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A Trainer's Guide

Robin Setton
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Volume 121

Conference Interpreting. A Trainer's Guide
by Robin Setton and Andrew Dawrant

Conference Interpreting

A Trainer's Guide

Robin Setton
Andrew Dawrant

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Robin Setton has worked as a conference interpreter since 1979 (AIIC member since 1983), both freelance and on the staff of an international organisation. He has been an interpreter trainer and course leader in both Europe and Asia, and has published articles and books on cognitive, linguistic and cultural aspects of interpreting, including a monograph (*Simultaneous Interpretation: A cognitive-pragmatic analysis*, Benjamins, 1999). He holds a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics and separate postgraduate degrees in Conference Interpretation, Translation and Chinese Studies, and is currently based in France.

Andrew C. Dawrant 杜蘊德 is a conference interpreter, diplomatic interpreter and consultant. A member of AIIC since 1999, he has interpreted for G20 and bilateral summits. He has fifteen years of experience training professional conference interpreters in China, including eight years as head of programme. He holds an MA in Translation Studies and Prof Dip (Hons) in Conference Interpreting. He lives in Shanghai with his wife and four children.

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Abbreviations

AIIC	Association internationale des interprètes de conférence
AOUSC	Administrative Office of the United States Courts
ASTM	ASTM (US-based standards organization)
CA	continuous assessment
CC	Complete Course (Vol. 1 of this set)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CITP	conference interpreter training programme
CRT	criterion-referenced testing
ELF	English as *lingua franca*
EMCI	European Masters in Conference Interpreting
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EVS	ear-voice span ('lag' in SI)
FCICE	Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination (US)
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGO	Inter-governmental organization
ILR	Interagency Language Roundtable
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	international organization
IRR	inter-rater reliability
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITT	Interpretive Theory of Translation (*théorie du sens*)
KSA	knowledge, skills and abilities
L(K)E	Language (and Knowledge) Enhancement
LKSP	Language, Knowledge, Skills, Professionalism
LSP	Language for Special Purposes
LTM	long-term memory
NGO	non-governmental organization
NRT	norm-referenced testing
PECI	Professional Examination in Conference Interpreting
PSI	Public-Service Interpreting
RT	Relevance Theory
S1, S2	Semester 1, Semester 2

SCL	student-centred learning
SDI	Speech Difficulty Index
SI	simultaneous interpretation
SI-text	simultaneous interpretation with text
SL	source language
SLE	Second Language Enhancement
SLI	sign-language interpreting
spm	syllables per minute
SRT	standards-referenced testing
ST	sight translation
T & I	translation and interpreting
TA	teaching assistant
TG	Trainer's Guide (Vol. 2 of this set)
TL	target language
UN	United Nations
WM	working memory
wpm	words per minute
Y1,Y2	Year 1, Year 2

General introduction

Interpreting is an attractive profession for people of a curious, independent cast of mind. Bridging cultures and communities, interpreters are rewarded with a rich and varied experience of humanity in its diversity. Unlike the translator of written text, the interpreter's work is fleeting; yet beyond the thrill of mediating live communication, it can also be deeply gratifying when it is done well, leaving a sense of having truly brought people together across cultures. This takes a complex mix of ingredients – language, analysis, empathy, knowledge and technical skills – that for best results should be stirred into expertise by teachers and students working together: interpreters are both born *and* made.

The two volumes in this set are not symmetrical (one for students, one for trainers), nor is the first volume intended for self-study: trying to go through the exercises alone without the guidance of fully-qualified instructors will make no sense and will not take the student anywhere near the level of expertise envisaged for the programme.

Conference interpreting is a social, interactive, contextualized activity performed in very specific conditions and environments. The skillset and judgment required cannot really be mastered alone, nor even by a transfer of wisdom from master to apprentice: it requires a partnership in which instructor and student each have their role. Instructors create realistic and relevant conditions – speeches, exercises, simulated contexts – in which students learn through practice, with detailed feedback and guidance, plus additional support from theory, language and knowledge enhancement, voice training and so on, to be able to meet the needs of real users in real conferences. To make that necessary symbiotic relationship clear, the first volume – the Complete Course (CC) – deliberately intertwines and alternates between the student's and teacher's roles as we move through the stages in learning. The process is centred on the student, who should also benefit from understanding the instructor's role. As for instructors, extensive additional guidance is provided in a separate volume (the Trainer's Guide [TG]), but it will be clear from TG-2[1] that there is a lot more to their role than merely following the exercises or methodological suggestions that any textbook, however detailed, may provide.

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1. Chapters and sections in either of the two books are cross-referenced with the prefixes CC- (for the Complete Course) or TG- (for the Trainer's Guide).

The level of detail we offer in our recommendations for exercises, class procedure, feedback, practice or testing may give the impression of an over-'prescriptive' approach to interpreter training. Certainly we have written these books because we believe, on the basis of our experience, research and appreciation of the skills required, and of the reality of the job, that some methods of training are better than others, and that some structure, a reasoned progression and explicit guidance (and some key supporting components, like language and knowledge enhancement) make for better results. At the same time, training must always be student-focused and needs-based; so these recommendations, however strongly argued for, must necessarily remain suggestions that instructors and course designers will adapt to their specific needs, and enrich with their own ideas, practice and methodology.

The focus is on conference interpreting, but the principles and many of the exercises, particularly in the early chapters, are relevant to interpreting in all modes and settings. Today there is a steady demand[2] – and growing, especially in emerging markets – not only for SI but also for reliable consecutive interpreting for the thousands of meetings held every day in locations where no SI equipment is available.

Throughout both books we have sought to support our training proposals with both theory, from cognitive science or expertise research, and constant reference to real-world practice. Trainers and other seasoned professionals will naturally find much that is familiar, or even obvious and elementary, but perhaps also some new ideas. Research and ongoing debate on some key points are flagged and briefly discussed as of the Complete Course, with cross-references to the Trainer's Guide (TG) for more in-depth treatment. Conversely, CC-references in the Trainer's Guide point the reader to the relevant stage or exercise in the Complete Course.

The indexes and tables of contents should also help readers to find specific points of interest, and more systematically, exercises, examples or case studies for each stage in the progression, as well as complete (mini-)syllabi for the various complementary modules: language and knowledge enhancement (CC/TG-7), the use of theory both *for* training (TG-3) and *in* training (TG-12), professionalism (CC/TG-10), an introduction to the organization of the profession (CC-11), lifelong and teacher training (TG-14), plans for postgraduate courses (MA and PhD, TG-12), and last but not least, blueprints for exams (CC-3/TG-4 for admission, TG-3.4 for in-course testing, TG-11 for the final diploma). Course leaders and instructors will find the principles of course design and pedagogy summarized in TG-2 and TG-3, with additional guidance in TG-13 on negotiating the challenges of creating and running a programme in a host institution.

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2.   As reflected in the number of functioning schools: in 2014, AIIC recognized 84 interpreting schools meeting its basic criteria – i.e. turning out reliable professional conference interpreters – in 44 countries.

In the core teaching chapters (CC-4/TG-5 to CC/TG-10), new techniques and exercises are illustrated with worked examples in various language pairs, with English as a common thread, and with graphic process diagrams, boxes highlighting key techniques or controversial issues, some discussion of the learning and teaching challenges of the new skill, and (especially in TG) a review of relevant literature. Detailed guidelines on how to study and practise independently or in groups outside class – an indispensable part of the training – are provided to students in an Appendix to CC-5.

We hope that researchers, instructors and students will all find these volumes a rich but also an original resource: while the programme we describe builds on the 'standard model' of training that has successfully turned out generations of professionals, we also propose some adaptations and improvements to meet the changing profile of conference interpreting.

Training interpreters: tradition and innovation

In an age where 'evidence-based' is a buzzword, we need to explain the basis for our recommendations. Interpreting is a complex activity, and interpreter training still more so. As is often repeated in the literature, comparative empirical evaluation of the effectiveness of different training methods is complicated by practical difficulties such as tiny samples, high individual variability and the elusive and ephemeral nature of live performance data, not to mention the lack of statistics on student outcomes. We must therefore still rely largely on experience,[3] supplemented with what we know from research on language, cognition, human communication, education or sociology.

Despite the lack of published data, we do know that since the 1950s and 1960s a few well-known ('leading') schools have been largely successful in training operational conference interpreters for work at the highest levels, applying a 'standard' apprenticeship-based training model – also promoted by the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC[4]) – of which one version has been

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3.   In the authors' case, a combined total of nearly sixty years as interpreters and as trainers, administrators and researchers in various programmes in Europe and Asia. Many exercises and teaching methods were developed, piloted or implemented in conference interpreting programmes in Taipei in the 1990s (GITIS, Fujen University), in Beijing in the early 2000s (BFSU), then in Shanghai, as taught from 2003–2011 (SISU-GIIT), as well as Geneva (FTI, formerly ETI) and Paris (ESIT and ISIT).

4.   International Association of Conference Interpreters, known by its French acronym 'AIIC': http://aiic.net. (See CC-2, Appendix.)

described in the best-known manual published to date (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989/2002).[5]

Our own scheme is also in line with AIIC recommendations, but aims to 'stand on the shoulders' of past generations of trainers to update and adapt the standard paradigm to the realities of interpreting in the 21st century, including its emerging markets. In most respects we have followed established practice, in some ways even 'more so', but with some adjustments and innovations, notably in the areas of teaching style, assessment and testing, and support with language and knowledge enhancement, in pursuit of fairer yet more efficient and realistic interpreter training.

Progression and incremental realism

One of the cornerstones of the standard training model has been a progressive and constructive curriculum that takes students from exercises in active listening and analysis, then through consecutive interpreting with notes, and some sight translation, before moving on to SI, learning each new skill first into the native (A) language and only then into the second (learned, 'B') language.

We still find this progressive approach, as intuitively followed by early trainers, to be pedagogically highly persuasive. Our readings in cognitive science suggest that it largely reflects the incremental challenges of these tasks – for example, practising interpreting a speech or text in two stages, as in consecutive and sight translation, for at least a while before trying to do everything simultaneously, as in SI – and we have therefore articulated it in still more detail than in past training blueprints, identifying four stages in the mastery of each skill – Initiation (Discovery), Coordination, Experimentation (reflecting individual student variability) and Consolidation – with some limited flexibility allowed for students advancing at different speeds (see TG-3 for discussion and rationale).

Authenticity of tasks and materials is another traditional concern. To reconcile this with progression in difficulty and keep things fun and stimulating, we apply a principle of **incremental realism**: instead of doing artificial drills that are theorized to be cognitive components of the full interpreting task – an idea that some have toyed with in the training debate – we ensure that each exercise from the very start contains something of the communicative goal that is the essence of interpreting, gradually adding new challenges in terms of (i) the communicative characteristics of the input (from natural to formal, recited speech, for example), (ii) the techniques

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5.   The Ecole supérieure d'interprétation et de traduction (ESIT) in Paris is the home of the 'theory of sense' or 'interpretive theory of translation' (ITT), which we refer to at several points throughout these books.

required to deal with them, and (iii) the expectations for the quality and clarity of the product. Performance objectives are spelled out at each stage. In contrast to language learning, this means that input materials do not necessarily progress linearly in terms of 'linguistic' difficulty or subject matter, but are chosen to encourage and develop a particular type of cognitive processing at each stage. A tentative typology of speech difficulty on four parameters, with indications of appropriate speech and text types for each stage, is provided in an Appendix to TG-2.

We adopt a 'components' approach mainly at a descriptive level, in the postulate that overall interpreting expertise can be seen as a successful integration of four competencies – Language, Knowledge, Skills and Professionalism ('LKSP', CC-2.4). Each is either enhanced (L, K) or acquired through the course (S, P), and thereafter consolidated through life, but these four must be fully integrated to achieve overall, operational interpreting expertise that will continue to mature with practice. Some components – such as language proficiency, specific domain knowledge, or the more mechanical aspects of note-taking – can be focused on separately to some extent, but these are the exceptions to the general rule of incremental realism.

Full realism: going the last mile

Our second extension of the Standard Model involves a commitment to *full* realism, aiming to bring students in contact with all the realities of professional interpreting, including several weeks of 'last-mile' training to deal with the most challenging conditions that graduates will face on today's market: fast, dense, formal and recited input, foreign accents and presentations that mix speech, text and slides (CC/TG-9).

Unfortunately, due to the pressures of time, money and the need for many speakers to use non-native languages, we don't always have the luxury of interpreting for people expressing themselves transparently and clearly in live, interactive discussion, but are often faced with speech that is rushed, informationally dense (read out from text), or otherwise opaque, stilted or uncommunicative. As interpreters have become increasingly taken for granted and invisible over the years (moving out of the meeting room to the SI booth and now to remote interpreting), it has become virtually impossible to refuse such tasks, even on quality assurance grounds.

While it remains true that coherent and meaningful interpretation is *never* possible without focusing primarily on the sense, conference interpreters must be fully prepared to deal with speeches that are either delivered so fast that the message can only be rendered comprehensibly by (meaning-preserving) compression, and/or are replete with formulas and jargon for which set equivalents are expected, or numbers and names to be accurately reproduced (i.e. a high 'transcoding' factor); or are produced from written text whose linguistic structure requires

complete reformulation to be delivered in comfortable, idiomatic form to an audience listening in another language.

To respond to these challenges, interpreters must complement their basic listening, analysing and speaking abilities with a suite of additional competencies: linguistic *readiness*, or the instant availability of ready phrases, both to keep up and because set equivalents are often expected; the ability to stay close to the speaker in SI *temporally,* not to overload short-term memory, but not *linguistically,* to stay idiomatic or even comprehensible, especially from written text – in contrast to the flexible lag and spontaneous formulation that is possible when following a natural, spontaneous exchange; and (c) the ability to compress the text while preserving meaning, often the only way of coping with very fast speeches.

