CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the data from field studies, the questionnaire, and interviews will be analyzed and compared against each other and the standards set out in ISO 2603. The findings in this chapter will serve as the basis of discussion and further analysis presented in the next chapter.

The organization of this chapter is as follows:

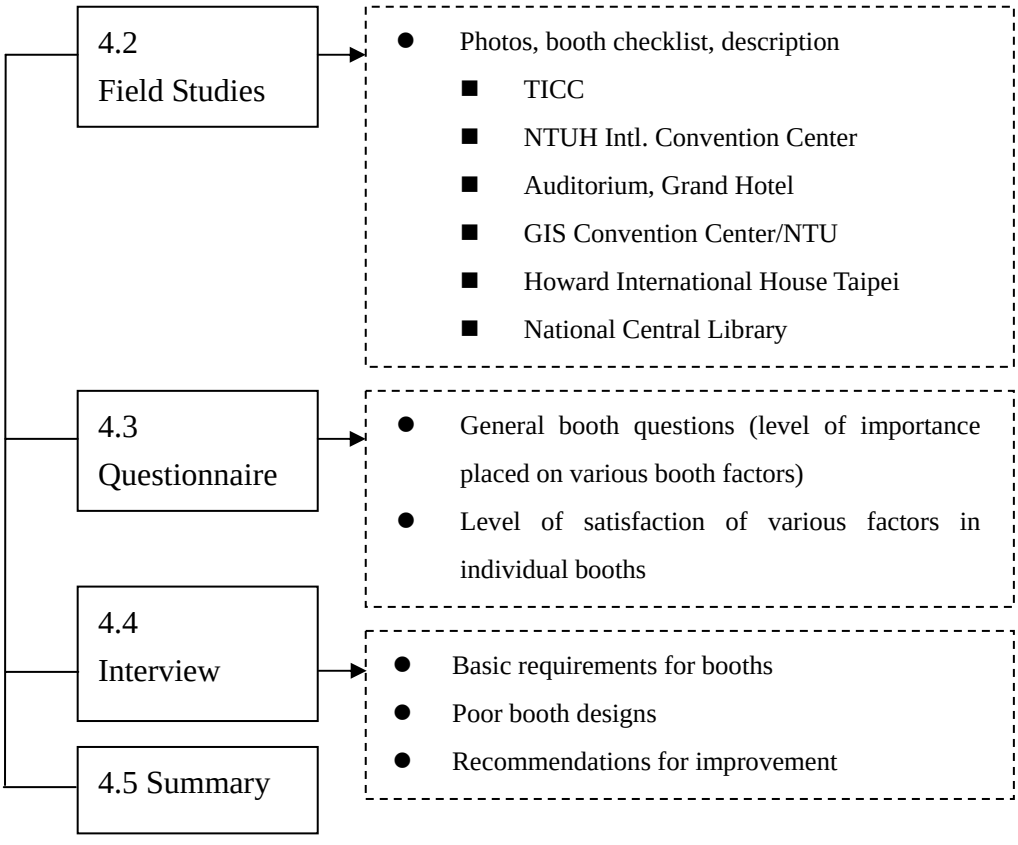

Figure 4.1. Chapter 4 Organization Chart

4.2 Field Studies

To examine whether current conditions conform to ISO 2603 standards and to what degree, this study created a booth checklist (see Appendix A), as was mentioned in Chapter 3. This section will present the data collected in the form of booth checklists and photographs, with floor plans provided in Appendix E.

Based on ISO 2603, the booth checklist used for the field studies can be categorized into general, doors, access, size, visibility, windows, air conditioning, lighting, working space, and seating. An overview of the six venues was provided in Chapter 3. Of these venues, a total of nine booths were visited, including the Taipei International Convention Center VIP Room, 401, and Plenary Hall, National Taiwan University Hospital International Convention Center, Grand Hotel Auditorium, GIS Convention Center/NTU, the Howard International House Taipei Convention Hall and Conference Room, and National Central Library. Table 4.1 presents the findings of the field studies and observations. Overall, booth factors in general received an average compliance rate of 42%. The detailed findings of each factor are presented in the following sections.

The questions were largely adapted from ISO 2603, although there are certain questions that cannot be answered with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ due to unclear wording. One example of this is the “general” question: “Is the sound control booth close to

interpreters' booths?" It is difficult to simply answer 'yes' or 'no', as the idea of 'close' is rather subjective. In cases such as these, this study makes a subjective judgment, while indicating that the booth or factor in question will be discussed in later sections to understand the ambiguity.

The categories in this section may not match the categories in the questionnaire section. The most obvious example of this is "acoustics". Since this study is limited in scope, acoustics is not a part of this booth checklist. Nonetheless, it is an important booth factor, and interpreters were asked about its importance and quality in various booths in the questionnaire section.

This section will focus mainly on observable factors, or those easily measured such as booth dimensions. Other factors, such as more detailed aspects of lighting and ventilation, were not studied here due to the scope limitations and a need for more sophisticated measurement equipment.

Table 4.1

Compiled Booth Checklist and Results for All Venues

Factors \ Venues	Taipei International Convention Center			NTUH International Convention Center	Grand Hotel	GIS Convention Center/NTU	Howard International House Taipei		National Central Library	Percentage of Compliance (%)
	VIP Room	401	Plenary		Auditorium		Convention Hall (2F)	Conference Room (1F)		
GENERAL										**78**
Is the booth floor at least 1 m above level hall floor?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	100
Is the sound control booth close to interpreters' booths?	×*	×*	×*	○	○	○	×	○	○	56
DOORS										**22**
Do the doors operate silently?	○	○	○	○	×	×	×	○	×	56
Does it have an observation porthole?	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	○	11
Is there a light indicating active mike outside door?	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	0
Are assigned languages and channels indicated on or adjacent to doors?	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	22
ACCESS										**78**
Does the booth have a separate entrance from outside the hall?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	100
Is the access corridor at least 1.5 m wide?	○	○	○	×	×	×	○	×	○	56
SIZE										**17**
Is the booth (for 2) at least 2.5m wide, 2.4m deep, 2.3m high?	×	×	×	○	×	×	○	×	×	22
For halls with less than 6 booths, is one of them at least 3.2m wide?	×	×	×	○	×	×	×	×	×	11
For halls with more than 6 booths, are all of them at least 3.2m wide?	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
VISIBILITY										**44**
Is there a direct view of the entire conference room (including projection screen)?	×	○	○*	×	○*	×	○*	×	○	56
Is there visual support?	○	×	○	○	×	×	×	×	×	33
WINDOWS										**23**
Do the front windows stretch across full width of booth?	×	○	○	×	×	×	○	×	○	44
Is the front window at least 1.2m high from working surface upwards?	×	×	×	×	×	×	○	×	×	11
Is the lower edge of front window level with working surface or lower?	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	○	11
Are the side windows at least the same height as front windows?	NA	○	×	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	50
Do the side windows extend from the front windows for 1.10m along partition between booths?	NA	×	×	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0

Table 4.1 (*continued*)

Factors \ Venues	Taipei International Convention Center			NTUH International Convention Center	Grand Hotel	GIS Convention Center/NTU	Howard International House Taipei		National Central Library	Percentage of Compliance (%)
	VIP Room	401	Plenary		Auditorium		Convention Hall (2F)	Conference Room (1F)		
AIR CONDITIONING										**22**
Is the temperature controllable between 18 and 22C by individual regulator in each booth?	×	×	×	×	×	○	○	×	×	22
LIGHTING										**60**
Is the booth lighting independent from the hall?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	100
Are there 2 different systems? (work, general)	○	×	○	○	×	○	○	○	×	67
Is the general light switch located by the door?	×	○	○	×	×	○	○	○	○	67
Are the dimmer switches for both systems located within reach of the interpreter working?	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	0
Are light sources placed in such a way that do not cause reflections on booth windows?	×	○	○	○	×	×	○	○	×	56
WORKING SPACE										**48**
Does the working surface stretch across full width of booth?	×	○	○	×	○	×	○	×	○	56
Is it 0.73m ± 0.01m from the floor level of booth?	○	×	×	○	×	○	×	×	×	33
Is the total depth of the working surface at least 0.60m?	○	○	×	○	○	○	○	○	×	78
Is there at least 0.66m of leg room (height)?	○	×	×	○	×	○	○	×	×	44
Is the area under the working surface free of shelving or trays?	○	×	×	○	×	○	○	×	○	56
Are shelving or trays located towards the rear of the booth, within easy reach of the interpreter?	×	×	×	○	×	×	○	×	×	22
SEATING										**37**
Are there five legs?	×	○	○	×	×	○	×	○	○	56
Is the height adjustable?	×	○	○	×	×	○	×	○	○	56
Is the back-rest adjustable?	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	0
Are there arm rests?	×	×	×	×	×	○	×	○	×	22
Do the castors produce any perceptible noise?	NA	○	×	NA	NA	○	NA	×	×	60
TOTAL PERCENTAGE OF CONFORMANCE										**42**

Source: adapted from ISO 2603 and compiled by this study

"*" marks subjective judgments and will be discussed in later sections.

4.2.1 General

The two questions in this category are concerned with the siting of the interpreters' booths relative to the conference hall and the sound control booth, and have a compliance rate of 78%.

All booths surveyed have been raised at least one meter above the hall floor. However, in the TICC Plenary Hall, Grand Hotel Auditorium, Howard Convention Hall, and National Central Library, the booths are not located on the same level as the rest of the hall, creating steep viewing angles for the interpreters.

The ISO 2603 stipulates that "the sound control booth shall be placed close to the interpreters' booths to facilitate access and visual communication between them…" The definition of "close" in this requirement is not clear. This study cannot ascertain the distance at which a sound control booth is deemed "close" or "far". Thus, for interpretation booths which were immediately adjoining the sound control booth, the answer is yes. The sound control booth in Howard Convention Hall is decidedly located far from the interpreters' booths. The TICC sound control booths are more ambiguously located and open to discussion in the following chapter.

