalance. While public regional television does, in fact, make an effort to offer a model of language quality, the local television stations, all broadcasting mostly in Catalan, do not guarantee the quality of the Catalan language used in their broadcasts. In this respect, the *Observatori de la Llengua Catalana* (Catalan Language Monitoring Service)² warned, at its First Conference on the Catalan Language and Means of Communication in June 2004,³ that all audiovisual means of communication and television in particular, should make proper use of the Catalan language; should not permit a mixture of other languages, or suppress the Catalan language in favour of other languages; and should monitor the quality of the Catalan language being used, making use of current expressions instead of resorting to a language replete with Spanish influences.

As yet, no systematic studies have been carried out concerning the influence of Spanish on local television, which means that the most serious problems encountered on local television with regard to the quality of the Catalan language stem from the situation of bilingualism in Catalonia and the influence of Spanish. It must be borne in mind that 60% of local television stations are located in the Barcelona region, the demarcation area in which the Spanish language has the strongest hold. Language problems stem directly from this bilingual situation. They include the occurrence of Spanish phonetics, syntactic expressions and terms taken from Spanish, and the use of “Spanishisms”. There is also a degree of uncertainty regarding the use of the Catalan language, for example, hesitation over neologisms, or hypercorrection.

2 Cf <<http://www.observatoridelallengua.org>>.

3 Comment from l'Observatori sobre Llengua Catalana i Mijtans de Comunicació, cf <<http://www.acpv.net/docs/20040616064648.doc>>.

3.1 The model focusing on the end product versus the model focusing on creating autonomous television media professionals

The LTVN decided that the standard of the Catalan used on local television stations which were members of the Network should be improved. It decided to establish the *Unitat de Dinamització i Assessorament Lingüístics* (the Unit for the Promotion and Assessment of Language). The first question to be resolved was how to organise this language assessment service. The points listed below were considered:

- The model focusing on the end product is not financially viable for local television:

Audience fragmentation has also meant the fragmentation of profits, and a consequent need to reduce costs, which for many media entities has involved a reduction or lack of investment in language assessment. The model focusing on the end product involves the creation of a team of correctors and assessors for each television station, working in tandem with editors to review texts produced by television media professionals. This model is not financially viable for local television stations.

- The model focusing on the end product is not practicable for local television stations:

A centralised correction service for the 70 television stations could be considered, but such a service would be likely to collapse during the periods of greatest demand, such as those time-slots when the news is being broadcast.

- The model focusing on the end product externalises the responsibility for linguistic quality:

Linguistic responsibility is shared by everyone who, in some form or another, through action or inaction, knowingly or unwittingly plays a role in the promotion and standardisation of the Catalan language. However, those who produce oral and written texts in the media have the most responsibility. Moreover, television media professionals include social responsibility⁴ in their professional code

⁴ The code of ethics may be consulted at the website of the College of Journalists of Catalonia: <<http://www.periodistes.org>>.

of ethics — a fact which, in principle, imposes on them a responsibility and also requires of them a sensitivity towards the appropriate use of the Catalan language.

Language quality is an essential aspect of the quality of the audiovisual product, together with all other aspects: picture quality, sound, script, and information content. Thus, those who have this responsibility must necessarily have the ability to fulfil it in an appropriate manner. This also implies the ability to exercise their right to be assessed.

Once these questions had been carefully weighed and considered, the Unit for the Promotion and Assessment of Language (UPAL) was deemed to be a centralised service, focusing on fulfilling this right to be assessed, with the aim of achieving the level of autonomy required by the television media professional in order to be able to produce high-quality texts. The concept of autonomy here is based on developing the television media professional's capacity to question his/her own linguistic competence, and training him/her to resolve these doubts quickly within the working environment — in other words, learning how to consult sources.