In our pedagogy, two strands correspond to these contrasting techniques as of the first steps in SI training. Alongside spontaneous and natural speeches that allow for a more elastic lag and freedom of style, more or less static or drip-fed text-based exercises are introduced towards the end of the first year (CC-7) alongside freer sight translation, leading into gradually accelerating 'chunking-and-joining' in SI-Initiation (CC/TG-8.2), preparing for the relatively rigid and formal material of institutional discourse and presentations from text (SI-Consolidation and Reality).

Finally, since *all* these techniques are vastly facilitated by familiarity with the subject matter (and sometimes impossible without it), we prescribe intensive study and practice on materials typical of the main target market(s) as soon as basic SI technique is in place (CC/TG-8.5), along with training in document management and conference preparation.

'Bi-active' SI

Another update is the **mainstreaming of 'bi-active' simultaneous interpreting**, i.e. into the B as well as the A language, long since standard in emerging markets, to meet the increasing demand for this capability worldwide (overwhelmingly with English B). SI into a non-native language is obviously more challenging cognitively and linguistically. To preserve the pedagogical progression (B into A before A into B), but still provide sufficient hours of training and practice into B, two adjustments to the standard curriculum are needed: extra class hours for into-B training, and significantly more language enhancement (LE) support than is traditionally provided in leading schools, both in dedicated LE classes and in classroom feedback into B. CC-7 describes exercises and guidelines for Language Enhancement, both within the course and for independent study and practice, and additional knowledge modules required for key domains in conference interpreting (Law, Economics, Parliamentary Procedure etc.) or other specializations.

Teaching professionalism

Another component of training that needs reinforcing is Professionalism, with three interacting facets – craft, ethics and service – that interact to ensure trust and quality in the interpreter-client relationship (CC-10). To take an obvious example, the near-impossible conditions described above are best *mitigated* or pre-empted in advance (as with climate change), to avoid having to *adapt* to them, by communicating better with our clients upstream. With growing pressure on young beginners to accept makeshift or unreasonable terms and conditions, students need a fuller and more detailed introduction to proper working conditions, ethics, role norms and conventions, dealing with (and educating) clients, and the organization of the profession, than has traditionally been provided in schools. This preparation should be consolidated in practice visits to organizations with work in 'dumb booths', and followed up after graduation with support and mentoring.

Under the general heading of professional ethics, norms relating to the *interpreter's role* are known to vary widely in the more diverse and less professionalized settings of community interpreting. However, we have found that such norms vary even among conference interpreters on different markets. The conference interpreting skillset – full consecutive and SI – has long been in demand well beyond the multilateral intergovernmental organizations, notably in settings like bilateral diplomacy and high-stakes business, where the full neutrality of the interpreter (and some more secondary conventions and conditions) is often neither expected nor taken for granted.

In short, while there are no defensible grounds for diluting the oath of *confidentiality*, and no revolutionary leap in human cognition has occurred to change the optimal and minimal *conditions* for quality interpreting, principles like neutrality, loyalty and fidelity are not as clear-cut nor as easy to apply in practice as these iconic words suggest, and need to be better understood in the light of the diversity of practice if we are to preserve their ethical core in the real modern world. After observing some clear differences of perspective between cultures and markets, we have therefore had to settle for presenting both sides of an apparent divergence in the contemporary self-image of the profession – frankly unresolved here – between those who believe that we should always strive towards and never relinquish interpreter neutrality as a goal, and those who hold that (full) neutrality is either not possible or cannot be required of interpreters in some settings and situations (CC/TG-10.3).

In terms of 'business/service' professionalism, practical information that future graduates will need about market organization, getting work and key relationships as they embark on their career (CC-11) is the substance of a final-semester 'Introduction to Professional Practice' module.

Acknowledgements

These books have drawn on a rich trove of work by many authors in the research community, and on the help of numerous colleagues. We have benefited in particular from existing works on training, including Danica Seleskovitch and Marianne Lederer's *Pédagogie raisonnée de l'interprétation* (1989/2002), Daniel Gile's *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training* (1995/2009), Roderick Jones' *Conference Interpreting Explained* (1998); Andrew Gillies' *Conference Interpreting: A Student's Practice Book* (2013); Jean-François Rozan's *La prise de notes en interprétation consecutive* (1956), and Laura Myers' (1976) and Andrew Gillies' (2005) introductions to consecutive note-taking; and for court interpreting, González, Vásquez and Mikkelsen's *Fundamentals of Court Interpretation* (1991/2012). For a general overview of the field (including community interpreting), and their work as editors of the journal *Interpreting* and co-authors of *The Interpreting Studies Reader* we are indebted to Franz Pöchhacker (*Introducing Interpreting Studies*, 2004), and – also for her legendary warmth and support – the late Miriam Shlesinger.

Several recent publications on conference interpreting or interpreter training have been referenced only briefly, having emerged too recently to be fully addressed in this book. For additional background and information, including abundant online references and resources, readers are referred to the Further reading sections in each chapter, and to the following excellent general reference works in the field:

Baker, Mona and Gabriela Saldanha (eds.). 1998/2009. *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203359792

Chapelle, Carol (ed.). 2013. *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* (10 Vols). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Gambier, Yves and van Doorselaer (eds.). 2011-2013. *Benjamins Handbook of Translation Studies* (4 Vols). Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi:10.1075/hts.1

Malmkjær, Kirsten and Kevin Windle (eds.). 2011. *Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199239306.001.0001

Millán-Varela, Carmen and Francesca Bartrina (eds.). 2012. *Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.

Mikkelson, Holly and Renée Jourdenais (eds). 2015. *Handbook of Interpreting*. London: Routledge.

Pöchhacker, Franz and Nadja Grbić (eds.). 2015. *Encyclopedia of Interpreting Studies*. London: Routledge.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks go to all the colleagues, students and friends – too numerous to mention at this point – who have helped us in this work; to the anonymous reviewers for their thorough and helpful suggestions and comments (one in particular, who read two successive versions); and of course, to our families for their unflagging patience and support.

Introduction to the Trainer's Guide

This volume is intended as a companion to *Conference Interpreting: a Complete Course* (BTL 120) and is predominantly aimed at instructors but also course designers and leaders, as well as researchers. While seasoned trainers will understand the background to what is discussed in each chapter, much of the content refers specifically to exercises and activities described in the Complete Course (CC) and is thus cross-referenced throughout to the relevant CC chapters and sections.

We begin this volume with an overview in two chapters of optimal (in our opinion) teaching methods and arrangements, starting in TG-2 with the attributes of a good instructor. One such attribute is the ability to put oneself in the novice's place, often a challenge for the seasoned professional trainer. Student morale is briefly discussed as a key factor in successful outcomes, followed by sections on class design and classroom practice.

One complaint sometimes voiced by interpreting students over the years is that they do not get enough practical guidance, but mostly receive just very generic, holistic feedback on their performances, with an accompanying pep-talk, leaving it to them to intuit how to actually do the job better. This is related to a somewhat harsh criticism that has been levelled at the 'best' interpreter training schools by sceptics who suggest that such schools do not actually teach but just select the best 'naturals' who would have succeeded anyway, so that maintaining very strict admission standards is all they need to do to keep up their reputation for producing the best graduates.

How can we improve the 'value-added' of interpreter training (real and perceived)? While it is often hard to find the balance in teaching between confident prescription and modest suggestion, our experience is that we can put enough trust in students' strong motivation to justify a more systematic, hands-on and explicit pedagogy, rather than the coy or distant style sometimes traditionally adopted – for example, confined to letting slip a few clues about a note-taking method, or abstaining from any linguistic suggestions. Students with real aptitude for interpreting are highly individual and will adapt any techniques we offer them to their own personalities and knowledge bases.

In Consecutive, this means giving a more explicit presentation of the note-taking method; in SI, a more explicit focus on details of local SI technique; and in terms of the necessary domain knowledge, once skills are in place, working

intensively with authentic materials from the target market(s) (the UN or EU, for example), and insisting on familiarization with the relevant subject matter, style and jargon.

Although this approach is admittedly labour-intensive and demanding for instructors, we believe they can and should provide all-round teaching that combines explanation, rich feedback on students' performances, and personal demonstration.

In terms of *explanation*, we encourage the use of anything that works – given the lack of confirmed scientific knowledge about the interpreting process – from evocative images and metaphors (like Seleskovitch's 'currant bun') to any facts or more structured models that are available (like Gile's 'Effort Models'), but in measured doses, and always checking that students are making the connection with their own experience.

In *feedback* on student performances (the core of teaching), instructors should be able to offer not just corrections and generic advice, but regular, detailed and individualized '3D' feedback that goes from observation to *diagnosis* (teasing out problem causes), then *treatment* in the form of both detailed recommendations for exercises to be done alone and in group practice outside class, with appropriate texts provided, and sometimes also 'hands-on' coaching of the student through selected difficult passages (if necessary with interruptions, for certain kinds of problem) on the principles of 'deliberate practice' that have been shown to build expert performance (TG-2.6.2).

In addition to explanations and feedback, an instructor in interpreting skills should be able to offer a model of performance to students by *demonstrating* the skills being taught, and be open to commentary and discussion.

In terms of class size, organization, and the need for frequent and focused group practice, we confirm standard recommendations and offer detailed blueprints for classroom procedure.

TG-3 (Curriculum and Progression) completes the pedagogical framework with an evaluation of the traditional or 'standard' training paradigm, and of proposals in the literature that aim to establish interpreter education on a more scientific footing. On the basis of our own analysis of the interpreting task, we review various component-skills approaches and conclude that while some supporting skills such as language, domain knowledge, and some mechanical aspects of note-taking (like abbreviation or number conversion) can be taught alongside and independently of semi-realistic, contextualized exercises, these are the exception to a dominant principle of **incremental realism**. This rationale underlies our preferred curriculum design as a progression from consecutive and sight translation to SI, and from into-A to into-B training (though with significant overlap in both cases), through four or five stages in the acquisition of each skill (Initiation, Coordination,

Experimentation, Consolidation/ Polishing and 'Reality'). To check students' readiness for SI training, testing at the midpoint of the course is recommended (or a continuous-assessment option, as required by local regulations), and other forms of in-course assessment (peer, portfolios, journals) are briefly discussed.

The chapter closes with a summary of our proposals for updating and reinforcing the existing apprenticeship model, but without 'fixing what isn't broken'.

TG-4 (Selection and Admission) discusses procedures for the entrance examination, and is the first of a series of chapters that mirror the Complete Course, but now from the instructor's viewpoint, with specific pedagogical tips for each stage, module and exercise (CC-4/TG-5 to CC/TG-9), and in some cases additional examples and somewhat more technical background discussion and references to the research literature, often in the final section.

Professionalism: the devil is in the detail

In the area of Professionalism and Ethics (CC/TG-10), alongside universal values there may be some variation in dominant norms between market sectors (private, IO) and regions, notably as regards the interpreter's role. For training purposes, the best trade-off between description and prescription seems to be to make students aware of some fundamental principles to uphold at all costs (competence, integrity, confidentiality, as described in CC-10), and in the more complex areas of neutrality and fidelity especially, to present real-life case studies and suggest realistic solutions – which may in some cases include refusing an assignment. To support such discussions, we have theorized a distinction between the fully neutral (as at the UN or EU) and the 'affiliated' interpreter (as for example in diplomacy); and to clarify choices in terms of fidelity, a continuum of possible 'optimization' of communication, on which the interpreter must position herself somewhere between the extremes of cautious quasi-literalism and active mediation, stopping short, in the default case, of outright arbitration and advocacy. Case studies and examples from literature and practice are provided to support classroom discussion.

Revisiting testing and certification

Another traditional doctrine of the standard interpreter training model is the need for **strict selection and testing**, at admission and in some regimes, at the midpoint of the course (before beginning SI), to avoid frustration and wasted effort when students do not have the requisite knowledge base or language proficiency, and

of course at graduation, for legitimate reasons of professional gatekeeping and responsibility to clients, since final exams at interpreting are *de facto* tantamount to professional certification.

However, current practice still results either in unacceptably high attrition and dropout rates, in some schools, or lax standards in others, while testing procedures are not always demonstrably valid and reliable or seen to be fair. Schools do not publish their admission or pass rates, which are known to be low compared to other vocational training – as indeed they are at EU or UN accreditation tests, although here too clear statistics on the success rate of graduates of leading schools, as distinct from 'all comers', are hard to come by.

Current flaws in testing are partly attributable to institutional pressures or constraints (TG-13), but more could be done to apply best practices in performance assessment and develop more valid and reliable testing – especially for the final credentialling diploma – even with trade-offs for feasibility in schools in present conditions. We explore the long-term potential for developing performance standards to centralize conference interpreter credentialling, ideally with comparable rigour to the US FCICE exam for court interpreters, but with a less rigid system of scoring that is more appropriate to the fidelity norms of conference interpreting, which allow some 'optimization' of communication.

The testing regime we propose is described in several stages, but must be seen as a coherent whole: CC/TG-4 describes a complete procedure for admission testing; in-course assessment, including a possible Midpoint Exam, is covered in TG-3 in the framework of the curriculum. In TG-11 we review the current state of interpreter testing and make our own recommendations, based on accepted standards of criterion-referenced testing, for designing and conducting a valid and reliable final qualifying or diploma examination – the acid test of the credibility of any professional course – that can also serve as the main credentialling test for access to the profession.

To reduce attrition and waste and preserve the interests of all stakeholders – i.e. high standards, for future users of the service and the reputation of the school and the profession, and fair outcomes for students – we propose various mechanisms, including a streaming system to allow students to switch to another programme (typically, a different specialization in translation studies, and delinking the Professional Examination in Conference Interpreting (PECI), or 'Diploma' for professional certification from a (differently-labelled) academic MA that might be earned through coursework and continuous assessment. Some other options for a future, centrally-administered certifying exam are also discussed.

Finally, students deserve full *transparency* as to the standards, criteria and expectations by which they will be assessed and tested as explained above.