4.2.2 Doors

The compliance rate for booth doors is 22%. Booth doors are required to operate silently by ISO 2603, for the obvious reason of avoiding disturbance to interpreters.

Assigned languages and channels should be indicated on the door or nearby. In addition, ISO 2603 recommends the addition of an observation port-hole in the booth door and/or a light outside the door to indicate an active microphone within the booth.

Four of the nine booths have doors that decidedly produce noise. However, the case is not so clear for the remaining five. More to the point, how silent is “silent”? The doors to the booths of the TICC VIP Room, 401, Plenary Hall, NTUH, and Howard Conference Room are silent enough in that they don’t produce noise (as in squeaking) when opened and closed. However, there is still an audible click when the door is shut. By definition, something that produces any noise at all is not silent. However, since the noise is unobtrusive enough to cause no or minimal distraction to interpreters, the study deems them as silent.

Only one of the booths studied, that of the National Central Library, is installed with doors with observation portholes (Figure 4.2). None of the nine booths have a light indicating a live microphone outside the door.

Figure 4.2. NCL booth door

Figure 4.3. TICC 401 booth door

At the time of this study's observations, only the TICC VIP Room and 401 had signs indicating assigned languages and channels posted outside the door of the booth. These signs were little more than a hastily drawn "Chinese ←→English" taped to the door, as can be seen in the photograph in Figure 4.3.

4.2.3 Access

The access portion of this checklist determines whether booths have a separate entrance from outside the hall, and whether the access corridor is at least 1.5 meters wide; this factor received a compliance rate of 78%. These two requirements are necessary, according to ISO 2603, to avoid the interpreters disturbing the meeting when coming and going and allow for safe and quick passage, respectively.

All the booths surveyed in this study had a separate entrance, allowing interpreters to come and go without disturbing conference proceedings. However, of the nine booths, the access corridors of the NTUH, Grand Hotel Auditorium, GIS, and Howard Conference Room do not reach the required width. One noteworthy example is the Grand Hotel Auditorium (Figure 4.4), whose access corridor is not the same width throughout. Ranging from as little as 85 to 125 centimeters wide, the corridor is the narrowest in joining with the sound control booth, where the most traffic would occur and should be the widest. Another example is the Howard International House Taipei Conference Room (Figure 4.5), where the corridor is not only narrow, but

doubles as storage space.

Figure 4.4. Grand Hotel Auditorium booth access corridor

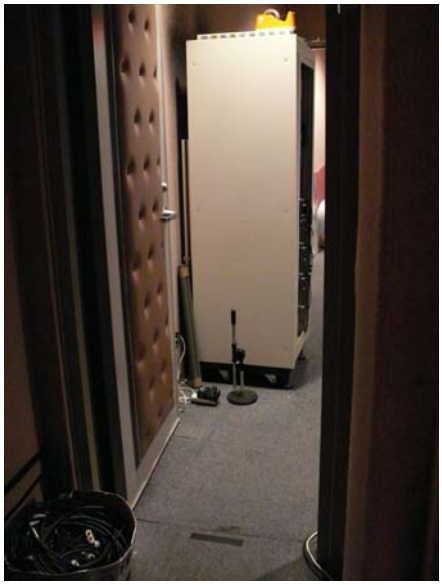

Figure 4.5. Howard Conference Room booth access corridor

4.2.4 Size

The importance of booth size has already been discussed in Chapter 2. Here, this study examines whether the selected booths conform to the minimum size requirements (2.5 meters wide, 2.4 meters deep, and 2.3 meters high). The compliance rate for booth size is 17%. Of the nine booths surveyed, only the Convention Hall in Howard International House Taipei and NTUH are large enough. None of the three TICC booths surveyed are deep enough; the Grand Hotel Auditorium booths are irregularly shaped, neither wide nor deep enough; the GIS Convention Center booths are only 1.85 meters wide; the Howard Conference Room booths are also irregularly shaped, being only 1.93 meters wide at the front windows and 2.18 meters deep; the booths in NCL are trapezoid shaped, being 1.8 meters wide at the front windows, 2

meters deep, and 2.08 meters high.

In addition, ISO 2603 stipulates that “for conference halls with up to six booths, one or more should be 3.2 meters wide” and “for conference halls with more than six booths, all booths shall be at least 3.2 meters wide”, in order to accommodate the continuous presence of three interpreters. Since none of the conference halls have more than six booths, the second requirement is moot. Of the venues surveyed, only the National Taiwan University Hospital International Convention Center is fitted with a booth that is at least 3.2 meters wide (4.07 meters wide).

4.2.5 Visibility

“A direct view of the entire conference room, including the projection screen” is essential according to ISO 2603 and has been discussed in the review of related literature. Visibility receives a compliance rate of 44% from the field studies. The TICC VIP Room, NTUH, GIS, and Howard Conference Room booths decidedly do not have a direct view, obstructed by the size or height of the window, which will be illustrated in the following section. The TICC 401 and NCL booths do have a direct view, albeit the NCL does not have a clear view due to the large distance separating the booth from the podium and projection screen. However, the answer is less clear for the three remaining booths. The TICC Plenary Hall booth does offer a direct view of the entire hall, but the interpreter does not have visual access unless standing. In

addition, the booths are located on the side of the hall two stories above the stage, giving the interpreters a slanted view at such a steep angle that it is difficult to see anything clearly out the windows. The survey of the Grand Hotel Auditorium booths (see Figure 4.6) was conducted during the lunch break of a conference, and answers regarding visibility were solicited from the interpreters. The answer was surprisingly mixed; some interpreters felt that they had a direct view of the conference hall and projection screen for the most part, though there were interpreters who felt that some areas of the hall that were obscured by either columns or by virtue of the booths' siting themselves. Although the Howard Convention Hall booths, located one on each side of the hall, have two front windows, providing an almost panoramic view of the hall, one of the windows is angled at the podium and one angled at the audience (Figure 4.7). The resulting effect is that either both interpreters are squeezed to one side in order for both to see the stage and projection screen, or one interpreter is forced to stare at the stage and one at the audience for the duration of the conference.

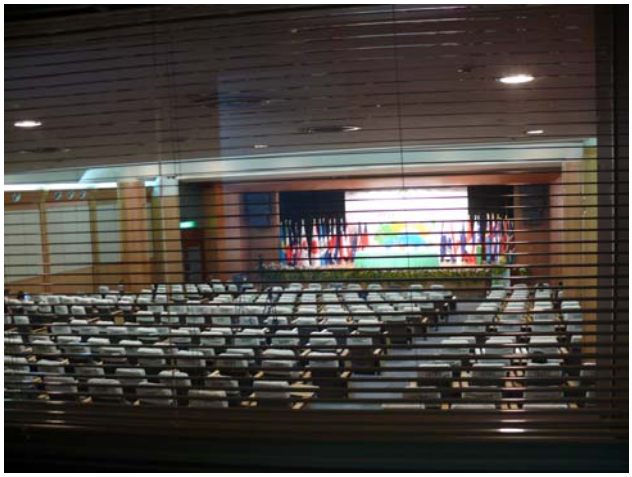

Figure 4.6. View from the Grand Hotel Auditorium booth

Figure 4.7. View from the Howard Convention Hall booth

For very large halls in which the booth is located more than 30 meters away from the podium or projection screen, ISO 2603 recommends the use of visual support, such as enlarged video display screens, or video/data display panels in or immediately outside the booth. This study only ascertained whether visual support was provided at these booths, regardless of their distance from the podium, since presentations and slides are not clearly visible even in the smaller venues. Of the nine booths surveyed, only the TICC VIP Room, TICC Plenary Hall, and NTUH provided visual support. In the case of TICC VIP Room, the visual support provided was a small TV monitor, whose visual quality was so bad as to provide almost no help whatsoever to the

interpreters (Figure 4.8). The TICC Plenary Hall only provided one monitor, aimed at the stage; interpreters still had to stand up or strain their necks in order to see the projection screen below (Figure 4.9). The NTUH booth had two monitors, one of for the speaker, and one for the on-screen presentation (Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.8. TV Monitor in the TICC VIP Room booth

Figure 4.9. Display Monitor in the TICC Plenary Hall booth

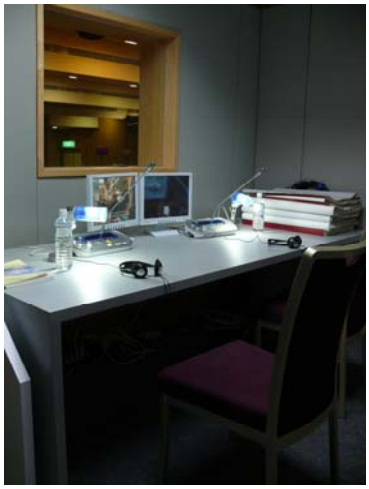

Figure 4.10. Monitors in the NTUH booth

4.2.6 Windows

Windows are a big factor in terms of the booth's visibility. This section will examine whether booth windows conform to ISO 2603 in terms of size and location. Overall, booth windows received a compliance rate of 23%.

First, the front windows should stretch across the full width of the booth. The TICC 401 and Plenary Hall, Howard Convention Hall, and NCL front booth windows do indeed stretch across the whole booth. However, the remaining five booths windows do not, giving interpreters limited space to see out of.