4. Which model of language assessment is better for television?

The language assessment model focusing on creating independent television media professionals who can produce competent texts of high linguistic quality does not guarantee the quality of the language used in local television broadcasts — at least not in the short term. Nevertheless, the creation of such a tendency towards language quality involves making a concerted effort towards full language standardisation, in order to achieve financial sustainability, and to be appropriate to the reality of the current content of broadcasts from local television stations. On the other hand, assessment focusing on the end product is based on the pretext of carrying out standardisation. No-one — particularly the news media professionals themselves — disputes the fact that standardisation has an educative function, but it externalises the responsibility for the appropriate use of the language — a fact which perpetuates the dependence of television media professionals on language assessment. This situation of dependency does not have a positive effect on full language promotion.

Surely the ideal form of language assessment for television purposes would be a kind which is capable of integrating the best aspects of the two models in a balanced fashion: language assessment focused on attaining a high-quality end product, and language assessment focused on attaining independence for the television media professional in terms of producing linguistically competent texts. After all, the two models have complementary objectives. In this manner, it would be possible to guarantee a high-quality language model for the media, with a concomitant decrease in financial costs, as well as enhanced performance directed towards obtaining full linguistic standardisation for the language in media communications.

5. The Unit for the Promotion and Assessment of Language: an example of a language assessment service focused on attaining independence for television professionals

5.1 Objectives

The UPAL is a service which promotes and assesses language, while focusing on attaining independence for local television media professionals. It has the following as its main objectives:

- to make the text writer aware of his/her responsibility for the linguistic quality of the product being drafted by him or her;
- to promote an attitude of self-improvement and sensitivity towards the quality of the language;
- to afford television media professionals the right to be assessed, in order to empower them to attain the necessary independence to be able to resolve linguistic problems themselves — thus, to help them to find the solution, rather than simply giving them the answer;
- to help to integrate the processes aimed at improving language quality in the everyday activities of editorial teams, and
- to help to internalise the knowledge of the solutions discovered.

The UPAL also has the following ancillary objectives:

- to promote understanding of language policy legislation, as well as the recognition of good practices in existing language assessment, which continue to be useful in the local television environment;
- to suggest mechanisms and strategies to improve language quality for the television stations which are members of LTVN;
- to establish organisational relationships with those organisations which can offer a measure of added value in promoting the proper use of the Catalan language on local television stations;
- to promote the use of the Catalan language on local television, and
- to provide support for the dissemination of language rules, the circulation of new words and the setting of standards.

5.2 Physical location and operational flow chart for the LTVN

Physically, the UPAL is located in LTVN's main offices, and has a desk in the editorial team's area, as an additional member. It has access to the television infrastructure used for tasks such as reviewing programmes and recording linguistic advice. Even so, part of the author's time is devoted to visiting local television stations and conducting remote co-ordination of various language-training, promotional and assessment tasks for the member stations.

5.3 Areas covered by the UPAL

The UPAL's activities cover four areas: language promotion and assessment; language follow-up; evaluation and training, and organisational relations.

5.3.1 Language promotion and assessment

The activities that fall within this area contribute towards the promotion of excellence in the use of the Catalan language among media professionals working at television stations that are members of the LTVN, and among those who work on their editorial staff. The main means of communication among UPAL users are LTVN's intranet (disseminating advice on drafting, editing, and pronunciation, as well as the LTVN style guide, etc) and e-mail. Also within this area are personal visits

to local television stations in order to offer information and training on the use of the web, how to use specific reference materials, and who to turn to when doubts arise.

5.3.1.1 LTVN's intranet workspace for language assessment and promotion

The intranet is a very useful tool for co-ordinating language information and support for the various local television stations. The intranet sections are listed below.