Theory and research

Theory and research (TG-12) must underpin any structured pedagogical project, and have long been recognized as a necessary ingredient in T&I training. The quality of interpreter training can only improve when instructors have internalized – on top of personal skills and experience – some shared understanding, informed by a study of cognition, communication, language, translation and skills teaching, of the incremental challenges of each stage and the successive objectives of the course.

In actual teaching, however, 'theory' must be used sparingly and selectively. We make an important distinction between theory to help *instructors* to get a fuller grasp of the issues and challenges and thus enrich their teaching, theoretical background provided in a dedicated Theory class, and the appropriate use of theory and models to accompany classroom skills teaching.

For students, the Theory module recommended by AIIC is best taught as the first half of a Theory and Practice track that explicitly links 'theory' (such as known facts about the limits and potential of memory, attention or lexical availability) with practical issues such as working conditions, fidelity or the interpreter's role. Each teaching chapter closes with some relevant background science and review of literature, with our own analysis of the tasks and challenges based on previous research,[1] updated with our ongoing efforts to collate clues from the study of cognition, language and its use, psychology, or user reception and expectations, with our own training experience.

This chapter also surveys some of the main sources of useful theory for interpreting, and in particular, asserts the value of having a general framework account of human communication and cognition to anchor our understanding of interpreting. Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995) meets this need to our satisfaction, illuminating the process by which we (all human verbal communicators) 'mind-read' a speaker's intended meanings by combining linguistic decoding with inference in context, and metarepresent them for re-expression. The Principle of Relevance (to a listener), defined as a trade-off between the cognitive effects that s/he can derive from an utterance and the effort s/he needs to derive them, gives us a basis for the traditional assessment of interpreting quality as an optimal composite of fidelity to the speaker and accessibility (intelligibility, even comfort) for the user.

Other theoretical innovations submitted for the reader's consideration include the continuum of optimization (or mediation) – from just coping to get the basic message through to confident outright advocacy – and a related three-way

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1.   See in particular Setton (1999).

characterization of interpreting norms as 'constrained' vs. 'default' vs. 'optimized', with some approximate correlation to settings: more constrained, cautious or literal for adversarial settings such as some legal and diplomatic interpreting, more 'optimized' in consecutive and especially community settings where there are large cultural or cognitive gaps to bridge (CC-5.8.4 and TG-10.4).

The chapter also sets out model syllabi for a Theory class for interpreting students, as well as possible topics and requirements for an MA thesis (compulsory in some schools, since conference interpreters are trained at postgraduate level), and an outline syllabus for a PhD in Translation Studies with a specialization in interpreting.

TG-13 addresses institutional and administrative issues. Interpreter training programmes have always been somewhat fragile – perhaps more so today with the pressure from English-as-lingua-franca (ELF) and budget austerity. Setting up and maintaining a viable, quality programme may face various challenges. Experience shows that the institutional host environment – typically, a university, though we also discuss the pros and cons of private-sector training – may either support or constrain course leaders in their efforts to train excellent interpreters, depending on how well the rules and regulations in place can accommodate this somewhat esoteric activity. Workarounds and variations on course design are discussed to secure a programme that combines fairness and quality in training with results that are relevant to market needs. Among the key prerequisites are effective partnerships with all stakeholders, from the host institution to the wider interpreting profession and the students' future employers. We add some additional key factors for success to the AIIC guidelines: a strategic location near a vibrant market, a good working partnership with the host institution, and close contact with (and oversight by) the profession.

TG-14 addresses needs for further (refresher and upgrade) training, and the training of trainers. Training conference interpreters to face today's market from 'scratch' (an undergraduate degree) in less than 18–24 months is unrealistic in our view, but short and specialized modules can meet some complementary needs for partial or lifelong training, such as upgrading, activating or refreshing language, knowledge or skills, both in professionals and partially-trained working interpreters (cf. CC-2.5). In community, healthcare or conflict settings, scarce resources may make short, intensive training better than nothing at all, but here the diversity of situations justifies a greater focus on role-playing and practica, with discussions and debriefing on ethical and role issues. Some examples of existing courses in these different categories are given, with evaluation and discussion. Last but not least, content and methods for the *training of trainers* are addressed with a model syllabus.

In a short concluding chapter (TG-15) we review the present status of (human) interpreting and discuss the challenges (or benefits) of technology, the rise of English as lingua franca (ELF), the increased demand for 'multiskilled' interpreters, and the likely implications of these and other changes in the interpreter's profile for training in the future.

With the triumphant spread of English, and technology again promising automatic translation any time soon, many are questioning the future role of interpreters. It is not an easy call. But if language is what makes us human, it is *diversity* of language. Most humans are multilingual,[2] but each of us experiences life and communicates this experience most richly in his or her native tongue. Demand for good interpreters is still strong. As long as it can be met, there will always be a use for a service that lets people of different nations and cultures exchange their concerns and aspirations on any topic in the full range of nuance and register available to them in their native languages, alongside taking care of everyday business in a simplified lingua franca. This kind of understanding needs interpreters who can read minds through faces and voices as well as words, something that machines may take a while to master.

Modern conference interpreting was born with multilateralism, an innovation aimed at keeping the peace, and the powers whose cultures it linked, at least, have not since been at war. At least one major international player, the European Union, has already recognized the value of defending multilingualism.[3] Certainly, there are signs of a roll-back from the multilateralism of the last century to more bilateral patterns of communication and negotiation; but helping people talk to each other through their respective native languages, within and across societies, can only be a positive and culturally enriching force.

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2. Tucker (1999: 1).

3. As of August 2011, the record number of languages handled in a meeting at the European Union was $29 \times 29 = 812$ combinations (Brian Fox, European Commission, p.c.).

Teaching conference interpreting

2.1   Introduction

2.1.1   Overview

Conference interpreting is a craft and a service to which the interpreter brings language, knowledge, skills and professionalism. The trainer's role is to guide, facilitate and encourage the development of these competencies in the student and their progressive integration in an all-round operational expertise. This relationship is necessarily one of apprenticeship, but it should also be a cooperative partnership that is rewarding and satisfactory for both sides.

In this chapter we set out some general pedagogical principles (2.1.2), then try to adopt in turn the perspective of the teacher, with a description of his/her ideal qualities (2.2; for an outline teacher training syllabus, see TG-14), and the student (2.3), with a brief discussion of factors in motivation and morale. In subsequent chapters we will pause at intervals to consider the steepness of the learning curve at each step, based on our observations in different programmes over the years.

More detailed recommendations follow for class design (2.4) and classroom procedures (2.5), with special emphasis on **constructive feedback** and how to alternate explanation, demonstration, student practice and discussion, all of which must be followed up outside class by the **deliberate practice** that is key to attaining expertise (2.6).

The rationale for our choices in terms of pedagogy and course design is developed more fully in the next chapter, in the light of recent challenges to the 'standard training model' from the changing professional environment, the reform of education systems, and different interpretations of how complex skills training methods might be applied in training interpreters.

2.1.2   Key pedagogical principles and rationale

Three key principles run through the approach to interpreter training proposed in these books:

1. **Incremental realism**: Most class time, from the very beginning, is spent on performing tasks that are a version of the integral act of interpreting, albeit at first embryonic: each stage builds on the last, from 'active listening' to expert interpreting in complex, real-life conditions, with realism introduced in increasing doses. An image from nature may illustrate this: the fledgling is nudged out of the nest and off the lowest branch of the tree – i.e. initiated in **a simple version of the integral task, in a protected environment (ideal working conditions) which already elicits the reflexes and a taste of the excitement, risks and rewards of the full task, but without most of the more notorious difficulties and hazards of real life.** These hazards are added incrementally: the speeches become authentic, then gradually more difficult, more formal or less structured, are delivered faster, and in the later stages, become more complex and awkward, with unfamiliar proper names and numbers, and mixed up with written text and slides, until the tasks resemble what we face in day-to-day professional practice (see TG-3.2 and 3.3 for discussion).

2. **Trainee individuality**: Each student begins with a different cognitive and linguistic endowment, temperament and background; each will stumble, get stuck or leap forward at different times (TG-3.2.6). This calls for variety in classroom activities, close individual feedback, attention to cognitive load and (individual and collective) student morale (2.3), and some curricular flexibility (TG-3.3.6).

3. **'Three-dimensional' (3D) teaching**, including observation, diagnosis and treatment (2.5). The core of pedagogy is *constructive feedback*, which can only be provided by instructors who understand the cognitive and psychological challenges faced by students at each stage, offer their own performances as a model, and guide students in the techniques of *deliberate practice* (2.6).

Interpreter training is labour-intensive, both for students – who are rarely pure bilinguals with wide general knowledge and neat modular minds that can switch from one language to another with no loss of meaning – and for instructors, who must complement their personal experience with a deeper understanding of the task and a sensitivity to the difficulties faced by different individuals.

A coherent and comprehensive theory, a fair and reliable testing regime and a congenial institutional environment (TG-13) all contribute to effective training. State-of-the-art equipment and modern technology (such as smart pens and video-conferencing) may also help. But any training course is ultimately only as good as its instructors and the quality of their feedback and guidance – which will be reinforced by being consistent with the programme's overall design.

2.2   What makes a good instructor?

It is sometimes said scornfully, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach". But doing, understanding the process and teaching are three different abilities, and interpreter trainers should preferably have all of them.

Teachers make or break an interpreter training course; schools compete for good students, who are increasingly well informed about the quality of instruction. Today, the same factors that are making interpreting more challenging are also placing new demands on teachers: it is no longer enough to be a charismatic and experienced interpreter who tells a few anecdotes about the profession, reads out a text and points out everything that was wrong (see Table 2.1 on p. 45).

This section spells out the qualities and abilities of a good instructor and describes an outline syllabus for teacher training, drawing on some successful recent initiatives. At the minimum, a good interpreter trainer should:

1. be a *trained and experienced practitioner* in the specialization taught – for a conference interpreter, at least 500 days (five years) of experience at international level – who remains professionally active[1] and well-connected, and preferably, enjoys the respect of peers in the profession for the quality of her/his work and professionalism;
2. have the *right working languages* for the combinations taught, and experience of the target market;
3. understand the *course design*, its rationale, structure, intermediate and final objectives, and assessment criteria at all levels.

In addition, s/he should preferably have some knowledge of theories and models of interpreting; and optionally, some prior vocational training experience in other domains.

These are just basic qualifications. To fulfil her task, the instructor must be able to deploy a range of pedagogical, practical and human skills:

2.2.1   Pedagogical and class management skills

Based on an understanding of the course progression and of each student's strengths and weaknesses (from the start, having participated in the admission exams), the instructor must be able to constantly challenge students within their 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky 1978: 86), entailing the following specific abilities:

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1. Junior and senior (retired) interpreters can also contribute in an auxiliary role or under certain conditions (2.7.4 and 2.7.5 below).

- ► **Make (interesting) speeches** at appropriate levels of difficulty in different genres;
- ► **Find and select materials** that are fresh, varied and appropriate for classes at each stage, for intermediate testing, and to illustrate particular difficulties and drill specific problems encountered by students, and gauge their level of difficulty (2.5.5);
- ► **Pace the progression** appropriately for the class as a whole, alternating periods of challenge with periods of consolidation, while catering to the extent possible to a variety of students with different profiles who will progress at different paces – without losing sight of the defined intermediate objectives for each stage of the course;
- ► **Put yourself in the place of students**, who must manage with far less thematic, general and linguistic knowledge than yourself, to understand the cognitive challenges they face in acquiring each new skill; and to have appropriate expectations of their performance at each stage, according to standards specified by and coordinated with other instructors in the programme (especially when students are working into a B that is the instructor's own A language) (2.5.2);
- ► **Explain things clearly**, in terms that students can understand (see 2.5.10), and offer strategies or heuristics that can be applied by students to overcome these difficulties, thus earning the trust of the students in the pedagogical approach;
- ► **Give constructive, '3D' feedback**, both fresh/immediate and considered, that is targeted to student learning needs and is appropriate to the stage of the course (2.5.8);
- ► Convincingly **demonstrate** relevant skills, techniques and strategies with professional competence and offer a model of professional performance (2.5.11);
- ► Be **open to criticism**, either provided directly or indirectly; be open to learning new things, or just adjusting already established concepts; accept feedback on teaching or coaching, and be prepared also to review the effectiveness of your approach.

In addition, a good instructor must have more general 'management' skills, being able to

- ► **Time-manage and run classes** efficiently, without getting sidetracked or bogged down, and effectively, by varying classroom activities and making classes *interactive* and stimulating – not just making or playing speeches, hearing and critiquing versions and moving on, which gets stale fast;
- ► **Coordinate with colleagues** to avoid giving students (seemingly) contradictory instruction;

▶   In the final stages of the course, **find or create opportunities for graduates** to practise in a 'dumb booth' at real meetings (TG-9.4.2), under supervision of the instructor or other senior colleagues; and finally, guide students into the market and encourage them in self-study to further develop their skills and in conscientious, professional and ethical practice.

2.2.2   Feedback and demonstration expertise

Feedback is the core of real teaching – the most perfect testing system is vain without it – and the greatest challenge to an instructor's ability. Giving constructive '3D' feedback against the current objectives takes sophisticated diagnostic skills to tease out the underlying cause(s) of a problem from multiple possibilities: language comprehension; background or general knowledge; analysis and memory; noting technique (inadequate abbreviation, layout, or noting of links; illegible notes); coordination; adaptation to the speaker's rhythm and changing discourse texture (e.g. noting too much, or not listening/analysing enough or at the right times); linguistic issues in production; problems of translation proper (cultural or technical equivalents, explicitation needed, etc.); or issues with delivery, communicativity, or posture.