Second, according to ISO 2603, "the height of the pane shall be at least 1.2 meters from the working surface upwards" and "its lower edge shall be level with the working surface of the table, or lower." In the photographs shown in Figure 4.11, we can see the front windows of each individual booth. The TICC VIP Room booth window is formed in a small diamond shape, not for the interpreters' benefit, but in order to fit the décor of the hall. Obviously, it failed to stretch across the width of the booth, stretch high enough, and is not level with the working surface or lower. Although the TICC 401 booth window does stretch across the booth, they only stretch 68 centimeters high and begin 8 centimeters above the working surface. The TICC Plenary Hall booth window spans the width of the booth as well, but beginning 10 centimeters above the table, the window only reaches 1.15 meters in height. The

NTUH booth window fails on all accounts; the window is only 93 centimeters wide by 90 centimeters high, and its lower edge is located 30 centimeters above the table. The window of the Grand Hotel Auditorium booths measure 150 centimeters wide by 92 centimeters high, beginning at 14 centimeters above the working surface. One interesting note is that the windows here extend across two booths (notice in the photograph below how the window has no left edge, it is cut off by the wall and extends into the booth on the left side of the one shown in the photo), and the wall separating the two booths does not connect with the window, leaving a small gap between booths, and resulting in poor acoustic separation between connecting booths. The GIS Convention Center booth windows are located 20 centimeters above the working surface, and measure 80 centimeters wide by 110 centimeters high. Even worse, a round column at the front left corner of the booth forces the table to be placed 35 centimeters away from the front wall, creating a further distance from the seated interpreter to the already small window. The orientation of the Howard Convention Hall booth windows has already been discussed in the previous section. The size of the windows in this booth conforms to ISO 2603, being 145 centimeters high; however, its lower edge is placed 20 centimeter above the table. The window of the Howard Conference Room booths does not stretch across the booth width, being only 114 centimeters wide by 150 centimeters high. Its lower edge is located 40

centimeters above the working surface. Moreover, there is absolutely no need for the excessive height of this window, since much of its view is blocked by the ceiling of the hall (Figure 4.12). The windows at NCL booths span across the full width of the booth; however, they are only 72 centimeters high, starting level at the height of the working surface. It is worth noting that these windows are severely tinted, making it difficult to see out into the hall, especially when hall lights have been dimmed.

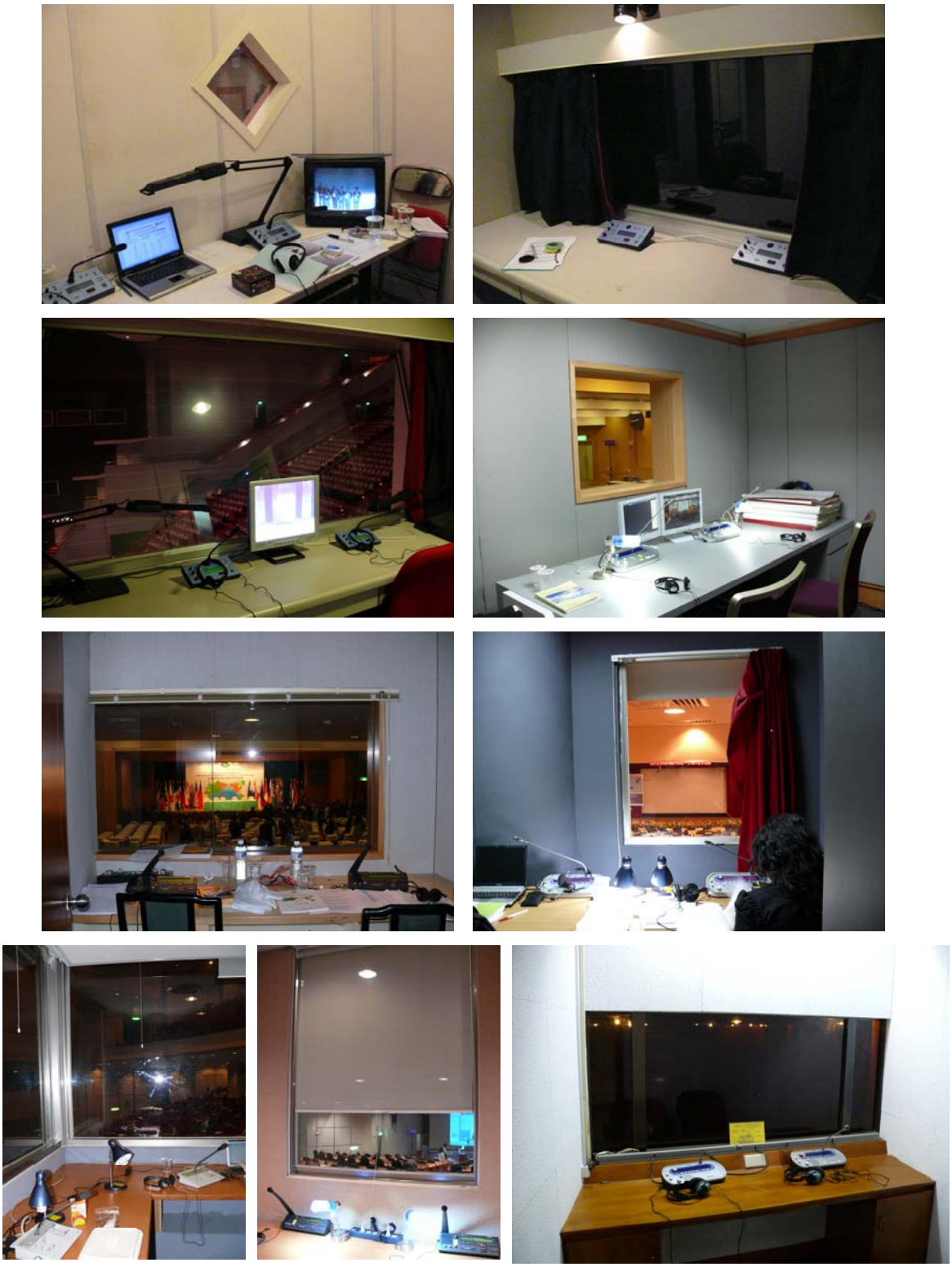

Figure 4.11. Booth front windows. From left to right, 1st row: TICC VIP Room, 401; 2nd row: Plenary Hall, NTUH; 3rd row: Grand Hotel, GIS; 4th row: Howard Convention Hall, Conference Room, NCL

Figure 4.12. Looking out of the Howard Conference Room Booth front windows

Figure 4.13. (left) Side windows of TICC 401 booth

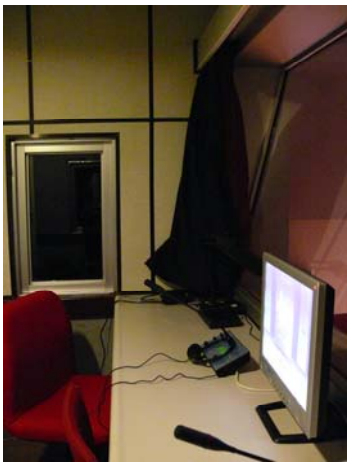

Figure 4.14. (right) Side windows of TICC Plenary Hall booth

In addition, ISO 2603 stipulates that “side windows, of at least the same height, shall be provided and shall extend from the front window for a length of 1.10 meters along the partition between booths.” Side windows are not applicable to NTUH or Howard Convention Hall booths, as the NTUH hall only contains one booth, and the two Howard Convention Hall booths are located on opposite sides of the hall. Of the remaining seven booths surveyed in this study, only the TICC 401 (Figure 4.13) and Plenary Hall (Figure 4.14) booths are fitted with side windows. Although the side windows of the TICC 401 booth is of the same height as the front windows, neither the 401 nor Plenary Hall booth windows extend from the front windows.

4.2.7 Air Conditioning

Of the ISO 2603 standards regarding air conditioning, this study focused on the one observable factor, which is that the temperature should be controllable between 18 and 22 degrees Centigrade by individual regulator in each booth. In the nine booths surveyed, only the booths of GIS Convention Center and Howard Convention Hall have an individual temperature regulator, giving this factor a compliance rate of 22%. The NCL has one regulator for two booths, located outside the booths in the hallway. As for the remaining six booths, the temperature is not controllable by the interpreters.

4.2.8 Lighting

Chapter 2 has already mentioned the importance of lighting for interpreters. ISO 2603 stipulates that booth lighting be independent from the hall, with two different lighting systems for work and general purposes, the general light switch should be located by the door, dimmer switches should be within reach of the interpreter working, and light sources should be placed in such a way as to avoid reflections and glare. Overall, booth lighting received a compliance rate of 60%; this section examines how the booths surveyed have or have not conformed to these requirements.

All nine booths surveyed have independent lighting from the hall. With the exception of TICC 401, Grand Hotel, and NCL booths, all other were provided with

work lamps. Since the survey at TICC 401 and NCL booths were not conducted during a conference, this study can not be certain that work lamps would not be provided when the booths are in use. However, the survey of the Grand Hotel booths was conducted during the lunch break of a conference. Of the three out of four booths in use, only one booth was provided with work lamps.

The light switch for the general-purpose lighting is located by the door for TICC 401 and Plenary Hall, GIS, Howard Convention Hall and Conference Room, and NCL booths. The TICC VIP Room booth light switch is located outside the booth door, meaning that interpreters must get up, open the door, and step outside the booth in order to turn the lights on or off. The light switch for the NTUH booth is located on the farthest end of the sound control booth away from the booth. The Grand Hotel Auditorium booths do not have any light switches operable by interpreters. Instead the light is controlled through the sound control booth.

None of the nine booths surveyed have dimmer switches, either for the work light or general-purpose light.

Most of the booth windows cast some level of glare. The two exceptions are the TICC VIP Room and Grand Hotel booths; the former has windows that are too small to produce glare, the latter has insufficient lighting and thus does not have glare. The NCL booth is most likely the biggest offender in terms of glare, as the window is

tinted and lights from the hall are cast through the window in the door to produce glare.

4.2.9 Working Space

Interpreters are required to study documents, read speeches and other information, and write down notes during their work, as was mentioned in Chapter 2, hence ISO 2603 has made a number of specifications with regard to the working surface and space. The working surface should be placed at the front of the booth across the full width; the surface height should be 0.73m ± 0.01m from the floor level of the booth; the useable depth should be 0.45m in relation to the interpreters' angle of vision into the hall; interpreters should have at least 0.66 meters of leg room in height; shelves and trays for documents should not be placed under the working surface, but located towards the rear of the booth, within easy reach of the interpreter. This factor received a compliance rate of 48%; this section examines the nine booths and their working spaces.