- What is UDAL UPAL?
This section describes the service.
- Objectives
In this section UPAL's objectives are set out.
- Basic tools for drafting texts
This section recommends dictionaries and style guides, both electronic and in book form, which the editorial staff should have, listing their contents and where they can be bought at a discount.
- Language advice
A list of language tips is sent to the editorial staff by e-mail.
- LTVN style guide
The style guide of the *El Periódico de Catalunya* newspaper has been adopted, but is aimed mainly at the written media, and does not cover certain aspects of the language, such as pronunciation. The LTVN style guide therefore includes additional information and guidelines.
- Protocols for drafting and phrasing texts
This section contains advice on reviewing a text from a linguistic perspective, as well as suggestions on public speaking and how to use one's voice.
- Learning Catalan
This section includes a list of learning centres in Catalonia for learning Catalan, as well as courses and assessment systems conducted over the internet.

- Other interesting websites
This section includes information on websites relating to language assessment in general.
- Legislation on the use of the Catalan language on TV
Here users will find an explanation of the legislation applicable to linguistic material on local television.
- How to contact UPAL
This section contains the contact address and telephone number(s) for advice.

5.3.1.2 E-mail

E-mail is one of the basic tools for maintaining a relationship between UPAL users. This method serves to provide warnings about words which might be problematic on a particular day, or advice on writing or pronunciation. Even so, this method should be employed sensibly by UPAL users, in order to avoid saturating the network and causing bounced messages. In many instances, e-mail serves to promote the use of the UPAL intranet for consultations.

5.3.1.3 Writing advice

Weekly writers' meetings (lasting a maximum of 20 minutes) are held with the LTVN writers in attendance. Comments and linguistic advice are provided, and any linguistic uncertainties that have emerged during the week are discussed. It is very important that these writing-advice meetings should not disrupt normal editorial activities, since it is imperative that the tight deadlines involved in drafting and writing texts should be respected.

5.3.1.4 Visits to the editorial staff of member television stations

The presence of a linguist on the editorial staff of local television stations can be very interesting, as well as promoting the consultation of material available to the editorial staff and encouraging them to question their own linguistic competence.

5.3.1.5 Collaboration with the Consortium for Language Standardisation

The *Consorti per a la Normalització Lingüística* (Consortium for Language Standardisation) in Catalonia comprises a group of language learning and assessment centres. This network of centres, serving the whole of the Catalonia region, was in existence before UPAL was established. All the television stations associated with the LTVN have a Consortium for Language Standardisation Language Service in their area. Yet they do not make use of these centres. One of the reasons for this is that the centres' opening times do not coincide with the needs of the editorial staff of the local television stations. Currently, discussions are being held with the Consortium management with a view to setting up a co-operation agreement to offer regular language training and assessment to the television stations associated with the LTVN.

5.3.2 Language follow-up

This area reviews local television programming. Of primary importance is the reviewing of programmes which are offered to LTVN by the television stations as a package to be distributed to other television stations. The more television stations likely to broadcast a programme produced by an associate television station, the higher the priority accorded to that programme by UPAL, as well as to the reviewing of its linguistic quality. The concept of language follow-up involves carrying out a review once the programme has been broadcast. This entails the drafting of a language quality report, which will be used later as a "motivational tool" to encourage the television stations to improve language quality. The programme evaluation report reviews the wording, morphology, syntax, and phonetics of the programme, as well as any questions that may arise in respect of content.

5.3.3 Evaluation and training

The activities in this area are aimed at providing continuous assessment and training of news and information journalists.

5.3.3.1 Setting up a single aptitude test

Associated local television stations are urged to provide a Catalan language comprehension test as part of the selection process when appointing

contractual media professionals. Such a test should be appropriate to the role and functions which the employee will have to fulfil, and these will be co-ordinated by the UPAL. How this test is drawn up is especially important, since media professionals have to pass it in order to be appointed to CTV. It would be of great benefit if all the local television stations adopted this selection process, since this would standardise the selection criteria and would avoid any perception of there being “first-grade” and “second-grade” professionals.