     Having diagnosed the problem, simply telling the student what is wrong and why is still not enough – the right combination and sequence must be found to lead the student to an autonomous, implicit (procedural) mastery of the process (2.5.3, TG-3.2.5.2). Immediately after a performance, it is pedagogically more effective to *hint* at what could have been better – by asking questions that reveal incoherence, an inconsistency, a problem of expression, etc. – and prompt the student, then others in the class, to improve on it. Only after students have seen how different approaches could have led to a better version – analysing more carefully before speaking, deverbalizing more thoroughly, looking further ahead, starting a sentence differently, and so on – should you offer practical tips on a handy abbreviation, symbol or TL equivalent for a term or a phrase, now freely giving students the benefit of this knowledge without fearing that these linguistic and technical tips will be seized on as short-cuts for those mental procedures. 'Ready equivalents' can be given once students are clear about the relationship between words and sense, but not before.

     To implement this approach, a good instructor must be able

1.   to *teach by example*, demonstrating the competence to the class (and trying to reconcile 'what I say' with 'what I do'…); this will also show students that each professional has his/her own style (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989: 173);

2.   to *elicit curiosity, self-examination, self-correction* and individual adaptive solutions, rather than dictating solutions and relying on correction by others;
3.   to *create the right problem situations* – those likely to force a search for solutions – by the right choice of materials and exercises.

2.2.3   Human qualities

Teaching also calls for certain human qualities:

▶   *Empathy*: the ability to empathize with and relate to students, and to recognize different learning styles/needs: not being dogmatic, and tailoring the approach where necessary;
▶   *Fairness* and ability to grade and comment on student exam performances reliably;
▶   *Sense of humour*, energy and the ability to motivate or even inspire students to learn, coupled with humility to admit what you don't know or have done wrong, including using your own negative experience of 'failed strategies' and horror stories from the real world;
▶   *Imagination*: Parables, allegory and metaphor are traditional aides to teaching, and can help picture processes more vividly (2.5.9);
▶   *Ability to empower students* as the course progresses so that they can increasingly take charge of their own learning process;
▶   *Alertness to strains and stress*: being aware that training in interpreting is a high-stress process, and remaining alert to other, hidden vulnerabilities in students, whether physical (hearing), psychological, emotional (lack of confidence, intra-group relationships), or even economic, including possible problems outside school that students may be experiencing but may not openly admit to.

2.2.4   Theoretical knowledge

Finally, a good instructor must have some *theoretical* knowledge, which in our present framework means understanding and subscribing to the basic teaching philosophy of the course, specifically the principle of progression through gradually more challenging conditions and expectations without losing the reality of communication *('incremental realism')*; and understanding the stages in skills acquisition, what each involves in terms of discovery and challenges for students, and the goals of each stage, to be checked before proceeding.

Last but not least, some knowledge of cognitive processes, and the general constraints and flexibilities of human memory, attention and language competence

and performance, can help both instructors and course designers to understand and gauge the load on students of a particular task, or of the cumulative challenges she is presented with in a particular phase of the (proposed) course. The effort or cognitive load required of students doing hitherto unknown and to them unusual exercises, or acquiring difficult new skills, is not obvious to the experienced professional in whom these reflexes and skills have long since been assimilated, integrated and internalized, becoming a holistic behaviour.

Explicit models of the interpreting process, with diagrams like those we provide in the teaching chapters of the Complete Course, can help students to understand the key factors in each step in different modes: for example, how attention (or cognitive effort) is a limited resource (Gile 2009: 157 ff.) that must be managed very carefully and agilely in interpreting conditions; or how much other sources than merely the words of the speaker contribute to understanding, and are in fact indispensable and cannot be neglected (Setton 1999; see TG-8, Appendix B).

Beyond the basic human and pedagogical qualities, the theoretical and practical knowledge a good instructor needs can be acquired through

▶ self-study, critical reflection and peer exchanges (e.g. sitting in on each other's classes and offering helpful comments in a non-threatening way);

▶ participation in structured interactive workshops run by experienced trainers (AIIC, FTI [University of Geneva]), and better still, taking a certificate course in interpreter training.

2.2.5 Training the trainers

The need for teacher training – 'training of trainers' (ToT) – has been widely acknowledged only quite recently, and is now becoming more urgent with, on the one hand, the retirement of the second (baby-boomer) generation of self-made (and often proud) trainer-practitioners, creating an urgent need to renew the ranks (Durand 2005); on the other, the emergence of new markets and languages in which there are few experienced professionals; and finally, the influence of calls for a more structured, scientific and accountable pedagogy.

Candidates for training as interpreter-trainers come in several profiles:

▶ Motivated practitioner-trainers seeking to improve their teaching technique, who may be sent by their institutions, or young graduates interested in teaching alongside interpreting, perhaps with a post in view (who may have developed an interest in teaching while completing a compulsory requirement such as an MA thesis or PhD (see TG-12.4);

▶ Future course leaders or administrators planning to set up a new programme, often for an emerging market with a 'new' language;

▶ Future teachers on such new courses. However, while candidates from a language-teaching or written translation background may be provisionally trained as auxiliaries or team-teachers (2.2.6–7), they will not qualify to teach core interpreter skills until they have themselves been trained and acquired experience as fully qualified interpreters.

Funding teacher training for instructors may be one of the most productive investments that a school can make.

A syllabus outline and discussion of methodology for a **Training of Trainers (ToT)** course will be found in TG-14 (Further Training and Teacher Training), and a more compact PhD module is described in TG-12.4.

2.2.6 Postgraduate teaching assistants (TAs)

Some programmes are fortunate enough to have teaching assistant (TA) posts available for graduates (or even qualified external applicants) pursuing postgraduate studies after completing professional training (but see TG-13.2.3 on fairness in assigning them to teaching). Where possible, any healthy and fully functional course with a long term plan should offer postgraduate training in pedagogy and research, at MA or preferably even PhD level (TG-12.4.2) but adapted to real needs: teacher training, in particular, should be a core component. Indeed, given the limited scope for employment with a purely theoretical qualification in 'Interpreting Studies', many such students choose a thesis topic related to interpreter training, and hope to become instructors themselves. Provided they have graduated as professional interpreters (passed the PECI), they should be associated with the main teaching programme as active TAs.

Teaching assistants can help on the course in many ways – supervising group practice and student journals or portfolios, maintaining and updating of the AV library, extracurricular student guidance and tutoring, as speakers and listeners in class – but also in mentored teaching functions, including substitute teaching and team-teaching; as native-language assistants in introductory classes to support instructors who are teaching into a TL that is their own B language (2.4.4); or in the initial stages, giving short explanations of theoretical points in the students' A language, or giving additional feedback to students (after careful coordination beforehand and explanation by the main instructor of the current objectives of the class, the TA's role and the type of feedback needed).

Note that in planning such arrangements, senior instructors must prepare the ground carefully with both the students and the TA to avoid authority issues, introducing the TA gradually to the class as a respected substitute, who is a 'journeyman-level professional' who will assist with coaching. The TA will usually have to show tact when giving feedback, observing certain limits that more senior instructors can occasionally overstep.

2.2.7 Other auxiliary instructors

As already argued, the core skills-training faculty should consist of established professionals, but there are several roles for regular contributors with different backgrounds.

Language enhancement (CC/TG-7) and complementary knowledge modules, in particular (TG-7.4) should normally be taught by **specialists in advanced language teaching** (LSP, and ESL for students with English as a B language, for example), or **experts in the key mainstream domains** of conference interpreting (Economics and International Law) and other more specialized, optional modules of special relevance to particular sectors (Parliamentary Procedure, Language of Research, Legal Interpreting, etc.).

In both cases, however, the content and design of these classes must always be planned in close coordination with the Course Director and core faculty, to be adapted to the specific needs of interpreter training. For example, language enhancement should focus on developing active or passive oral proficiency (not descriptive linguistics or literary criticism); and economics and law on systems, concepts and terminology, not on how to *do* an econometric analysis or prepare a brief.

Specialists in education, orthophonists, public speaking experts, and speech, posture or stress therapists will also make valuable contributions.

Apart from invited one-time lecturers, other more long-term contributors may include **distinguished senior colleague**s, such as former staff interpreters from international organizations – some of whom who may originally have been 'self-made' and may not have a diploma or extensive teaching experience, or be members of AIIC – but on condition

a. that their approach is compatible with the school's, that they accept and are familiar with the curriculum structure and intermediate objectives; and
b. that they have substantial and recent experience of the students' target markets (a lifelong UNESCO staff interpreter may not be suited to teaching students whose main target market is for consecutive interpreting in business and high finance).

Established schools can make (and have made) a decisive contribution to launching quality interpreting on emerging markets by training **future founders of training programmes** in their home countries. However, as in any other profession, these pioneers should first be fully trained and qualified as professional practitioners themselves. Attempting to make interpreter trainers of non-interpreters (e.g. language teachers) will not usually work, and is more likely to perpetuate poor quality, and ignorance – hence negligence – of professional norms and ethics, jeopardising the client-profession relationship (CC-10, Figure 10.2).

2.2.8 Pedagogical coordination and cohesion

A key requirement for success – throughout the course, but especially during periods of initiation to new skills – is **close coordination among instructors.** More than this, however, while respecting academic freedom and individual teaching styles, the programme should aim to maximize **pedagogical cohesion**. Preferably, the course leader and instructors should share an overall and explicit understanding of the curriculum and assessment criteria (for admission, midpoint, and professional exams), as well as the theoretical principles behind the curriculum design, overall pedagogical strategy and classroom procedure. In practice, there are probably not more than one or two schools today where staff *explicitly* share the same theories and follow the same classroom procedures; but in successful schools, this consensus is implicit on most if not all key issues. This cohesion should be maintained by regular **pedagogical meetings**, with discussion and refresher training, beyond simply reviewing and discussing the progress of individual students. This is necessary to remedy a pervasive weakness in many schools: while virtually all core teaching staff are professional interpreters, only a minority have undergone serious and systematic teacher training (i.e. beyond occasional 3-day workshops), and there is little or no systematic evaluation or control of teaching ability (see TG-13.2.3/13.3.3).

The impression that teachers are on top of their job, know what they are doing in terms of class planning and procedure, and are more or less playing the same tune (instead of giving contradictory advice and using confusingly variable terminology) is critical to student morale.

2.3   The student's experience

2.3.1   Morale and motivation

> Without an appreciation of how students are experiencing learning, any methodological choices we make risk being ill-informed, inappropriate, or harmful. This is why, in my opinion, the most fundamental meta-criterion for judging whether or not good teaching is happening is the extent to which teachers deliberately and systematically try to get inside students' heads and see classroom and learning from their point of view.   (Brookfield 1995: 35, cited in Takeda 2010: 39)

In the past, training as a conference interpreter earned the reputation of being gruelling, but student blogs report a stimulating and enjoyable experience for students with motivation and the right profile, qualifications and interests, in a school with instructors who are constructive, motivated and friendly, but not lax or complacent (Aymeric de Poyen 2008).

The tension and adrenalin inherent in this profession must be harnessed and converted into 'constructive stage-fright' (*trac constructif*). This ability may be partly a matter of personality (perhaps detectable in admission tests), but training in Public Speaking has also been found to help master stress (Jiménez Ivars and Calatayud 2001). Montani (2003) found that interpreting students gradually worry less about evaluation and manage public-speaking anxiety (PSA) better than translation students, albeit recognizing that personality factors may have an impact upstream on the students' choice of specialization.

A review of the still-modest literature on this issue suggests that the best measures against student demoralisation, and (sometimes justifiable) dissatisfaction with the course, are those we have recommended for course design and management:

- rigorous selection of only the most apt and motivated students, with solid language skills that will not require impossible amounts of homework and enhancement to be viable (Shaw et al. 2004);
- full information and transparency about the curriculum and its goals, and the commitment expected of students, and accountability on the part of instructors in keeping these promises (Pöchhacker 1999; Lim 2005) and of the department chair in ensuring coordination to avoid contradictory teaching;
- less subjective/personal, more criterion-based evaluation that is also balanced (Shaw et al. ibid.: 92);
- the value of theory and models in explaining the interpreting process (Takeda 2010: 45), provided they connect with students' own experience; but also

- realism, authenticity (Takeda 2010), hands-on practice, exposure, role-play (Shaw et al., ibid.), and reliable and timely information about the market (Aymeric de Poyen 2008).

Certainly the full-time curriculum (and later, the job) take some resilience and stamina; an excellent course may be expensive, with no guarantee of success; and there may be unexpected setbacks, for example due to events in the student's private life (the international nature of the job may involve separation from loved ones for an extended period). While occasional tears in class are usually cathartic and temporary, periods of demoralisation cannot therefore be ruled out.

Access to counselling is an asset in any institution. Some schools organize occasional seminars on stress management; instructors can also recommend stress-reducing activities like yoga, Pilates, tai chi, etc. A hobby like music or hiking is usually beneficial. Most importantly, however, course designers and instructors must avoid curriculum overload, and always be alert to the students' mood and ready to listen to them, even when the school also has a professional counsellor or Dean of Studies (who may not know them as well).

Finally, there is little instructors can do about personality clashes between students, but two approaches in particular may help. First, explain that good interpreting does not leave room for any extraneous distractions, and that it requires teamwork. Second, and most importantly, be sure to devote a full class if necessary to making sure that students fully understand and accept the Group Practice guidelines (CC-5, Appendix C) – especially the part about how to give and accept feedback.

2.3.2   The learning curve

Becoming a professional interpreter entails a significant and probably irreversible reconfiguration of the way we use language and memory,[2] in a fulfilling but sometimes difficult gestation. These are faculties that are interwoven with our very identity and that we therefore take for granted: just as young actors and dancers may at first have difficulty seeing their voices and bodies objectively and treating them as tools of their profession, budding interpreters may experience resistance and discomfort in this reconfiguration of language and memory, and become disoriented and demoralised before seeing results.

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2.   A recent study by neuroscientists at the University of California (Berkeley) found that intense preparation required for the law school admission test (LSAT) changed the brain structure of students preparing for the test. http://health.usnews.com/health-news/news/articles/2012/09/06/does-studying-for-law-school-test-boost-your-brain (Accessed November 11, 2015).