Five of the nine booths have working surfaces that stretch across the full width of the booth. The TICC VIP Room, NTUH, GIS, and Howard Conference Room booths are fitted with tables that do not span the booth width. As mentioned earlier, the table of the GIS booth has been set back 35 centimeters away from the front wall of the booth due to a protrusion from one section of a column. As for the height of the

working surface, only the TICC VIP Room, NTUH, and GIS tables conform to the ISO requirement.

Although ISO 2603 defines “useable depth” as the depth of the working surface clear of equipment and fixtures, this is difficult to ascertain as some equipment may be move and locations adjusted according to interpreters’ needs. As such, this study determined that the average interpretation console is approximately 15 centimeters deep. Thus, this study set out to examine whether the total depth of working surfaces was at least 0.60 meters (0.45m + 0.15m). Only the TICC Plenary Hall and NCL booths failed to reach at least 0.60 meters in depth, being 59 centimeters and 53 centimeters deep, respectively.

Only the TICC VIP Room, NTUH, and Howard Convention Hall and Conference Room booths provide enough leg room for interpreters.

All nine booths do not contain shelving or trays beneath the working surface. However, the TICC 401 and Plenary Hall, Grand Hotel, and Howard Conference Room booths do contain drawers beneath the table.

Of the booths surveyed, only the NTUH and Howard Convention Hall booths provide any form of shelving for document storage. The NTUH has a whole wall of shelves located to the side, but it is by no means within easy access of the interpreter (Figure 4.15). Instead, it seems to be a storage area for when the booth is not in use.

The booths of Howard Convention Hall do not have shelves or trays per se, but rather a ledge that can be used to place documents and other objects (Figure 4.16). On another note, the TICC VIP Room, although already a small booth, was provided with a row of chairs in the back in lieu of storage space (Figure 4.17).

Figure 4.15. Shelves in the NTUH booth

Figure 4.16. Ledge in the Howard Convention Hall booth

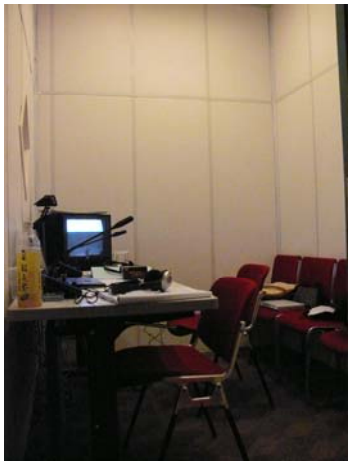

Figure 4.17. Chairs in the TICC VIP Room booth

Figure 4.18. Chairs, from left to right, 1st row: TICC 401/Plenary Hall, NTUH, Grand Hotel; 2nd row: Howard Convention Hall, Howard Conference Room, GIS; 3rd row: NCL

4.2.10 Seating

ISO 2603 stipulates that chairs should have five legs, adjustable height, adjustable back-rest, arm-rests, and castors producing no perceptible noise. Overall, booth seating received a compliance rate of 37%. Not a single one of the booths surveyed have adjustable back-rests. The chairs in the TICC VIP Room booth, as can be seen in the photographs shown in Figure 4.18, follow none of the requirements.

The chairs in the TICC 401 and Plenary Hall booths are identical, both having five legs. Although these chairs are adjustable in theory, it is near impossible to do so without assistance in reality. The castors of the chairs in 401 do produce noise as opposed to those in the Plenary Hall, probably due to lack of oil. The chairs in NTUH, Grand Hotel, and Howard Convention Hall booths also do not conform to any of the requirements. Chairs in the GIS and Howard Conference Room booths have five legs, are adjustable and have arm rests. The chairs in the NCL booths have five legs and adjustable height, but no arm rests. (Figure 4.18)

4.3 Questionnaire

Out of the 96 email invitations sent, only 28 interpreters responded. The original questionnaire, conducted online in Mandarin is attached in Appendix C, as well as the translated questionnaire including results in parentheses, in Appendix D.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the questionnaire contains two main sections: the section for general booth factors with 31 questions in which respondents were asked to rate each with “no opinion”, “very unimportant”, “unimportant”, “average”, “important”, or “very important”; and the booth-specific section, repeating 19 questions for each booth, in which respondents were asked to rate each with “not applicable”, “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neutral”, “agree”, or “strongly agree”.

4.3.1 Background Questions

Out of 28 respondents, 10 are male and 18 female interpreters, with ages ranging from 26 to 59. The average age of respondents is 34.32 years, which is slightly younger than the average age of 40 years in the *Taiwan fanyi chanye xiankuang diaocha yanjiu zongjie fenxi baogao* (Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation, National Taiwan Normal University, & Taiwan Institute of Economic Research, 2004), hereinafter referred to as the Taiwan T&I Study. Seven respondents have worked 1-2 years, nine respondents worked 3-5 years, three have worked 6-10 years, six have worked 11-15 years, two have worked 16-20 years, and one has worked over 20 years as an interpreter. (See Figure 4.19 and Table 4.2)

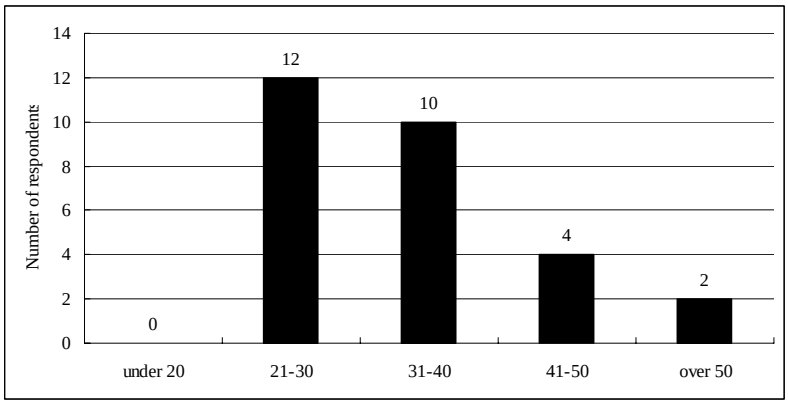

Figure 4.19. Distribution of Age of Respondents

Table 4.2

Years of Experience as an Interpreter

Years	Number of respondents	Percentage
1-2 years	7	25%
3-5 years	9	32%
6-10 years	3	11%
11-15 years	6	21%
16-20 years	2	7%
over 20 years	1	4%

Source: compiled by this study

When asked to select their 'A', 'B', or 'C' working language(s) according to AIIC classification, 27 replied that their A language is Chinese (Mandarin), 2 chose English, one chose Cantonese, and 1 chose Taiwanese. As for their B language, 2 chose Chinese (Mandarin), 26 chose English, and one chose French (see Figure 4.20). Obviously, some respondents chose more than one A and B language. Only 1 respondent chose Spanish and French as their C language. Surprisingly, although the number of interpreters in Taiwan working in Chinese-Japanese is second only to those working in Chinese-English, none chose Japanese as their A, B, or C language.

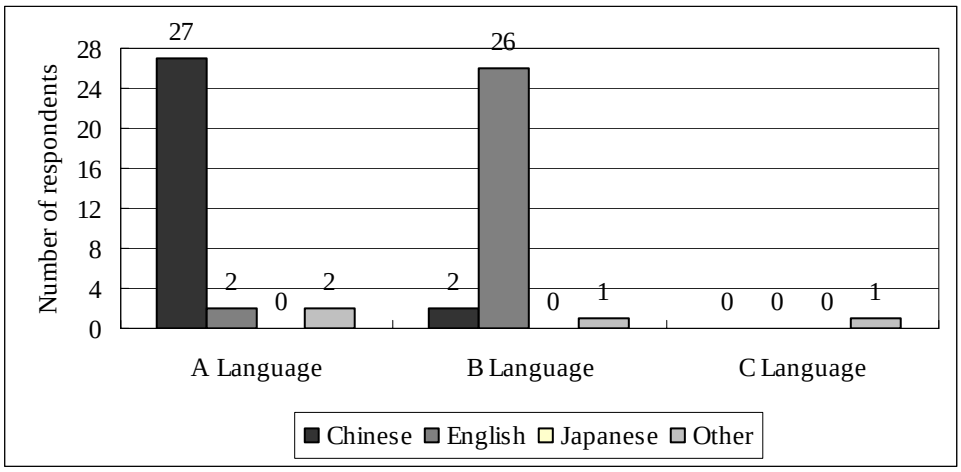

Figure 4.20. Working Language According to AIIC Classification

Respondents were also asked the number of conferences they had interpreted in 2006. Twelve replied they had interpreted less than 10 conferences, three replied “10 to 20”, four replied “21 to 30”, two replied “31 to 40”, and seven replied “more than 50” (see Table 4.3). The Taiwan T&I Study estimated an average of 44 working days per year among their responding interpreters in 2003; however, the finding of this study only represents the number of conferences, and not the working days. Therefore, it is not possible to compare the workload between the two.