5.3.3.2 Co-ordination of training courses

UPAL will co-ordinate how, when and where specific training courses are held for television media professionals, as well as their content, in order to ensure that they have a direct bearing on the various aspects relating to the improvement of language quality in the field of television broadcasting. These courses should aim to inculcate the correct use of assessment tools (such as dictionaries and grammar books as well as electronic text correction tools) and to provide specific training on aspects of the Catalan language (points of conflict regarding syntax or pronunciation, and so on).

5.3.4 Organisational relations

The objectives of the organisational relations area are to establish relationships and agreements with other institutions and bodies in order to promote the use of high-quality language, and to benefit from this synergy.

5.3.4.1 Setting up collaboration agreements with other institutions

UPAL belongs to the *Antena de Terminologia* (Terminology Barometer), a body which assembles various professionals from the field of language assessment in the written press and the audiovisual media. The Terminology Barometer tries to find solutions in respect of new terms in the field of media communications. The UPAL also maintains ongoing dialogue with universities and other institutions (such as the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Audiovisual Council for Catalonia) on the promotion of language, with a view to establishing collaboration agreements.

5.3.4.2 The inclusion of clauses on language quality in agreements between LTVN and the television stations

The agreements between LTVN and the television stations are to be reviewed periodically. These agreements set out the respective rights and obligations of LTVN and each television station. It has also been considered appropriate to include a clause which establishes the commitment of each television station to improving the quality of the Catalan used in its broadcasts.

5.3.4.3 Agreement on the quality of Catalan

The aim of this agreement is to gain the support and collaboration of the *Collegi de Periodistes de Catalunya* (College of Journalists in Catalonia), the *Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya* (Catalan Audiovisual Council (CAC)), and the *Secretaria General de Política Lingüística de la Generalitat de Catalunya* (Language Policy Secretariat of the Catalan Government), as well as of the universities, since the journalistic code of ethics stipulates that journalists must set a high-quality linguistic example.

5.3.4.4 Catalan quality awards

UPAL draws up, promotes and co-ordinates awards for high-quality use of the Catalan language in local television. These awards are intended to give credit to local television stations which have made an effort to improve the quality of the Catalan language they use.

6. Conclusions

The 20-year history of television in Catalonia and its language assessment processes has been marked by a desire to offer a standard-quality language model with an educational role extending beyond mere dissemination. The language services of CTV have performed an important task in the standardisation of language, and continue to do so. Now, because of changes in the audiovisual arena, and with the emergence of approximately 100 local television stations, the anticipation of new regional channels and the changing audiovisual climate throughout Europe, it needs to be determined whether the model used 20 years ago for organising language services, with a focus on the end product, continues to be the only solution, or whether other practices should be tested

— such as language assessment focused on promoting the linguistic autonomy of television professionals.

One of the basic needs in the world of television and audiovisual media is an understanding of the fact that Catalan does not only need to be spoken, but be well spoken. Television media professionals' understanding of the Catalan language is very extensive, but linguistic interference from Spanish is a serious reason for language degradation. Therefore, particular sensitivity is required towards personal competence and the quality of the language spoken.

Language quality is truly a matter for everyone, but particularly for television professionals. They bear a special social responsibility because of their professional role. It must thus be understood that, while it is important to guarantee a language model, it is even more important to stop externalising the television professional's responsibility for language quality.

It is therefore necessary for all those who use language in their professional activities to acquire the habit of interrogating their own linguistic competence, and to learn to consult sources in order to resolve and document any doubts or uncertainties.

In addition to sensitisation, training and assessment, the demand for language quality must be reflected in purchase contracts for audiovisual products and services, as well as in collaboration agreements with audiovisual media institutions.

This paper has outlined the philosophy that inspired the establishment of UPAL, whose fundamental aim is to create an environment of support and assessment. The audiovisual world is still sensitive to language quality, and television media professionals can themselves promote this by improving their own language competence. The benefits associated with this assessment philosophy may not be immediate, but they will make an important contribution in creating the necessary dynamic to rectify the current lack of language assessment at local television stations.

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