At each stage of our commentary on the progression in Chapters 4 to 8 of this book (mirroring the fuller description in the Complete Course), we have paused to dwell briefly on the challenges faced by students in acquiring each new skill, and the possible effect on their morale. Accordingly, suggestions are occasionally made for 'dosing' or pacing the introduction of new material, ensuring classroom variety, and other measures to keep things interesting and stimulating while avoiding overload and burnout as students discover and negotiate the novelties, steep gradients or relative plateaux of a two-year course. This may seem somewhat speculative, but experience in several schools has shown us a pattern in student morale, with – for example – a noticeable dip when grappling with consecutive note-taking in the middle of the first year, and again, though less so, when things begin to 'hot up' in the Experimentation phase of SI.

Understanding the learning curve in interpreter training may be critical in helping us to sense when to relieve or add pressure, and how far we can take the training process. At certain key points, students encountering difficulties may put up resistance or be tempted to 'skip this and try something else'. Also, however well-designed a curriculum may be, students will always vary in the pace and rhythm of their progress due to differences of temperament and background, some peaking early, others stagnating then making great leaps. There will also be variations depending on the weight of the task they have taken on (such as a four- or five-language combination) or their starting handicap (a B language still needing a lot of work, or weak general knowledge). In the later stages, if some students fall too far behind we may indeed have to 'focus on the best' (Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002), but while still doing our best to target individual problems, if necessary accepting temporary delays in the progression for some students; or finally, if all else fails, streaming them out into other viable specializations (TG-13.3.5.3).

2.4   Class design and configurations

Training interpreters takes close individual attention, but also realistic simulation and exposure to lively and varied exchange and debate. Combining different class sizes and configurations provides for both of these dimensions (and may help to meet certain requirements on staffing ratios: see TG-13.2.3, 13.3.3).

2.4.1 Types of class configuration

One-way language-pair class: In the standard 'apprenticeship' training model, skills training classes – the core of the programme – are typically specific to one language-pair and direction, mode (consecutive, SI) and stage in the course (first or

second year). For example, '(first year) English-to-Russian consecutive' is ideally taught by a Russian-A instructor with English B or C, for first-year students with either Russian (A) and English B or C, or English A and Russian B.

'Bi-active' classes can be organized for students working both ways between two languages (A-B or B-A), e.g. 'French-Korean/Korean-French SI'. This format is common in primarily 'bi-active' programmes, but requires either a fully or near-bilingual instructor, or team-teaching (see below). It is rarer in multilingual (mostly European) schools, where these students would do each direction in a different one-way class, alongside other students working from B or C.

A multilingual school may also organize bi-active classes (or triangular: see 2.4.5) in unusual combinations, or possibly,[3] for students who can usefully and justifiably be trained to work between two B languages, given a sufficiently high standard for admission, and special market needs – for example, an African-country national training in French-English whose true mother tongue may be a third, African language (see TG-4.2.1). These graduates will be in demand chiefly for French-English conference interpreting in Africa, but will also be able to apply their skills to working with their mother tongue if needed.

Master or 'plenary' classes bring together all students in one or both years. This format is standard for *common lectures* – law, economics, theory of interpreting, public speaking, conference preparation and even language enhancement in the 'home' language, or that of a majority of students – and is convenient and convivial for *general introductory classes*, such as the first introduction to note-taking.

For skills training in general, a plenary bringing together students with different languages, and perhaps at different levels, can also be highly stimulating and instructive, if well run (perhaps **team-taught** by several instructors), as it provides an opportunity both for public speaking and 'relay' consecutive (TG-6.4.3) or SI that brings in the whole community.

Here students with rarer languages can get a change from the possible claustrophobia (or if in very small classes of 2–3 students, the possible risk of 'overteaching', according to Seleskovitch and Lederer [2002: 166]) while the others will learn from the experience of being dependent on interpretation as 'pure users' (TG-7.3.4.1), or through doing relay, as both pivots (providers of relay, CC-2.2.2) and relay-takers.

In such plenary classes, feedback is given immediately after one or a series of performances, but for obvious reasons of class dynamics, must be kept minimal and highly targeted. A similar and even more (but differently) structured event is the **mock conference**, described in TG-9.4.1.

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3. As in the '*régime special*' at ESIT, in Paris.

2.4.2 Class size, composition and duration

Interpretation skills training is performance-intensive, requiring detailed individual attention and feedback. For morale and continuity, in each class each student should get *at least* one turn and personalized feedback. This means that class size cannot exceed 8–10 at the most (ideally 3–6) for a two-hour class in most stages in the course, with recommended longer class times for full consecutive.

In SI classes, even if several students can work at the same time in different booths, the instructor should be able to listen to each for 6–8 minutes at least once in every class (and in a bilingual class, in each language direction).

If larger class sizes are inevitable (e.g. imposed by the institution, see TG-13.3.2.5, 13.3.5.2), teaching assistants or even 2nd year students can sometimes help by supervising or facilitating practice sessions, or taking sub-groups of the class in break-out sessions.

The **duration** of an interpreting skills class should be at least 1½ hours, but longer sessions, with breaks and provided activities are varied, can be more productive.

In general, the priorities in setting class duration and frequency should be to

✓ provide the total number of contact hours promised in the curriculum (TG-13.2.4.2);
✓ make sure each student has at least one turn and personalized feedback in each class;
✓ ensure continuity (avoid 'empty weeks' with no instruction in a particular combination);
✓ avoid overload: total class-time for any one student should not exceed six hours in any one day (five if they are all performance-intensive).

2.4.3 Diversity and class participation

Any of these class formats may also include additional categories of students, as well as other participants:

i.   Students who are repeating the year, in some cases after having spent a gap year in their B or C language country;
ii. Students with one or both of the languages involved, but in a different combination, who are allowed to sit in, to get additional passive practice taking notes (or if there are spare booths, practice SI unsupervised into their A or B);

iii.   Students who have been accepted into the programme for training from or into a rare language for which there is an emerging need, but no professional instructors with the same combination (for example, a student with French A or B and the language of an EU accession country, such as Hungarian or Finnish, studying in Paris in the 1990s; or in the future, perhaps, an Indonesian student in a Chinese programme);

iv.   Students from other schools, either participating actively under the terms of student exchange programs with sister institutions (as in the EMCI) or allowed to sit in as observers;

v.   Invited speakers, who may be students, instructors, teaching assistants, guest lecturers from inside or outside the university, etc.;

vi.   Invited listeners or language consultants, who either

   a.   monitor interpretation into their own native language from a language that – unlike the instructor and other students – they do not understand, thus simulating the so called 'pure user' of interpreting services in a conference, or

   b.   in a so-called 'triangular' class (2.4.5 below), for students in category (iii) above, assist the main instructor to give practice and feedback, by acting as speaker and/or listener in the 'unofficial' language;

vii. Other guests and observers, with the permission of the course administrators, the instructor, and preferably, the students.

This diversity has many potential benefits, but given the different categories of participants who may sit in alongside core students, *rules of participation* must be decided and the approximate size of each class planned and decided at the beginning of the year, taking into account both admission (for Y1) and midpoint (for Y2) exam results, as well as returning and exchange students.

Even though student turns will be shorter on some types of exercise, or at certain stages of the course (e.g. for short or dialogue consecutive, or ST-based SI initiation drills), the class must be small enough, or last long enough, for everyone to get a turn in each class period – notably for full (long) consecutive.

Linguistic diversity in the **cohort** and in mixed-language groups is overwhelmingly beneficial, for reasons of cultural and academic exchange as well as contributing to quality on multilingual markets (into-A interpreters available in every language from every language). Students from different language groups can be paired up as B-enhancement partners, to listen carefully to each other's recordings in this way and give feedback.

However, there can also be practical difficulties, when language distribution is very uneven – for example when twenty students with active English B are competing to recruit the one or two English-A students in their year as practice

partners (or, worse still for these Anglophones, as language coaches!). Programmes that are full of English Bs but few if any English As – unfortunately, a universal trend – should consider extending the duties of instructors with an A in English, and/or recruiting and training **part-time English-A assistant instructors** – ideally, interpreters, or if not, carefully selected educated native speakers.

2.4.4 Language combination of instructors

Staff available to an interpreter training school *must* at least include professional interpreters who are native-speakers of all the students' languages of production. The small scale and specialized nature of interpreter training does not permit any waiver of this rule (TG-13.2.3, 13.3.3.1).

Ideally, each skills class should be taught by a professional interpreter whose A language is the TL of the class and who has the SL of the class at least as her B or C. Where this is really not possible, a viable compromise may be found in which the instructor (a professional interpreter) teaches from her own A into her own (very good) B; though this works better if the students are working into their A than if they are also working into B. In this latter case, an educated native speaker of the TL (even if not an interpreter) should also be in class to help with issues of expression.

The characteristics of the *input speeches* are also crucial to effective, progressive pedagogy, especially in the early stages of acquiring consecutive or SI, when they must be structured, free of certain difficulties, naturally delivered and carefully paced, etc. We shall call these **trainer speeches** (see Speech Difficulty Index in Appendix A to this chapter).

Fully bilingual instructors, able both to make these speeches and comment on output as a native, are in short supply. In single language-pair classes with a single instructor, schools have traditionally relied on student-generated speeches; but students cannot always be expected to produce speeches to order, even in their A language, with the right features for each stage in the progression. Hence our recommendation to use **(video) pre-recorded trainer speeches**. An instructor with a strong B in the input language can use prepared scripts – especially for the controlled ('drip-fed') SI-Initiation exercises, but input with real native prosody must also be used regularly to train sensitivity to these patterns (for anticipation).

Absent a bilingual instructor, one viable solution is to arrange **team-teaching for the first few weeks** of each skill (Orientation and Initiation) – for example, one teacher with an A in the TL, one (or a TA) with an A in the SL – and use mostly video-recorded trainer speeches in single-pair classes (especially from C languages); then from Experimentation onwards, use a mixture of recordings, invited speakers and student presentations.

In programmes with one-way language-pair classes only, students will *attend* classes in both their B-A and A-B directions from the start, at first listening and practising passively, and occasionally giving speeches for the other students under the instructor's supervision (as public speaking practice), then beginning to work into B towards the end of the Coordination stage of each new skill (TG-3, Table 3.1).

2.4.5   Team- or assisted teaching and 'triangular' classes

When a new language arrives on the international conference scene (like Finnish, Slovak or Estonian in the EU, or some East Asian languages), it may be impossible to find experienced practitioner-trainers with that language in their combination. Seleskovitch and Lederer (2002: 337–340) describe a 'triangular' assisted-teaching arrangement in which the lead trainer is assisted by an educated native speaker of the 'exotic' language. This works as follows (more conveniently in consecutive):

▶ When students work from the 'exotic' language into a common language (e.g. French), the lead instructor, who is familiar with neither the SL nor its culture, expects a clear and convincing product (into A or B), and rejects any attempt by the student to blame the original for fuzziness or incoherence. The assistant-instructor checks for completeness and accuracy.

▶ When students work into the 'exotic' language, the assistant reports on coherence, language and accuracy, but the lead instructor can also use 'relay consecutive' or 'back-interpretation', in which students leave the room for the original, then return, listen to the interpretation, and interpret back into the lingua franca; then probe with questions all around to diagnose problems.

In multilingual groups (since there are usually too few students with each rare language for a separate class), the other students join the instructor as 'pure users'. These classes begin with universal topics and move on to culture-specific ones, providing an excellent opportunity for students to practise communicating their A-culture-specific material to listeners from different languages and cultures (ibid.).

Schools with such multilingual groups, in which some students interpret into their A and others into their B, report that the set-up is pedagogically fruitful when all students participate, providing a good opportunity to test real intercultural communication (Donovan 2004: 213).

2.5　The interpreting skills classroom

Various procedures for making classes efficient, fun and interesting through preparation and brainstorming, turn-taking, discussion and feedback are described in the successive teaching chapters of the Complete Course. After some remarks on the teacher-student relationship in an apprenticeship-based, vocational training context, this section discusses how different activities can be most effectively sequenced and alternated in the skills class, with special attention to the choice and use of materials, and especially, how to give effective feedback.

2.5.1　Student-centred learning

'Student-centred (or "student-focused") learning' (SCL) is increasingly being promoted as a development of the pragmatic and constructivist and approaches pioneered by Dewey (1916) and Piaget (e.g. 1950), and seems to be a much-needed corrective to traditional authoritarian approaches. In the context of the European Higher Education Area (completing the 'Bologna reform process'), SCL is described somewhat vaguely as "an approach to education [that] aims at overcoming some of the problems inherent to more traditional forms of education by focusing on the learner and their needs, rather than being centred around the teacher's input",[4] but is exemplified in several positive initiatives such as improving student mobility, curriculum flexibility, mutual recognition of qualifications and the interactivity of the learning process. In general education, however, we also find some stronger formulations of the SCL manifesto that apprenticeship-based vocational training can realistically only go some of the way to implementing. Purely for illustration, we might respond to some of its features (as listed on the Wikipedia article on SCL[5]) as follows:

✓　the "students' needs come first" – certainly, but at certification, their 'need' for a diploma will be weighed against the interests of future users;
✓　students must indeed be "active, responsible participants in their own learning";
✓　certainly, learning can be "focused on each student's abilities […] and learning styles" – but not on each student's 'interests'; nor will students "choose what they will learn, how they will learn, and how they will assess their own learning". Nor will they want to: their aim is to acquire a new skill and learn about the environment in which they can practise it to earn a living;

4.　http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=147 (Accessed February 18, 2016).

5.　All quotes from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Student-centred_learning (Accessed November 28, 2015).

✓ indeed, students must "participate in the evaluation of their learning" – but they will not "[decide] how to demonstrate their learning", or be responsible for their own assessment.