Table 4.3

Responses to Number of Conference Interpreted in 2006

Number of conferences interpreted in 2006	Number of respondents	Percentage
less than 10	12	43 %
10-20	3	11%
21-30	4	14%
31-40	2	7%
41-50	0	0%
more than 50	7	25%

Source: compiled by this study

Next, respondents were asked the number of times they had worked in the built-in booths of certain venues in 2006. These venues, which are also the focus of the field studies, include the Taipei International Convention Center (TICC), National Taiwan University Hospital International Convention Center (NTUH), the 10th floor Auditorium of the Grand Hotel, GIS Convention Center/NTU, Howard International House Taipei, and the National Central Library (NCL). Nineteen interpreters

responded that they had worked in the built in booths of TICC in 2006; eleven of which had worked there 0-5 times, six worked 6-10 times, one worked 11-20 times, and one worked more than 20 times. Fourteen respondents have worked at the NTUH up to 5 times in 2006. Thirteen interpreters worked at the Grand Hotel up to 5 times, and one worked 6 to 10 times. As for the GIS Convention Center/NTU, out of the fourteen interpreters who worked there in 2006, twelve responded that they had worked 0-5 times, and two had worked 6-10 times. Out of the seventeen people who had worked at the Howard International House Taipei in 2006, thirteen worked 0-5 times, and four worked 6-10 times. Only five out of the total 28 respondents had worked at the NCL in 2006. The results are compiled Table 4.4 as follows.

Table 4.4

Frequency of Work at Selected Venues in 2006

Venues	Responses to Number of Conferences Interpreted in 2006					Total	
	0	0 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 20	more than 20	Number of respondents	Percentage
TICC	9	11	6	1	1	19	68%
NTUH	14	14	0	0	0	14	50%
Grand Hotel	14	13	1	0	0	14	50%
GIS	14	12	2	0	0	14	50%
Howard	11	13	4	0	0	17	61%
NCL	23	5	0	0	0	5	18%

Source: compiled by this study

Respondents were also asked to name other venues with built-in booths and the number of times they had worked there in 2006. Unfortunately, due to a programming

mistake while creating the online questionnaire, only the number of times worked were recorded, which is of no significance without the name of the venue. This question was asked again in interviews with interpreters, and the information is presented in section 4.4.2.

4.3.2 Physical/Environmental Factors for Booths in General

In this section, interpreters were asked 31 questions regarding general booth factors. Answers were required for each question, and the selections were “no opinion”, “very unimportant”, “unimportant”, “average”, “important”, and “very important”. The responses for each question can be seen in Appendix D, Translated questionnaire and results. The results were compiled, and the weighted average was calculated thusly, with x_1 being the number of responses for “very unimportant” and a corresponding weight of 1, x_2 for “unimportant” and a corresponding weight of 2, x_3 for “average” and a corresponding weight of 3, x_4 for “important” and a corresponding weight of 4, and x_5 for “very important” and a corresponding weight of 5:

$$\text{Weighted Average} = \frac{x_1 \cdot 1 + x_2 \cdot 2 + x_3 \cdot 3 + x_4 \cdot 4 + x_5 \cdot 5}{x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 + x_5}$$

Responses for “no opinion” were not calculated within the weighted average.

Weighted averages ranged from 2.50 to 4.96, with lowest average for question number 36 “Sunlight or outdoor environment visible from the booth” and the highest

for question number 42 “Quality of sound transmission”. Twenty-two of the 31 questions received a weighted average of 4.00 or above, meaning that interpreters rated them somewhere between “important” and “very important”. The weighted average of eight questions fell between 3.00 and 4.00, meaning that interpreters rated them between “average” and “important”. Only one question, number 36, was rated less than 3.00, implying that interpreters felt that this was not important. For details, refer to Figures 4.21 through 4.24, or see the complete figure of Weighted Factors for Physical/Environmental Factors for Booths in General in Appendix F.

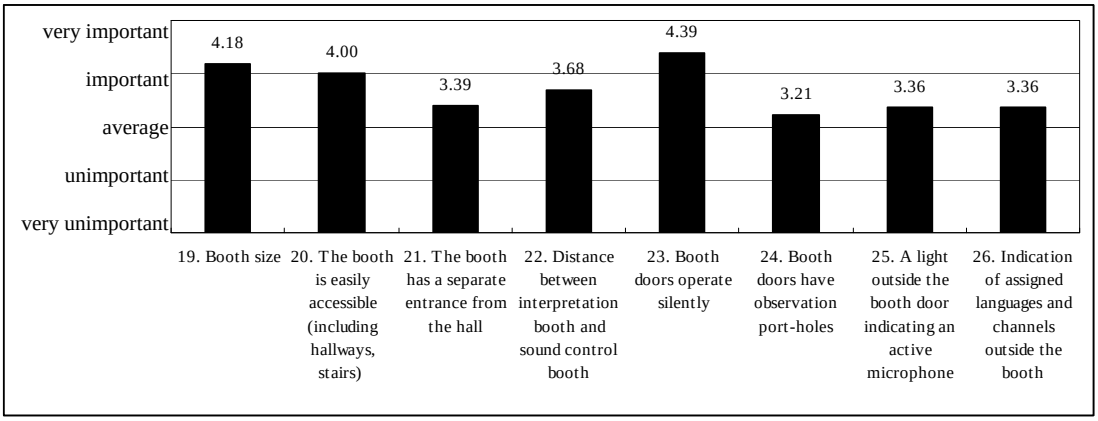

Figure 4.21. Weighted Factors for Size, Access, and Visibility

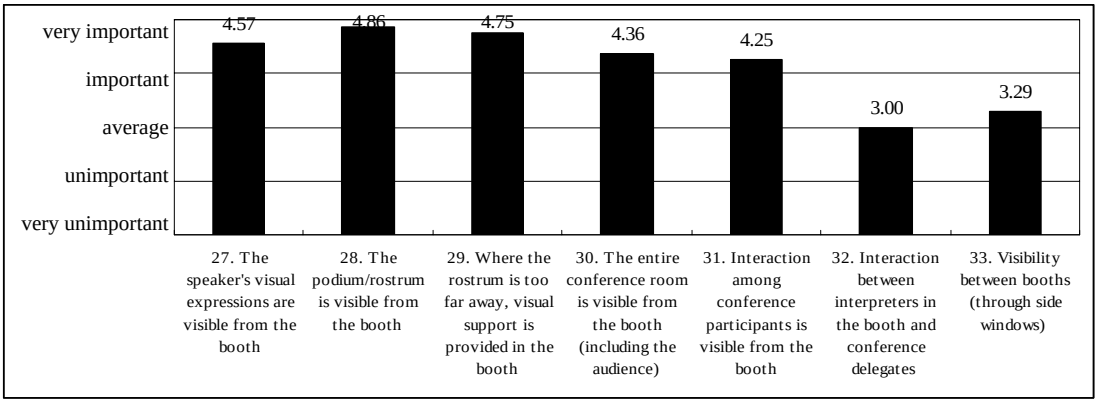

Figure 4.22. Weighted Factors for Visibility

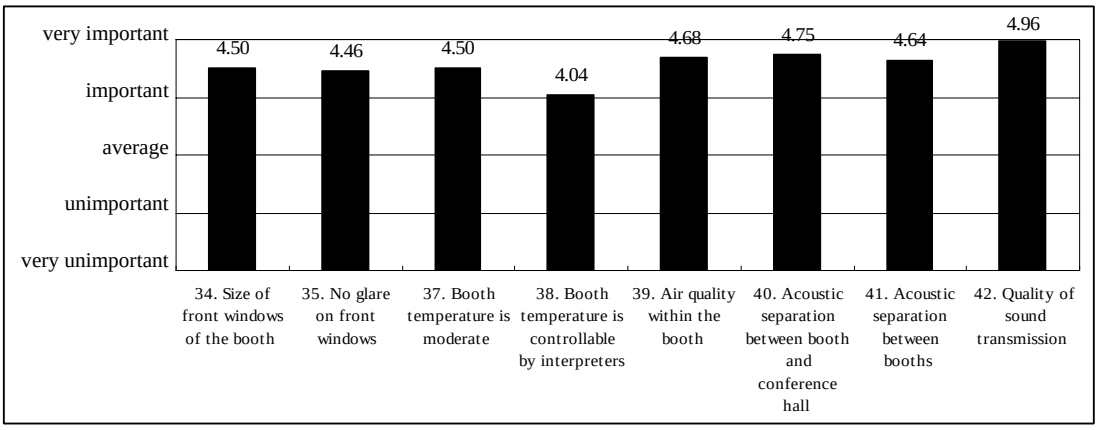

Figure 4.23. Weighted Factors for Windows, Ventilation, and Acoustics

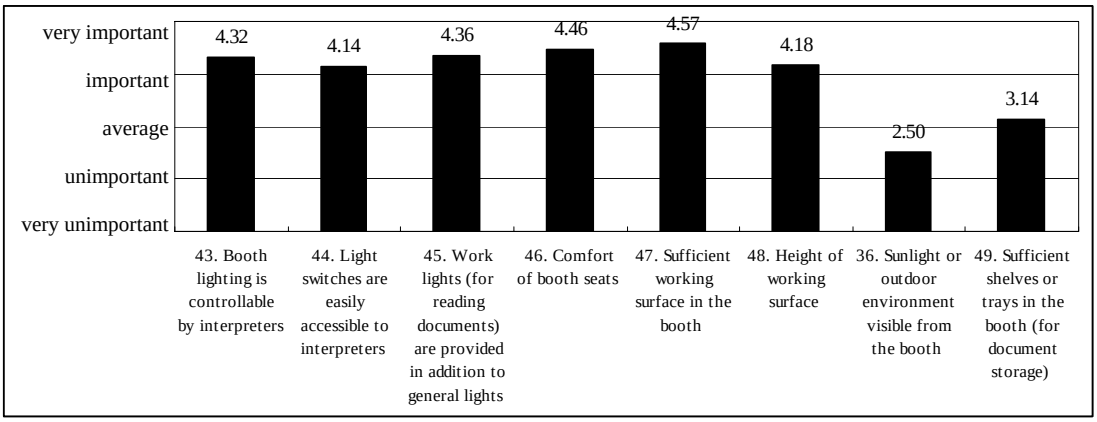

Figure 4.24. Weighted Factors for Lighting, Seating, Work Surface, and Miscellaneous

4.3.3 Physical/Environmental Factors for Specific Booths

The booth-specific section of the questionnaire repeats the same 19 questions for eight types of booths in the six selected venues of this study. Respondents were asked to rate each statement/phrase with “not applicable”, “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neutral”, “agree”, or “strongly agree”. The responses of each question can be seen in Appendix D. The results were compiled, and the weighted average was calculated thusly, with x_1 being the number of responses for “strongly disagree” and a

corresponding weight of 1, x_2 for “disagree” and a corresponding weight of 2, x_3 for “neutral” and a corresponding weight of 3, x_4 for “agree” and a corresponding weight of 4, and x_5 for “strongly agree” and a corresponding weight of 5:

$$\text{Weighted Average} = \frac{x_1 \cdot 1 + x_2 \cdot 2 + x_3 \cdot 3 + x_4 \cdot 4 + x_5 \cdot 5}{x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 + x_5}$$

Responses for “not applicable” were not calculated within the weighted average.

Respondents rated physical/environmental factors in TICC booths (with the exception of 4F VIP Room booths) between 2.91 to 4.26, TICC 4F VIP Room booths between 1.11 and 3.70, NTUH between 1.60 and 3.64, Grand Hotel between 2.38 and 3.62, GIS Convention Center between 2.64 and 3.79, Howard Convention Hall between 2.33 and 3.75, Howard Conference Room between 2.38 and 4.08, and the NCL between 1.88 and 3.57 (See Table 4.5).

Overall, the responding interpreters feel that the 4F VIP Room of the TICC, the Grand Hotel, and the National Central Library provide less than adequate working conditions, while the others are more acceptable. Chapter 5 will discuss the relevance between the findings of field studies, the questionnaire, and interviews.

Table 4.5

Weighted Factors for Physical/Environmental Factors for Specific Booths

Question \ Booth	TICC (except for 4F VIP)	TICC 4F VIP Room	NTUH ICC	Grand Hotel	GIS Convention Center	Howard Convention Hall	Howard Conference Room	National Central Library	AVERAGE
The size of the booth fulfills my needs.	4.14	2.40	3.64	2.38	2.71	3.50	3.00	2.22	3.00
I can easily access the booth.	3.45	3.50	3.09	2.38	3.71	3.17	3.69	3.00	3.25
The sound control booth is not located too far from the interpreters' booth.	2.95	2.33	3.63	3.62	3.64	2.33	4.08	3.38	3.24
I can see the speaker's facial expressions.	3.05	1.78	2.40	2.38	2.73	2.58	2.38	1.88	2.40
I have a good view of the conference hall from the booth.	2.91	1.22	1.60	3.31	2.93	2.58	2.85	2.78	2.52
The size of the front windows fulfills my needs.	3.91	1.11	1.73	3.46	2.64	3.75	2.62	3.22	2.80
The front windows do not cause glare.	3.50	2.57	2.82	3.08	3.14	3.08	2.92	2.33	2.93
Booth temperature is moderate.	3.18	2.60	2.55	2.38	3.36	3.25	3.31	2.67	2.91
Good air quality within the booth.	3.45	2.90	3.00	2.85	3.21	3.42	3.31	2.67	3.10
Good acoustic separation between the booth and the conference hall.	4.23	3.11	3.55	3.38	3.71	3.75	3.62	3.56	3.61
Good acoustic separation between booths.	4.26	3.25	3.33	2.55	3.50	3.25	3.67	3.57	3.42
Good sound transmission quality.	3.86	3.70	3.55	3.46	3.79	3.75	3.69	3.00	3.60
Sufficient lighting within the booth.	3.86	3.70	3.45	3.00	3.57	3.67	3.62	2.89	3.47
Light switches are easily accessible to interpreters.	3.90	3.20	3.00	2.92	3.21	3.67	3.62	3.00	3.32
Work lights are sufficient.	3.95	3.50	3.45	2.67	3.43	3.50	3.38	3.00	3.36
Booth seats are comfortable.	3.45	3.00	3.09	2.69	3.00	3.25	3.31	3.00	3.10
I have sufficient working surface in the booth to read documents.	4.09	2.60	3.27	2.77	2.93	3.25	3.31	2.78	3.12
The height of the working surface provides enough leg room.	3.95	3.50	3.55	3.46	3.36	3.42	3.15	3.25	3.45
The booth provides sufficient shelves or trays for document storage.	3.28	2.50	3.20	3.00	2.85	3.10	2.83	2.50	2.91
AVERAGE	3.65	2.76	3.05	2.93	3.23	3.28	3.28	2.88	3.13

Source: compiled by this study

4.3.4 Further Comments

In the final section of the questionnaire, interpreters were asked to respond, in their own words, regarding other booth improvements needed. The full responses can be seen in Appendix D, Questionnaire (in English) with results. Ten interpreters responded, and their relevant comments can be classified into windows, ventilation, visibility, chairs, sound quality, access, general condition, and additional amenities. The classification and abridged comments are shown in the Table 4.6, below.

Table 4.6

Classification of Interpreters' Comments from Questionnaire

Classification	Comments
Windows	Booth windows should have curtains
Ventilation	The air is either too cold or stuffy Booth temperature should be controllable by interpreters Booths should not be damp or smell moldy
Visibility	Audience in back rows should not block views of interpreters Booths are too far from speaker Cannot see the screen
Chairs	Chairs should not produce sound
Sound quality	Depends on technician's skill
Access	Doors should be controlled by interpreters from the inside, not from the outside Should have easy access to restrooms
General conditions	Booths should be clean, hygienic (dust-free, no bugs)
Additional amenities	Internet access Drinking fountain should be nearby

Source: compiled by this study

4.4 Interviews

This section presents the findings on current booth conditions in Taipei from information obtained in interviews with persons directly and indirectly involved with booths for simultaneous interpretation in Taipei between May and October of 2007. These include six interpreters, two professional corporate organizers, and three conference hall operators (Table 4.7). The interviews were conducted in English or in Mandarin. Real names and personal information remain confidential.

Table 4.7
*List of Interviewees**

Date	Subject	Profession
October 2007	A	Freelance Interpreter
October 2007	B	Freelance Interpreter
October 2007	C	Freelance Interpreter
October 2007	D	Freelance Interpreter
October 2007	E	Freelance Interpreter
October 2007	F	Freelance and In-House Interpreter
August 2007	G	Professional Corporate Organizer
September 2007	H	Professional Corporate Organizer
May 2007	I	Conference Hall Operator
June 2007	J	Conference Hall Operator
June 2007	K	Conference Hall Operator

Source: compiled by this study

*Interviewees are hereafter referred to as: Subjects A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, and K.

At the time of writing, Subject A has had 15 years of experience as a professional conference interpreter and interpretation instructor. Subject B has worked approximately 200 conferences in his three years as a conference interpreter. Subject

C has been a professional interpreter for 10 years, and has also taught interpretation for seven. Subject D has both practiced and taught interpretation for eight years. Subject E has worked as a professional conference interpreter for 12 years. Working in Mandarin, English, Spanish, and French, Subject F has worked as a conference interpreter for over 10 years, and is currently working as an in-house interpreter. Subjects G and H are professional corporate organizers (PCO). Subjects I, J, and K are conference hall operators at the Taipei International Convention Center, Howard International House Taipei, and National Central Library, respectively.

Using the qualitative data produced from these interviews, this section discusses the different factors of booths for simultaneous interpretation that have the potential to affect the performance of interpreters, and in addition, explores the additional information and some of the possible causes of current conditions.

4.4.1 Findings regarding booth factors

This section discusses the different factors that are important to booths for simultaneous interpretation, as reported by the interpreters interviewed.

- Booth size

The interview findings with regard to this factor are as follows:

1. Booth size is a basic requirement for interpretation booths;
2. Most booths are too small;
3. Booths that are too small could adversely affect interpretation quality; and
4. Booths that are too big, though rare, can also pose problems.

Unsurprisingly, Subjects A, B, C, D, and F reported sufficient booth size to be a basic requirement for interpretation booths, which concurs with the findings of the questionnaire. Quite often, booths are found to be too small, sometimes only providing enough space for one interpreter. Examples of overly small booths include those of the Grand Hotel, GIS, School of Continuing Education Chinese Culture University on Chien-Kuo South Road, and the original booths of the Civil Aeronautics Administration, as provided by Subjects A, B, C, and F. Subjects C and D speculate that the designers must have been under the misconception that simultaneous interpreters work alone, thus designing booths large enough only to fit one person. Subject B remarks that the Civil Aeronautics Administration, whose

original booths were also as small as to seat only one person, knocked down the partition walls between booths on the advice of a fellow interpreter so that they are now just barely able to fit two interpreters in a booth, proving that poor conditions can be improved at the urgings of interpreters.

Booths that are too small can be a distraction, as noted by Subjects C and F, and could also adversely affect the quality of interpretation. Both Subjects B and C recommend that booths which are too small should be enlarged, perhaps by taking down the partition wall and combining two booths into one, especially since many conference centers waste space by having three or four booths which are never used at the same time, as noted by Subject B. In addition, Subject F believes that booths should be enlarged to accommodate three interpreters to a booth, which is a standard practice in conferences held in the European Union and United Nations, where several language combinations are used and relay interpretation is needed. Although this practice is rare in Taiwan's current conference interpreting environment, she feels that Taiwan should and will adopt this practice in the future; hence booths should be prepared for this need.

Although booths that are too large are much rarer than booths that are too small, they can also pose a problem, as reported by Subject B. Echoes are created in overly large booths, such as those at National Defense University and Chung-Hua Institute

for Economic Research, where there is no partition separating the latter's interpretation booth from the sound control booth. Thus, while the technicians stay as silent as possible, anything said by the interpreters echo throughout the combined space. This is a distraction for interpreters, although their effect on the audience is not known.

- Access

Some interpreters and one PCO interviewed mentioned the importance of easy access as a basic requirement for interpretation booths, providing examples to illustrate the problems and difficulties caused by poor access.