The teacher is of course 'a facilitator', choosing materials and exercises, judging the pace of the class and the individual, simulating conditions still unknown to the students, and setting objectives and expectations. But s/he is also much more than that. Students learning a new skill will often expect more direct, even 'intrusive' correction and guidance. The prerequisite for all this – perhaps even more so for adult vocational training – is still the teacher's ability to put her/himself in the student's place and understand the learning process from the student's perspective, the better to guide it.

2.5.2 Putting yourself in the student's place

Trainee conference interpreters may well equal their instructors in language proficiency (though this will still not be 'configured' and flexible for interpreting) – perhaps even in motivation… – but not in terms of relevant knowledge, interpreting skills or professionalism. The instructor must facilitate both the acquisition of these distinct competencies and their integration into all-round interpreting expertise.

However, in the instructor's own performance of the task, these components (L, K, S and P) have long since been integrated and interact more or less seamlessly in a way thats/he takes for granted. In particular, a seasoned interpreter (such as an instructor) will have developed a rich stock of **schemas of knowledge** – world, background and specialized (e.g. about international organizations) – in the core domains of conference interpreting. This domain familiarity, and the ready availability of the **jargon** that goes with it, make such a huge difference to cognitive (effort) management on-task that it is almost impossible for a seasoned instructor to really put herself in the place of the student struggling with such material.

It is vital that teachers allow for this relative knowledge deficit in the students, since it means that *students cannot at first model their technique on the instructor's*, but will need to do much more basic processing (much more of the information is new). In consecutive they will need to take more notes; in SI, they will hardly be able to anticipate when first working with realistic mainstream conference interpreting material; whereas the instructor would only need to attend closely to information peaks against a largely familiar background.

This is why students must rely more heavily at first on linguistic agility – 'syntacrobatics[6]' – than the instructor would with the same material, justifying the

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6. Setton and Motta (2007).

intensive 'linguistic' exercises in chunking, paraphrasing, etc. in the early stages. This is why it is so important that they read intensively on current issues, to install the key knowledge schemas that will go a long way to alleviating cognitive load in lieu of experience (TG-6.8.3.2).

2.5.3 Learning what and learning how

The literature on cognitive skills acquisition distinguishes 'declarative' (knowing what) from 'procedural' knowledge (knowing how). This terminology can be somewhat confusing, because 'knowing what' could refer to the factual knowledge needed for the job – for example, knowledge of road signs and the highway code for a driver. However, when talking about skills acquisition, 'declarative' knowledge often refers to facts *about* the skill (such as descriptions of it) that teachers give their students ('explicitly') in the hope that they will convert this knowledge into the ability to perform the skill themselves ('implicitly'). In interpreting, the bulk of the declarative knowledge needed – the equivalent of the highway code – is the vast area of knowledge about the world, the institutional environment, etc. that must be learned to perform the skill in the world, but is not essential to it, just as we might learn to drive in a desert; this knowledge is not taught in the skills classroom, but must be acquired by the student/interpreter, through private study, reading, lectures, etc. as described in CC-7.

Skills training in interpreting is overwhelmingly aimed at installing *procedures* that will generate appropriate autonomous responses to an ever-changing environment. Apprentices in manual crafts typically learn from observing the master, then attempting the task themselves, with hands-on guidance and some accompanying verbal instruction. But for a mental skill like interpreting, a master's demonstration is less revealing, and hands-on accompaniment (two hands on the adze, two pairs of feet on the pedals) is difficult. The challenge for instructors is to find the right mix and sequence of pedagogical interventions – among the classic methods of explaining, demonstrating, facilitating by creating favourable conditions (choosing materials), and coaching – to elicit the invisible mental responses that will become internalized as autonomous skill.

Various methods can be combined to this end, most of which belong to a venerable apprenticeship tradition:

i.   detailed and constructive '3D' **feedback** (2.5.8);
ii.   'declarative' but evocative **explanation**, using process models, diagrams and metaphors (2.5.9);
iii. teaching by example, through instructor **demonstrations** (2.5.11);
iv.   partially hands-on (more intrusive) **coaching**, with on-line interruptions (2.6).

Success will be measured by the power of these methods to elicit the emergence of autonomous competence in the student. (See TG-3.2.4.2 for a discussion contrasting our position on declarative and procedural teaching with some ideas in the interpreter training literature.)

2.5.4 Teaching methods and classroom procedures

A typical sequence of activities for a skills class in full consecutive interpreting was set out in CC-5.6.4. Let us briefly recall the successive steps here:

1. *Preparation*: The instructor sets learning objectives for the class, chooses materials, plans the sequence and timing of activities for optimal time management, and announces the class objectives and subject matter of materials to students, with any recommended readings, preferably a week in advance to give them time to prepare.
2. *In class*: Explain the objectives for the class. Present the materials and describe the exercise; brainstorm the background, context, issues, subject matter and associated terminology likely to come up.
3. *Performance, critique and teaching*: Students do the exercises, followed by feedback, discussion and second, improved performances. Depending on the stage in the course and the skills mode in focus, interpreting performances may be interspersed with ancillary exercises and drills, brief 'theoretical' explanations and/or instructor demonstration.
4. *Wrap-up:* Devote the last 5–10 minutes of class to summarizing what has been practised and discussed and leave students with 'take-aways', and if appropriate, homework and recommendations for group practice and private study.

Each step, from choosing materials to recommendations for homework, is described in the next sections.

2.5.5 Choosing the right materials

2.5.5.1 *Progression in materials*

One of the greatest challenges in effective interpreter training is choosing speeches and texts for classroom exercises, practice and testing that are appropriate for each stage of the course.

Incremental realism (2.1.2) means moving from targeted 'quasi-interpreting' exercises through artificially structured, then more authentic, realistic speeches progressing in difficulty on multiple parameters (register, subject matter, speed, form of presentation, etc.), as well as in expectations of the product.

In Initiation and Coordination, texts and speeches must often be chosen to be *challenging on only one parameter* for the exercise at hand, with all others set at 'easy'. For example, the stylistically sophisticated texts used to practise gisting in Initiation, or the structurally awkward texts used to practice chunking practice in drip-fed ST, might rarely be encountered, or would be very difficult, for free SI. In Coordination, students are still being eased into the full interpreting task with artificially simplified, conveniently structured and comfortably delivered 'trainer speeches'.

It is only from the Experimentation stage, when students start practising the full interpreting task on realistic material, that we need to find *authentic* speeches of steadily increasing general difficulty, with an occasional jump or special focus (the introduction to formal or written input in SI-Consolidation, for example). By Consolidation, ideally all input should be 100% authentic, with additional difficulties targeted in the 'Reality' phase. (Note that a speech taken from a real conference but presented by an instructor, even verbatim, is still artificial. Only a real recording can deliver that quality of real-world speech that is both natural and uncompromising.)

Finally, speeches for the final exam must be chosen (and sometimes tweaked if necessary) to cover all the constructs and known difficulties to be tested (TG-11.6.3.2–6.3.4). Recommended values for texts on four rough parameters of difficulty for each exercise, stage, and test/exam are given in our 'Speech Difficulty Index' (SDI) in the Appendix to this chapter.

All this will mean a significant effort by instructors to find and select appropriate authentic speeches (ideally, recordings) and associated material (context, terminology). But this is key to taking students through to proficiency on realistic (market-representative) criterion tasks by the end of training, which we fail to do if we rely on student- or even instructor-generated speeches at all stages, as sometimes happens even in leading schools and recruiting organizations.

2.5.5.2   *Assessing speech difficulty*

Real-life speeches can be fast or slow, dense or redundant, but are too variable and mixed to classify by increasing difficulty for use in the successive stages of an interpreting course. Speeches that may be easy and entertaining to follow for listeners may be very difficult to interpret.

Measuring the difficulty of a speech for interpreting is complex, involving multiple interacting factors like subject matter, speed, delivery, style ('writtenness' or 'preparedness'), diction etc.

In general education, indexes are used (e.g. the Flesch readability index) to measure the difficulty of a text for comprehension in terms of its language and content. This is not good enough for interpreting, where comprehension is just

the first hurdle to take into account – there is also translatability, and difficulty of processing under the special constraints of interpreting (speed, structure, linearity/simultaneity, etc.), and their interactions.

In reality, there is hardly any such thing as a purely 'easy' or 'difficult' authentic speech (nor, consequently, a single uniform performance standard that could be defined for all speeches). Any natural speech is multidimensional, as witnessed by the long list of factors that have been cited in the literature as contributing to speech difficulty:

> Delivery (speed, clarity, prosody, diction, melody, rhythm), preparedness (extemporaneous, recited from text, etc.), style, formality, orality vs. 'literariness', information density/redundancy, lexical richness, syntactic complexity, sentence length, semantic density, numerical information; coherence/cohesion, emotivity/affect, accompanying media (ppt., text), visual aids; context provided, subject matter (technicality, familiarity…), conceptual originality, visualizability, opportunity for preparation, cultural specificity/'translatability', discourse function (informative, persuasive, ritual/ceremonial, ritual, conative, phatic…), discourse 'genre' (narrative, discursive, descriptive, argumentative); discourse structure (logical sequence, tightness, tight/loose structure, standardness of speech structure for the genre [ritualized vs. boilerplate], rhetorical sophistication; direct/indirect speech acts, speech-organising illocutions [*I think, I stress that*, etc.], anaphoric vs. cataphoric, theme-rheme progression…); cooperative vs. adversarial; addressee orientation, speaker-audience relationship…
>
> (Salevsky 1993; Alexieva 1997; Shlesinger 1989; Hönig 2002; Pöchhacker 2004)

Not surprisingly, then, attempts to develop a metric of difficulty for translation or interpreting have been rare and tentative (but see Hönig 2002). Until such time as a computer programme can be developed to generate realistic speech to specified values of these parameters without being too artificial, we can only tailor materials to our needs by producing our own simple (instructor's oralised or 'trainer') speeches, in the early stages, or supervised student presentations, from notes; then later, carefully seeking out and testing real speeches pitched at or just above the students' current level, and whose challenges we (the instructors) understand.

Professionals can make a rough assessment by scanning a text or listening to a speech, especially at the extremes, but as is well known, even listening attentively alongside a colleague who is interpreting cannot tell us how easy or difficult the speaker was. Trainers and testers have traditionally chosen their materials and adjusted their expectations intuitively, perhaps informed by their own experience of interpreting the speech, or of testing it in class; or for tests such as diploma exams, by some back-up process of collective screening and verification (but see TG-11.4.3).

While the intuition of seasoned professionals about speech difficulty may still be superior overall, in the Appendix to this chapter we tentatively offer an analytic

Speech Difficulty Index for assessing the difficulty of speeches on four parameters (subject matter; speed; density and style; accent and prosody; for the 'preparedness' parameter, see also the typology in CC-4.5).

2.5.5.3   *Finding authentic speeches and maintaining a speech bank*
As the course progresses and speeches become more authentic, it is also increasingly important that they are *current.* Most speeches used for conference interpreter training will by definition be about current events, recent developments, topical jargon, slogans of the day, etc. – and will therefore be out of date very quickly, sometimes even within only one or two months, and certainly after a year or two.

It is possible to develop a stock of speeches with a longer shelf-life, on more universal and perennial topics that reference no current events at all. But these will be the exception; and being up to speed on current events is part of the job and the training. In practice, this means that a good instructor should not recycle more than 10–20%[7] of material from year to year.

However, finding the right speech is probably getting easier, with speech pools and abundant speeches and live recordings (e.g. of European Parliament sessions) now available online.

Beyond what students can find for themselves on internet, etc. and what instructors can lend them, the school should also build, index, maintain and regularly update representative (including varied and exotic) speeches and materials in an *audiovisual library*.

Teaching assistants (postgraduate students) can help with this job, with some supervision (given the experience needed to evaluate speech difficulty). Ideally, a file should be created for each recorded speech or complete event, describing the occasion and major issues touched upon, with any supporting documentation (a programme or agenda), terms and keywords, and links to background documents and glossaries, if any, for preparation. This file could also include

- a difficulty score as judged by previous cohorts of Y2 students, using a grid such as our SDI (see Appendix) with a brief description of the speech's main features and difficulties;
- archived recordings of good performances by previous students, and if possible, also good professional performances;
- ideally, a full transcript of the SL for students to study after using the speech for practice and follow against while checking their interpretation.

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7.   Our thanks to one anonymous reviewer for observing that even 20–30% might be too much, since students also hand on speeches to the next generation.

Online resources

The internet now offers access to a growing store of online practice materials, on the websites of institutions like the **EU or UN** as well as **online 'open' universities.** (A more eclectic, varied online pool of authentic conference speeches is not yet available, no doubt due in part to copyright problems).

As students begin practising in groups in each Experimentation stage, they can find practice material in speech repositories designed specifically for training. **Speechpool**[7], created by the interpreting programme at Leeds (UK) University with support from the EU, is a repository of videos of speeches prepared and delivered by students in various interpreting schools, in multiple languages and on different topics. The speeches are graded by users for difficulty, but there are no authentic conference speeches.

Political and economic speeches by leaders, ministers, CEOs and senior officials in almost any language can now easily be found on **YouTube,** via the **websites of Ministries and large corporations**.

Institution-specific and more challenging (technical or highly formalized) material for Consolidation and the final semester, may also be found on sites such as **un.org, C-SPAN,** or the **TED Talks**.

2.5.6 Topic and event preparation and brainstorming

Speeches for practice in class are simulations. The first imperative is to situate each practice speech in a context – speaker, audience, purpose, background – without which interpreting makes no sense. This preliminary phase is necessary *throughout interpreter training* to compensate for the artificial nature of the classroom situation and cover a wide range of different topics without demoralising students.

The purpose is to activate latent knowledge about the topic, and in particular, when the focus is entirely on acquiring a new *skill* (Consecutive, ST, SI), to eliminate problems of language and knowledge, such as proper names, titles and technical terms (which are bound to crop up occasionally in any realistic speech, however carefully chosen), and as far as possible, avoid the distracting search for linguistic equivalents.