Examples of booths with poor access include those of the Liberty Square Convention Center, Grand Hotel, and NTUH International Convention Center, as mentioned by Subjects A, B, F, and H. Access is terrible for the Liberty Square Convention Center booths, because interpreters have to climb stairs to get to the booth, which is located in an obscure location that takes a long time to find for first timers. The booths of the Grand Hotel are difficult to access, because first, interpreters have to climb up steep stairs to reach the mezzanine level where the booths are located, then walk down a few steps into the sound control booth, ducking to avoid hitting your head, pass through the sound control booth, and maneuver a narrow hallway to finally get to the booth. Restrooms are difficult to reach, as they are not located on the

same level. On the other hand, Subject A feels that as difficult as the booths are to access, it is a good thing to have different access for interpreters and delegates. It is also difficult for interpreters to reach the booth of NTUH International Convention Center, because they have to cross through the sound control booth and maneuver around a large column in order to get in and out of the booth.

- Visibility

  The interview findings with regard to visibility are as follows:

  1. Most interpreters and both PCOs considered visibility to be a most important factor;
  2. It is important for interpreters to see the speaker and his/her facial expressions and the slides, including the numbers and fine print;
  3. Opinions are split regarding the importance of seeing the audience;
  4. Poor or a lack of visibility can result in lower interpretation quality or physical discomfort for interpreters; and
  5. Monitors are recommended to improve visual access, although a direct view is preferred over a view through the monitor(s).

Visibility is one of the basic requirements for interpretation booths, according to Subjects A, D, E, and F, while Subjects G and H note that poor visibility is one of the biggest complaints the interpreters have. The importance of visibility extends to a

view of the speaker, the speaker's facial expressions, and the slides. In particular, Subject A feels that "interpreters need to see the speaker's facial expressions, although we rarely do in reality, due to the distance and angle of the booth from the podium, and sometimes our view is blocked." The ability to see the slides is also important, since interpreters need to see the details, numbers, and fine print on the slides in order to interpret. However, opinions on the importance of seeing the audience are rather mixed. Subjects B and E consider seeing the audience as very important; Subject E adds that without a view of the audience, interpreters are left in the dark, not knowing the context in which nonverbal messages are conveyed. On the other hand, Subjects A, C, and F feel that a view of the audience's interaction is not important, as most of the time, interpreters can only see the backs of their heads.

Visibility is so important to interpreting, that poor visibility or a lack of it can cause lower interpretation quality or physical discomfort to interpreters. Subject A states, "If I can't see the speaker or if the audience blocks my view, my interpretation quality drops." Subjects B and D note that booths placed at awkward angles to the screen force interpreters to stand or hold strange postures, resulting in back and neck pains. However, one interpreter interviewed disagrees; Subject C feels that if materials and documents are provided beforehand, visibility is not such a big issue. Also, Subject C reports no physical discomfort from having to stand to see the

speaker.

Visual monitors should be added to facilitate the interpretation process for booths with poor visual access to conference proceedings, as recommended by Subjects A, C, and E. Subject G remarked that her PCO company would bring in monitors for visual support in booths with poor visibility. Subject B recommends that all booths be fitted with monitors, stating, “Most booths are located too far from the screen, and there is a lot of information on the slides that we can’t see. Not to mention, oftentimes, speakers finish their PowerPoint presentations at the last minute, and not even the conference organizers have them, to say nothing of interpreters. So it’s crucial for interpreters to have a good view of the slides, preferably by a monitor. Plus, monitors go a long way toward giving interpreters peace of mind.” Subject D feels that although monitors could help alleviate the poor existing conditions, the degree to which they may help depends largely on the cameraman, who although is in all likelihood a professional, nevertheless does not understand what interpreters needs to see and cannot anticipate interpreters’ needs.

Examples of booths with poor visibility include the Taipei County Government Conference Room booths, which have no direct view of the hall; the TICC Plenary Hall booths, which are located too steeply above the hall to provide a good viewing angle; and the Howard International House Taipei Conference Room booths, whose

view is often blocked by the last rows of the audience, as provided by Subject A. Examples given of halls with good visibility include Room 102 and 401 of the TICC, as given by Subjects B and F.

- Windows

Interviewees' comments regarding booth windows can be summarized as follows:

1. Interpreters should be able to see while comfortably seated;
2. Windows should not produce glare, should be untinted, and clean enough to see out of; and
3. Side windows are important during relay interpretation.

Windows are an essential and basic requirement to interpretation booths, according to Subjects A, B, and C. Subject B noted that it was most important that windows conform to requirements, stating that windows should allow interpreters not only to see, but to see comfortably. In addition, Subject B also noted that the size of the window did not matter as much as its height, or placement. The height of the table, chairs, and working surface should allow the interpreter to see while comfortably seated, without contorting into strange positions, according to both Subjects A and B. The booths of GIS and Howard Conference Room are examples of windows set too high for interpreters to see out of. In addition, the placement of the windows in

conjunction with the ceiling structure cause the interpreter's view of the projection screen to be cut off at the top, which is usually where the title and most important information is located. Subject H added that although new and often frequented, the National Taiwan University International Convention Center is fitted with booth windows that are much too high. Another example is the Liberty Square Convention Center booth, which is perfectly located just above the hall, if only there were windows to see out of!

The main function of booth windows is to allow interpreters to see conference proceedings; this function would be greatly hampered if the interpreters are confronted with glare, tinted glass, or unclean windows, as noted by Subjects A, B, and C. An example of glare-producing windows is the booths of TICC; Subject A remarks that "Most of the time, I'm interpreting while staring at a reflection of my own face. It's very distracting, especially when I'm trying to read what's on the screen." Booth windows should be untinted, according to both ISO 2603 and Subject B. Booths that use tinted windows, such as those in the Civil Aeronautics Administration, National Defense University, and National Central Library, make it difficult for interpreters to see out of. Subject C emphasizes that windows have to clean enough to see out of. Subject B recalls an incident, in which one of the TICC booths was covered with dust, even the windows. He comments, "It is really hard to

see anything when there is a layer of dust covering the window."

Side windows are considered to be an important factor, especially during relay interpretation when many languages are used and interpreters are not sure which channels to use, according to Subjects B and F, although Subject C deems it unnecessary to see other interpreters. Subject F adds that side windows should not be overly large, since the habits and behavior of interpreters in other booths may pose as a distraction during the interpretation process.

Recommendations include enlarging overly small windows and replacing tinted windows with untinted glass, as offered by Subjects A and B. In addition, Subject B recommended that booths which can be viewed by audience members passing by, such as those of Howard Conference Room and GIS, be fitted with window curtains, so that interpreters may rest during the breaks.

- Ventilation and Air Quality

  The interview findings with regard to this factor are as follows:

  1. Ventilation is one of the most important booth factors;
  2. Lack of oxygen and excess CO2 levels can have adverse effect on interpretation quality; and
  3. Extreme booth temperatures and odors can be a source of discomfort and distraction.

The importance of ventilation in booths was noted by Subjects A, B, D, E, F, and H; Subjects A and D go as far as to rate it as the most important requirement. This is unsurprising, since interpreters have to sit in booths for six to eight hours a day, and the effects of poor ventilation are especially noticeable in late afternoon, after a whole day in the booth. Subject A remarks that “An interpreter can’t function with bad ventilation. You can’t think. The oxygen levels fall and your brain turns to mush.” Subject F concurs with Subject A, saying that she can’t think with low oxygen levels. Subject D mentions that the buildup of carbon dioxide has a distinct smell, and some interpreters leave the booth door open, sacrificing the privacy and quiet of the booth for some fresh air.

Booths temperature is also important, according to Subjects A, B, E, F, and G. Booths should be neither too cold nor too hot, and booth temperature should be individually regulated by the interpreters, remarked Subject B. Booths which are too cold, such as the ones at the Grand Hotel and TICC, may cause the interpreters’ voice to shiver or runny noses, according to Subjects A and B. Subjects A, E, and F comment that they often have to bring extra clothing to prepare for extreme temperatures. Booths which are too hot cause interpreters to sweat, smell, and generally feel uncomfortable, since it is a small enclosed space shared by two people, as mentioned by Subjects A, B, and D. One interesting example is the booths of

National Central Library, which have one temperature regulator per two booths. Subject B remarks that while working, the booth in which he and his partner were working in remained hot and stuffy no matter what they did, while the other empty booth became freezing cold.

Booth odors are also a source of discomfort and distraction. The booths of GIS were noted as an example by Subject A, who stated that “It stinks in there, it smells like the bathroom, like the booth was built above the septic tanks. Something like that would really distract me from my work.” Subject B noted that when he was working at NCL, the smell of cigarette smoke wafted through the ventilation shaft and into the booth, discomforting him and his partner.

Interviewees suggest that improvements should be made with regard to ventilation and booth temperature to create a more pleasant working environment; Subjects A and B recommend at least the use of air purifiers. Subject A also commented that she uses aromatherapy to make a more comfortable working environment, but adds that this is also dependent on the partner’s preference and whether they are allergic to certain scents. Subject D remarks that some interpreters ask that a fan be brought in to improve air flow; however, she feels that fans are too noisy and can be distracting. Subject E feels that the only thing interpreters can do is to spread the word about the extreme temperatures in certain booths and prepare

themselves by bringing extra clothing.

- Acoustics

Interviewees' comments regarding booth acoustics can be summarized as follows:

1. Acoustics is one of the most important booth factors;
2. Sound transmission is the main factor which may negatively affect interpretation quality; and
3. Poor soundproofing or acoustic separation can also adversely affect interpretation quality.

Acoustics is one of, if not the most important factor in a booth, as remarked on by Subject D; however, it is also often overlooked since it seems so basic a requirement, accounting for two of the three main requirements of ISO 2603. According to both Subjects G and H, it is one of the primary concerns for PCO companies and their clients when choosing whether to use fixed or mobile booths.