In the early stages, the speaker begins by giving the general topic of the speech (later, this can be given in advance) and students are encouraged to 'free-associate' aloud, recalling and activating what they know about the issues involved, current controversies, etc. and any relevant words and phrases they can think of, especially in the target language of the present exercise. The instructor will usually have to prompt this brainstorming more or less actively depending on the students' personalities, group dynamics and culture.

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8. http://speechpool.net/en/about-speechpool (Accessed November 12, 2015).

The speaker also gives any proper names, titles and technical terms, which students should note on a *separate pad* for easy reference (a first introduction to the use of supporting documentation in interpreting.)

From Consolidation, students are systematically given topics and links and/or documents in advance for preparation (preparation skills to be taught in a special module: CC-9.2.5.1).

2.5.7 Student performance and discussion

2.5.7.1 *Taking turns and class involvement*
The instructor should aim to give all students the same number of turns and amount of attention in each class; if this proves impossible in a particular session, explain why, and remember to make it up later.

In addition to opportunities for individual performances, or in large classes, all students can and should be involved in various ways. For example, after an exercise in which one or more students got stuck on a tricky phrase, the instructor can go around the room to elicit many *different versions* from students of that phrase in context. (In Initiation, the instructor can also fabricate different contexts for the same phrase and ask students how they would render it in those contexts, quite differently in TL. This is very effective for building flexibility, and more fundamentally, for showing how the best TL versions are often not those in the dictionary.)

2.5.7.2 *Discussion: staying focused*
Discussion over the meaning or the best rendition of an expression or a passage may be necessary, but can also be distracting and time-wasting. Avoid lengthy but minor quibbles over meaning – especially when the speaker wasn't clear and it is not even a major point in his argument. Keep the focus on determining the intended or most logical meaning: the best rendition should then either follow quickly when someone thinks of a good phrase (or if it is supplied by the instructor, in the case of a stock recognized equivalent or a term of art or jargon that students have not yet met); again, don't waste too much time. Time spent (by the speaker, whether student or instructor) on text choice and preparation before class helps to avoid the sudden discovery of ambiguities which the speaker can't explain because the text has been chosen in a hurry and half-digested without researching the context.

2.5.8 Feedback

Giving constructive feedback to students – and the opportunity to act on it – is the core of teaching. Because of the wide variability among individuals (and speeches), instructors cannot *dictate* techniques but only draw attention to or demonstrate them (chunking, rephrasing…), or suggest possible local tactics and solutions (e.g. note down numbers in SI), or preventive measures for forestalling problems (improving linguistic readiness or world knowledge, preparation, posture, voice etc.).

The quality of feedback will depend to a large extent on the instructor's ability to correctly diagnose the cause of a problem from the symptoms, and propose remedies. This requires not only professional experience and clarity about the expectations of the student at this stage and/or of interpreters in real life, but also an understanding of the mental processes involved in the task.

2.5.8.1 *General principles*

1. **'3D Feedback'**: feedback must go beyond observation and critique of the product to include *diagnosis* of problems and recommendations for *treatment* (specific practice and drills, LKE [CC/TG-7] etc.).
2. Feedback should be **positive as well as critical**, and above all constructive, with suggestions for improvement. Instructors must be sure to frame feedback as a critique of the performance, not the student personally; and students must learn to accept it as such (Shaw et al. 2004). Some feedback is best given publicly in class, some is best given privately (for example, regarding facial or postural tics).
3. Feedback should provide a chance for the student to **self-correct**.
4. Feedback should focus on the **current intermediate pedagogical objectives** as specified in the course progression and made clear to students not later than the beginning of the class. In the first phases of introduction to each new skill (through Initiation and Coordination to Experimentation), feedback should be primarily **process-oriented**, then from Consolidation onwards, should focus increasingly on the **product**.
5. Feedback given to students should be **carefully noted**, for instance in a journal, by both the student, so that s/he can work on the problem, and the instructor, for sharing with the student's other instructors in pedagogical coordination, and in order to choose appropriate segments (or if the problem is common to several students, speech materials) to test progress on that particular problem at the next class.
6. Each student should receive some feedback from the instructor in each class, but in addition to comments on class performances, thoughtful and comprehensive feedback should always be provided on **tests and exams**, and after **mock conferences** and **internships**.

Finally, to avoid misunderstandings, students must come to terms with the possibility of failure (at the Midpoint or final PECI exam), and will then usually appreciate (occasional) explicit benchmarking to that standard.

There are three main opportunities for feedback:

a. *Direct monitoring of the performance in class* with comments immediately afterwards (or in certain cases interrupting, especially for work into B: see below), allowing immediate retry and improvement. In SI, this is possible only when the instructor is not the speaker.

b. *Comments on playback in class* after the performance (best followed by another performance, if still fresh) – this may be the only way of giving adequate fresh feedback in an SI class with multiple students;

c. *Written '3D' feedback* by the instructor after listening to recordings outside class. In SI, giving comprehensive feedback is only possible by recording and listening carefully, perhaps repeatedly, in this way. This should be provided to each student at least once or twice in a semester.

2.5.8.2 *Follow-up: stand-back vs. hands-on pedagogy*

If feedback is to be constructive, it must target problems unambiguously and offer a chance for improvement, either on the spot, or later, after doing some recommended exercises. Some distortions and dilutions are very subtle and hard to get at with general comments. Of the three methods of feedback listed below, two are 'hands-on' approaches which challenge the received wisdom in some schools in two respects: that instructors should only give general comments, and that they should never interrupt a student's performance. The authors' experience is that these ostensibly more 'intrusive' forms of feedback are both feasible and beneficial if the instructor has built a good rapport with the students and earned their trust.

i. *Macro-comments after a performance*

This relatively non-intrusive mode, in which students are allowed to complete a segment of several minutes of consecutive or SI before receiving feedback, has traditionally been the standard (often the only) method of giving feedback in leading schools. It is appropriate and sufficient

✓ for an exam;
✓ when a student is clearly unsettled;
✓ or whenever the focus is on a point of skill that must be assessed over a whole performance, such as the logical coherence of an extended argument; in consecutive or sight translation, for audience engagement, eye-contact, poise, demeanour and momentum; in all modes, for general polish or flow in delivery; and in the Consolidation and Reality stages, for coping, unflappability and general resourcefulness under difficult conditions (CC/TG-9).

However, this will not be enough to elicit progress on specific problems, when more targeted and constructive – possibly intrusive – feedback is needed.

ii. *Blow-by-blow critique*

Student A (or the class) may not understand why her performance, which was fluent and contained no 'mistakes', comes in for more criticism than that of Student B, who hesitated several times and got two numbers wrong. But an interpretation may fail due to cumulative minor flaws and distortions. Identifying these subtle problems and explaining how they spoil the result makes the difference between superficial instruction and true pedagogical quality that produces solid, reliable interpreters.

This means that, especially in the first few stages (up to and including Experimentation), a balanced but detailed, blow-by-blow critique must often be given, both immediately after a student's performance, using playback and a script of the original, and occasionally in more detail in writing. Consecutive performances can be **recorded on video** for a detailed analysis, passage by passage, of posture, eye contact, facial expression, pause, hand movements, etc. before drilling and redoing one or more times until there is a visible improvement.

iii. *Stop-and-start coaching* (see *Deliberate Practice*, 2.6.2)

Some aspects of technique need real-time intervention, or are too complex to describe retrospectively after the entire performance is over, even with the help of playback, and need to be addressed immediately, by interrupting. The first experience students will have had of being interrupted is the **Grandmother Test** in Initiation (CC-4.2.2), in which any nonsense produced during retelling is met with a loud 'Hunh?' from the appointed 'grandmothers' in the class. Stop-start instructor coaching can be seen as an extension of this in a 'hands-on' procedure (with advance warning and explanation to students, of course) in which the instructor interrupts the student with quick local, chunk-by-chunk coaching cues, asking for segments to be repeated, prompting corrections or offering solutions and better versions.

This method is most productive for drilling any specific problematic aspect of performance that is *locally* manifested (albeit with potential knock-on effects), including

i. Technique: in sight translation or early SI-text, to drill deverbalization and chunking, with 'on-line' prompts to look further ahead, or cues on where to start or how to 'escape' from an awkward structure.
ii. Language: for work into B, especially 'tough love' drills aimed at eliminating persistent errors of grammar, agreement or pronunciation, or for drilling more natural, expressive prosody.

The authors have found that motivated students consistently appreciate and consult teachers who, though seemingly 'harsh', do not hold back from frank and detailed

feedback – *provided* that, crucially, it is also constructive, reflecting visible effort on the instructor's part to diagnose the problem, even if she does not necessarily offer an immediate quick-fix solution. This appreciation is further strengthened if the instructor (i) can recommend targeted 'treatment' for the problem, especially if s/he can provide or point to material for the student to practise on; and (ii) if s/he also offers a model of performance by demonstrating, and can answer questions and challenges to them cogently.

Motivated students also understand the benefits of fine-grained guidance, including – once they have been explained – hands-on drills involving interruptions, prompts and re-doing of problem passages. Alongside other kinds of more holistic feedback, this format is beneficial for stubborn and unacceptable linguistic errors as well as local techniques like chunking, 'taking the plunge' (where and how to 'jump in' to a new utterance: CC-8.4.1/TG-8.4.2), looking ahead in sight translation, etc.

General and detailed feedback can be followed by more hands-on coaching. A student can do a passage once and the instructor can give macro-comments, then go through the whole thing blow by blow, then redo it in a stop-and-start-drill with a particular focus.

Intensive coaching is part of a method of training known as 'deliberate practice', which trainees can also apply in their own time, in private coaching or alone, as described in 2.6.2 and Table 2.2. To be effective, such coaching must be targeted, addressing the next level of skill, not tasks that are too far beyond the trainee's ability. Ericsson warns that "if a coach pushes you too fast, too hard, you will only be frustrated and may even be tempted to give up trying to improve at all". (2007: 6).

Show, don't tell: eliciting self-correction
For language enhancement, research in SLA suggests that 'recasts' (when the teacher repeats a student's incorrect utterance with the correct version) are not always the most useful kind of feedback, because students do not notice the correction. Better outcomes are achieved when the teacher helps the student recognize and correct his/her own error. The success of this method is attributed to the student's active participation in the corrective processes (Lyster 1998; Lee & Lyster 2015; Mackey et al. 2000; Russell 2009). The instructor must

i. probe for the cause of the error, identify it, lead the student to realize the problem, then elicit self-correction (instead of just telling the student what was wrong and what the correct version should have been); then
ii. construct some similar problem scenarios for the student to try solving straight away – for example, making up sentences in various contexts that exhibit the same problem structure or contain similar problem expressions, and make the student instantly produce good versions to show that s/he has understood the pattern.

2.5.9   Explanations, theory, metaphors and models

Theories, models, analogies, metaphors, diagrams and other ways of explaining a process are a more or less inevitable component of all teaching, but can never replace, only complement practice with feedback.

'Theory' in the form of generalized explanations and models of some part of the communication or interpreting process can play a key role in training at different levels – course design, instructor training and classroom – with the right dosage and timing, as discussed in TG-12. Many instructors use findings from the cognitive sciences (which include psychology and linguistics) to good effect – such as, for example, Relevance Theory to explain the role of inference and the many sources of context in communication (12.2.2), or Gile's 'Effort Models' (2009: 157 ff.) to explain limits on processing capacity (TG-6.8.3.1, 8.6.1.2), or his Gravitational Model of lexical availability (2009: 226 ff.).

However, we have no scientifically validated model of the whole process of interpreting, a highly complex task involving cognitive, linguistic, motor, and social skills. As with other 'performance' types of expertise, the practitioner turned trainer instinctively turns to metaphor, anecdote, and motivational lectures, in the hope that experience and enthusiasm will rub off on the eager trainee, along with earnest exhortations to hard work and practice.

A good metaphor can speak to the imagination of most students and is thus a respectable educational aid, and translation and interpreting teachers have always been fond of using them to explain the interpreter's task or role, or processes like note-taking or SI. Examples mentioned in these books include the metaphor of a **tree** whose pleasing exterior can be reproduced with new leaves (the TL) based on an enriched memory of its internal, branching structure (for Initiation, CC-4.2.2.1); or the Paris school's 'currant bun' (*brioche aux raisins*) to illustrate what happens to the different elements of a speech in the interpretation process (CC-4.3.1). In another cooking image, the **soup-mix**, consecutive notes can be seen as dehydrated soup-powder, with memory and the target language as the hot water that turns the powder back into soup; along similar lines, an '**hourglass**' or 'bottleneck' diagram can suggest how notes are selective, especially when most of the material is familiar, or can be pictured, or held in conceptual memory. A few notes suffice for each successive idea, being 're-expanded' into words later, with memory supplying elements of style, tone or emotion and the volume of notes relative to words shrinking as the speech progresses.

Another image, of the interpreter as a **forest or mountain guide**, highlights the role of preparation in proving an optimal communication service. While this applies in a limited sense to any mode that involves a 'capture' phase (an opportunity to visit the speech before rendering it, as in consecutive or sight translation),

it is especially apt for SI-text (CC-9.2.3.2). The guide goes over the route noting and marking its highlights, tricky passages, vistas and places of interest, rehearsing the tour she will lead on the following day, so that she can then sound confident while informing, guiding or entertaining her clients, as if she were long familiar with the terrain.

Theoretical explanations and metaphors are effective in the skills classroom *only* if

a. they are timely – usually after students have tried the task at least once or twice;
b. they speak to the imagination: the instructor must check that the analogy is helping, 'connecting' with the students' own experience and helping them understand their problems;
c. the concepts used are clear and unambiguous. Aim to agree on a 'metalanguage' about interpreting from an early stage in the course.