The quality of sound transmission was given as the most important factor which may negatively affect interpretation quality by Subjects C, D, and E, which concurs with the results of the questionnaire. As Subject D succinctly puts it, "If I can't hear, I can't interpret properly." According to Subject A, the sound transmission quality of booths in the TICC is largely dependent on the technician's ability; when a technician

of insufficient skills is assigned, the interpreter is often left hearing a lot of static in the headsets, or the sound is not loud enough, even when the volume is turned all the way up.

Poor acoustic separation and background noise are also possible factors affecting interpretation quality, as cited by Subjects A, F, and H. Examples of booths with poor or nonexistent acoustic separation include the Grand Hotel and the National Taiwan University of Arts, the latter being not separate from the sound control booth, meaning that interpreters are distracted by the sounds and movements of the technicians.

- Lighting

The interview findings pertaining to this factor are as follows:

1. Independent booth lighting is important;
2. Work lights, though important, can cause glare on booth windows; and
3. Dimmer switches should be added to lights.

Unsurprisingly, Subjects A, E, F, and H noted that independent lighting is one of the basic requirements for booths, especially since the conference hall lights often have to be dimmed for slides.

Work lights are essential for interpreters to read documents while working; Subject E notes that for booths with no independent lighting, she usually requests that

work lights be brought into the booth. However, work lights can also be a significant source of glare, as commented by Subject B, causing the interpreters to either “bend the lights really close to the table to prevent glare, or work in the dark.” Subject D mentioned that at times, her partner would request that she turn her light off or position it really close to the table. Hence, Subject B recommends that work lights should be adjustable in all directions and be aimed wherever the interpreter chooses, in order to avoid glare.

Dimmer switches should be added to lights, as recommended by Subject B, since different interpreters or conferences call for varying degrees of illumination. Unfortunately, according to Subject B, no booths in Taipei are fitted with dimmer switches, which is something that should be easily improved.

- Working Space and Seating

  Interviewees’ comments with regard to working space and seating are as follows:

  1. Sufficient working space is important;
  2. Chairs should be comfortable and adjustable; and
  3. The height of tables and chairs should allow interpreters to see out of the booth window.

Sufficient working space is one of the concerns for interpreters, as mentioned by Subjects B, C, and F. Subject F noted that the working surface must be uncluttered

and large enough to read documents. She also mentioned that the table should be free of any drawers beneath, as they may hamper the interpreters' leg room.

Booth chairs should also be comfortable and adjustable, according to Subjects B, C, and F. One example of poor seating is the chairs in TICC, which have some kind of stiff bar on the edge of the seat, forcing the interpreters' bottoms to sink in the seat while the knees are forced up by the bar, creating an uncomfortable sitting position. Subject B also commented that poor tables and chairs, such as those in the TICC Plenary Hall, can cause physical discomfort, such as pains and cramps.

The height of tables and chairs, in conjunction with the height of the window, can sometimes make it difficult for interpreters to see out the window, as commented on by Subjects A and B. Subject F also remarked upon the height of the working surface, stating that it should provide sufficient room for interpreters who are pregnant to sit comfortably. In addition, they suggested that tables and chairs, being furniture and not part of the architectural structure, should be easily replaced to make a more comfortable environment.

- Additional Comments

In addition to questions provided by this study, the interviewees offered the following comments:

1. Booth Cleanliness

Regarding the general condition of booths, Subjects B and E commented that conference hall operators should ensure that booths are regularly cleaned and maintained. Booths which use sound-proofing materials on walls need to be aired on a regular basis, since they tend to mold if left in a humid environment for long periods. Subject B also recalls an occasion on which he walked into a booth to find a layer of dust covering everything, including the window. Food and beverage containers have been discovered in drawers beneath the working surface in booths, sitting there for unknown periods of time. Subject F felt that interpretation booths should not be used as storage rooms, saying that it both distracted her and affected her mood to work in a space where equipment was piled up.

2. Internet Access

Subjects B, C, and D remarked upon interpreters' common use of laptop computers within the booth. Subject C felt that booths should provide a power source to plug in laptops. Subjects B and C think all booths should have internet access, in order to research materials. Subject B commented that some venues have wireless access; however, since an account needs to be purchased in order to gain access, he believes that landlines are more convenient and preferable.

3. Water

Subjects B, D, and F noted interpreters' need for water. Subject F even listed

water as one of the basic requirements of a booth. Subject D remarked that either bottled water or a cup holder is fine, but not water in a glass, as those are easily knocked over when interpreters are flipping through documents or reaching for the console. Subject B suggested the addition of drinking fountains, which should be located in the hallway outside the booths, as interpreters require large amounts of water during the course of a conference.

4. Signage

Subject F, the only one of the interpreters interviewed who worked in languages other than just Mandarin and English, remarked upon a need for signage outside booth doors to indicate assigned languages and channels. To her, interpreters need to know which booth to enter, and these signs were just as important as the signs indicating men's and women's restrooms. In addition, she suggested the need for signs outside interpretation booths reminding passer-bys to be quiet, as booth doors are often not well soundproofed.

4.4.2 Additional Findings

This section presents additional findings offered by interpreters, PCOs, and conference hall operators regarding issues peripherally related to booths.

1. Number of Conference Centers in Taipei

The general consensus among interpreters and professional corporate organizers

is that the venues chosen for this study (TICC, NTUH International Convention Center, Grand Hotel, GIS, Howard International House Taipei, and NCL) are the most frequented in Taipei. In addition to the venues observed for this study, Subjects A through H also noted fixed booths for simultaneous interpretation in National Taiwan Science Education Center, Foreign Service Institute, Taipei Public Library, Taipei County Library, Taiwan Forestry Research Institute, Taiwan Academy of Banking and Finance, Liberty Square Convention Center, Civil Aeronautics Administration, Taipei County Government, National Defense University, National Institute for Compilation and Translation, and many university conference halls, such as National Taiwan Normal University, NTNU Gongguan Branch, National Chengchi University's Center for Public & Business Administration Education, Fu Jen Catholic University's Divine Word Academic Highrise, National Taiwan University of Arts, and Chinese Culture University.

2. Number of Conferences per Year and Number of Times SI Booths Were Used

In 2006, a total of 703 conferences were held at the Taipei International Convention Center, 21 of which were international conferences. However, there was no data as to how many used conference/simultaneous interpretation, or how often the interpretation booths were used.

The number of conferences the Howard International House Taipei has hosted in

one year and the number of times which booths for simultaneous interpretation were used could not be determined. However, according to Subject J's estimate, only approximately 30-40% of all international conferences at Howard International House Taipei used simultaneous interpretation.

The National Central Library hosted 77 conferences in 2006, only 4 of which used interpretation booths. As of June 2007, 23 conferences were held this year, 8 of which used interpretation booths.

One PCO interviewed handles approximately 1,000 conferences per year, 600 to 700 of which use interpretation. Of these conferences, most use simultaneous and not consecutive interpretation.

The other PCO interviewed organizes approximately 100 conferences a year. However, he mentioned that the number of conferences may vary, since different institutions have different definitions of "international conference." According to the definition by the Taiwan Convention & Exhibition Association as stated on the Meetings Exhibitions Events Travel Taiwan website, an international conference must have delegates from more than five countries, over 100 participants, and whose foreign participants must account for at least 40% of total participants or have at least 80 foreign participants. The TICC defines "international conference" by three criteria set by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA): (a) the

conference has to have at least 50 participants, (b) there must be at least three participating countries, and (c) the conference has to be held on a rotating basis.

3. Who Interpreters Voice Their Comments or Complaints to

All interpreters interviewed responded that, when faced with poorly designed booths, they did indeed give voice to their comments or complaints. Subject A mentioned interpreters usually do not have any direct access to conference hall operators, so she usually shares her thoughts with the agents, or PCOs, who will hopefully convey the comments to the conference organizer. Subjects B, C, and E directly tell the conference organizer, whose only recourse is to use a different venue next time. Sometimes, the on-site staff or technician is contacted, as Subjects B, E, and F mention, either directly by the interpreter or indirectly through the conference organizer; however, rarely is anyone able to respond and make changes to the environment of the fixed booth.

4.5 Summary

This study investigated the current conditions of select venues and their conformance or nonconformance with ISO 2603 through field studies, the importance of various factors and the degree to which needs were met in select booths as rated by interpreters in the survey questionnaire, and the views of interpreters, professional

corporate organizers, and conference hall operators towards booths for simultaneous interpretation through interviews.

Nine booths were studied at six convention centers, the selection of which was chosen after initial interviews with PCOs and later verified by interpreters as being the most frequented venues in Taipei. Booth factors from ten categories were observed or measured and compared against the standards set out in ISO 2603. None of the booths observed fully conformed to ISO 2603 standards. Common points of nonconformance include the booth being placed too far or at too steep an angle from the podium, lack of indication of assigned languages and channels near the doors, insufficient booth size, poor visibility, insufficient window size and lack of side windows, lack of independent temperature regulator within the booth, lack of dimmer switches for lighting, insufficient working surface, and uncomfortable seating.

The findings from the survey questionnaire show that interpreters consider issues of sound transmission quality, acoustic separation, certain aspects of visibility, windows, lighting, working surface, seating, silence of doors, and booth size to be quite important. In terms of the physical/environmental factors for specific booths, respondents feel that some of the needs, such as visibility and window size, were not fulfilled by certain booths.

Through interviews, this study found that booth size, visibility, windows, and

ventilation are of great importance to interpreters, and poor design with regard to the factors can cause discomfort or distraction, and may adversely affect the quality of interpretation. Acoustics, although not a focus of this study, is also a concern for interpreters, and one of the primary considerations for PCO companies and conference organizers in selecting venues. Interpreters also felt that certain improvements, including dimmer switches for lights and comfortable chairs and tables could be added easily, along with other amenities, such as window curtains, power outlets and internet access, and drinking fountains.

The following chapter discusses these findings and their implications in further detail.