2.5.10 Agreeing on terms

Trainers sometimes find that students have misunderstood advice they receive – for example, an instruction like 'follow the speaker closely' might be taken as an invitation to translate literally instead of just an (intended) warning against falling too far behind; if another teacher urges them to 'stand back' from the words, students may complain that they are getting conflicting instructions (Takeda 2010). Clarity in teaching can be greatly improved by establishing a shared metalanguage among all teachers and students for discussing interpreting in class and in feedback. This can be done in the Theory class (TG-12.3). Examples of terms to be covered are given in the box below.

A shared metalanguage for discussing interpreting

Make sure that instructors/the school share with students an understanding of the use of a few key terms, such as:

Working languages: active/passive language (A, Bsim, Bcons, C)
Modes and settings: dialogue, full consecutive, community /PSI, conference interpreting

Listening and analysis: active vs. superficial/selective listening; discourse modelling (mental) vs. outlining (on paper); message, 'point', communicative intent; deverbalization; linguistic interference: calque, faux ami;

Concision, compression, summary/précis; abstracting/gisting; paraphrase;

Speaking: oralising vs. reading vs. improvising; delivery types: unprepared/ impromptu, semi-prepared, scripted (pseudo-oral vs. recited)

Consecutive: capture/delivery; cue(/key)words, links; mood/affect markers; verticality, indentation, stacking, boxing; signposting, packaging, cohesion: 'Ear-Pen Span'

Memory: episodic, echoic, short-term, long-term, schemas (scripts, frames); procedures
Attention(al) resources, processing capacity; cognitive (over)load; 'problem trigger' (Gile 1995/2009)

Language readiness, lexical availability; implicit and explicit competence; selective activation; 'syntacrobatics'; 'bilingual phrasebook'

Knowledge: world/encyclopaedic, specialized, relevant, local; what is 'technical'?; priming, activation

Exams (for transparency): predictive and summative assessment; criteria: fidelity, expression, delivery
Errors, omissions, vagueness, ambiguity, communicativity, demeanour etc.

SI: smart shadowing (same-language SI), cloze; (linear) chunking and joining, anticipation, framing and filling (approximation-compensation), entry point, placeholder, padding, segmentation, reformulating, simplification, generalization, abstracting

Processes vs. techniques vs. strategies (see 3.4.2.1); lag (décalage, EVS);

Expertise vs. survival: coping; parallel reformulation; stepping stones

Quality: goal of interpreting: default, optimized, constrained
Fidelity: basic, default and optimal
Accuracy: completeness, precision; omission, major meaning error, *contresens*
Presentation/delivery; over-translation, under-translation, distortion, dilution, vagueness
Expression: register, fluency, prosody, style, eloquence
Communicativity

*Optimizatio*n: of form/ of content /of process; annotating, explaining, clarifying, correcting, filtering, toning down, censoring…; cultural references: localize or preserve
Mediation, mediator; adversarial vs. cooperative communication; 'strong' mediation, advocacy, arbitration

Professionalism: craft, moral and ethical, service/practical; competence, expertise
Ethics: competence, integrity, confidentiality
Role: neutrality, fidelity, loyalty/affiliation
Sender, Receiver (addressee vs. listener), Client (vs. user); 'pure' user/listener

Market organization: consultant interpreter, agency, 'co-opetition'
Inquiry vs. option vs. firm offer

Cognitive and linguistic theory: context, cognitive effects, availability, schema, metarepresentation

2.5.11 Instructor demonstrations

Instructor demonstrations are usually highly appreciated by students and can be very helpful to them in all modes. Demonstration by the instructor of anything s/he is asking the students to do, from the first simple exercises like cloze, paraphrase or summary to the full interpreting task in each mode as it is introduced,

is necessary for clarity and accountability, good for credibility, and an excellent pedagogical tool, especially through the Q & A session which should follow. The best value is derived

► *In ST*: when students also have the text;
► *In Consecutive*: when the students can also see the instructor's notes – for example, by projecting them while they are being taken and keeping them on the screen during delivery,[9] and for the subsequent Q & A and discussion (with playback if necessary), perhaps with the instructor doing a self-critique (do as I say, not as I do!);
► From SI-Experimentation onwards, students can learn a lot about technique from listening to good interpreters working in their own (the student's) language combination, for example on visits to real meetings to listen in (with their permission) to different professional interpreters' performances. In class, the instructor can sit in the booth and do alternating segments of SI with the student (Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002: 186–7; see also Altman 1989b).

2.5.12 Combining teaching modes

These different teaching modes can and should be combined. Explanation can be combined and alternated with demonstration, then students can be guided slowly in a controlled stop-start procedure, to guide them in applying the technique. In consecutive, for example, the teacher can listen to a paragraph, write notes on the board, show what s/he chose to write down, explain why and how s/he captured the successive units of meaning – then have the student do slow-notes on a sentence or two, and

► Ask the student "What are you going to write down in the first sentence? Why? How?"
► Offer tips: "Say you wanted to get this thing down in your notes, what are the options for recording it fast and unambiguously? Abbreviation? Symbol? Arrow?" – talking the student through the process, asking questions and giving tips as you go.

In summary, the best way to bridge the declarative-procedural gap (see 3.2.4.2) is to alternate between practice-plus-feedback, prompting or coaching, and where useful, explanation or theory and occasionally, teacher demonstration. For example:

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9. On the use of digital pen technology, see TG-6.6.4 and Andres (2002), Orlando (2011, 2014) or Navarro-Hall (2012) and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDyi1keov8A (Accessed December 6, 2015).

1. (For initial or special exercises): The instructor first describes the task, giving an example;
(for full-task interpreting): brainstorming for contextual activation.
2. A student performs the exercise or task on the selected material.
3. The student is coached to find a better way ('procedural') with prompts or questions, or suggesting heuristics, and by then going around the class for possible alternatives.
4. Relevant knowledge ('declarative') can then be shared – a nice tip for a good word, a symbol or abbreviation for note-taking, or a metaphor or model to help picture the processing constraint and rethink tactics. If necessary, the instructor can also offer a complete or partial demonstration, and answer questions on her choices and technique from the class.
5. Finally, practise again, focusing on the current challenges (see deliberate practice guidelines).

To summarize this section, Table 2.1 contrasts some dos and don'ts of effective teaching.

2.6 Expertise and deliberate practice

Personal study and practice has always been recognized as playing a vital part in training to be an interpreter. Active and passive language proficiency and general knowledge will need constant and regular work before and during the course to attain the levels required for conference interpreting, continuing throughout the professional's career (perhaps peaking again at times with the addition of working languages).

At first there should be rapid linguistic progress and cognitive expansion from a low (good undergraduate) baseline, but private study will have to become increasingly targeted to be efficient, especially by the Consolidation stage, when more time will be taken up with homework preparing specific topics for classes and mock conferences.

In terms of practising interpreting skills proper, we have recommended that from the early Experimentation stage in Consecutive through to the end of the course, students devote around 8–10 hours per week to practising in groups, taking turns to prepare and deliver (or find) speeches (13.2.4.2). SI practice in pairs or groups outside class should also begin from Experimentation, but not before. Guidelines are set out in Appendix C to CC-5, with additional points for SI in CC-8.3.6.

However, research into the nature of expert performance and how it is attained shows that the *quality* of practice is at least as important as the number of hours

Table 2.1 Effective and ineffective teaching: classroom best practices in interpreter training

	Ineffective (don't)	**Effective (do)**	**Principle**
Feedback	Stopping at purely generic feedback: read a speech, listen to the interpretation, make some general comments and criticisms, mostly about the product (what was missed, what word or expression wasn't right), and move on.	Skilful pedagogical querying after each performance task to unravel problems – of language vs. technique vs. attention management, etc. Fine-grained, focused critique: ► Focus on a specific aspect (e.g. segmentation, pausing in the right places, etc.). ► Target weak points and specific challenges. ► Don't be afraid of detail.	'3D' feedback: a good instructor should be able to trace back most problems to their source, explain them and offer remedies or exercises. Example: in SI, have a script to follow against and mark points for feedback; then use the script to do a blow-by-blow ST-based exercise, focusing on SI technique, problem-solving, how to attack sentences, how to join up the chunks, etc.
Lectures and theoretical explanations	One-way lecturing that *never gets beyond* general declarative statements – either barrenly theoretical, or sweepingly exhortative and prescriptive – 'take fewer notes', 'raise the register', 'shorten your lag'.	To explain communicative or cognitive processes, use metaphor, allegory, or more sophisticated theory or models etc. – but *checking* that students have made the connection with their own experience by following up with free Q&A, discussion. Be ready to drop anything that doesn't work.	Imagination and clarity in explaining processes. Adapt choice of model, image or citations of research to what students respond to best.
Demonstration	Instructor only ever 'demonstrates' on easy, shorter passages, after the student has done the passage, or on material prepared beforehand; can't answer questions or explain.	Instructor demonstrates on the same materials and in the same conditions (unseen, etc.), again followed by an opportunity for Q&A, *checking* that students have drawn some useful lessons.	Offer a model of performance. Students learn more than we think from the opportunity to see the instructor doing the job and ask questions.
Class management	Waste valuable skills class time teaching domain knowledge or discussing details of terminology.	Announce topics in advance so that students can prepare on their own, and *check* how students have prepared the topic.	Focus class on Skills training, with Language support where necessary, leaving knowledge enhancement to students (with guidance on topic preparation).
Follow-up	General comments on how to do better, study more…	Provide or prescribe deliberate practice and targeted coaching.	Identify and target weak points and check for improvement.

put in. Ericsson and Smith (1991) identified the two aspects of expertise most generalizable across tasks as (i) acquired mediating mechanisms (TG-9.5.1); and (ii) deliberate practice.

2.6.1 Expert performance research

Researchers on interpreting have been interested to study how experts in various fields – air traffic controllers, tanker navigators, chess masters, concert violinists, figure skaters, electronic game champions and many others – perform these highly specialized tasks and develop and maintain their skills. Two broad conclusions emerge, about the mental configurations that act as mediating mechanisms to underpin expert performance, and the training and practice that maintain them.

Early studies found that most forms of expertise "are the result of vast amounts of knowledge and pattern-based retrieval mechanisms acquired over many years' experience" (Chase and Simon 1973). In their analyses of expert performance, Ericsson and colleagues have shown that experts have not only more but **better organized knowledge**, so that they can access it reliably when it is needed (Ericsson and Kintsch 1995; Ericsson 1996 and passim). Experts make greater use of recognition and retrieval than novices do because more tasks and components of tasks in the domain of expertise will be routine for them. In short, two key factors in expertise are relevant: knowledge organized in retrievable schemas, and the automation of (retrieval and other) procedures.

Deliberate, concentrated and task-relevant **practice** appears to be a critical factor in acquiring and maintaining expertise (Ericsson and Smith 1991). Practice itself has been found to lead to cognitive changes, allowing experts to **bypass normal information processing limits**, like Miller's (1956) famous basic working memory capacity of 7 ± 2 units (Charness et al. 1996; Clark 2008: 77–82; see discussion in TG-6.8.3.2).

Expertise is **domain-specific**, making generalization from studies of widely differing professions difficult, but the notion is applicable to interpreting. In expertise research, a 'domain' of expertise is a composite of procedures *and* specialized knowledge (K and S), both at least partly internalized (familiarized, made automatic). On this analogy, examples of 'domains' in interpreting might be 'SI on central banking' or 'consecutive for legal depositions', either of which could be selected by students for a training session.

The clearest shared feature of preferred training exercises in all domains was a combination of effort (or concentration) and **relevance to the criterion task**: asked what practice tasks would best help them improve, experts selected activities that

were almost identical to what must be done in actual performance (Starkes et al. 1996). The key characteristics of **deliberate practice** are described below.

2.6.2 Deliberate practice

Deliberate practice refers to highly targeted forms of individual training that focus on weak points, involve repetition and coaching, and are typically much more taxing than casual and random practice without particular attention to the choice of task and materials (Table 2.2). Such deliberate practice has been found to play a major part in the acquisition of expertise. Ericsson et al. (2007) observe that

> The development of expertise requires coaches who are capable of giving constructive, even painful, feedback. Real experts are extremely motivated students who seek out such feedback [and are] also skilled at understanding when and if a coach's advice doesn't work for them. The elite performers we studied knew what they were doing right and concentrated on what they were doing wrong. They deliberately picked unsentimental coaches who would challenge them and drive them to higher levels of performance. The best coaches also identify aspects of your performance that will need to be improved at your *next* level of skill.
>
> (2007:6)

Certainly – as is often the case with exciting new ideas – claims for the benefits of deliberate practice have sometimes been overstated, notably in the '10,000 hour rule' (the number of hours supposedly needed to become an expert), and the idea that "talent is overrated" (Colvin 2010) or that "no characteristic of the brain or body constrains an individual from reaching an expert level".[10] Recent research (e.g. Hambrick et al. 2013) has put things back into perspective. Expertise almost certainly needs *both* talent – for interpreting, in linguistic and verbal skills, in particular, whether innate or cultivated from early childhood – *and* hard work: interpreters are both 'born' and 'made'.

What is not seriously in doubt is that progress to mastery is accelerated – in individuals with aptitude – by deliberately choosing problems at the next level of skill, and working on them repeatedly, rather than doing unfocused practice, however extensive, on what you can already do well or what you most enjoy; and by accepting an intensive regime of practice with stop-start and repetitive coaching. The key features of deliberate practice are summarized in Table 2.2.

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10. Attributed to Karl-Anders Ericsson by HOW2, an open-learning course on deliberate practice.

Table 2.2 Characteristics of Deliberate Practice
(adapted from Shadrick & Lussier 2009: 293–294)

1	Repetition	Task performance is induced by presenting designed tasks rather than waiting for these task demands to occur naturally. A goal of deliberate practice is to develop skills that operate expertly and efficiently.
2	Focused feedback	Task performance is evaluated by the coach or learner during performance. There is a focus on elements of form, critical parts of how one does the task.
3	Immediacy of performance	After corrective feedback on task performance there is an immediate repetition so that the task can be performed to better match the processes of experts.
4	Stop and start	Because of the repetition and feedback, deliberate practice is typically seen as a series of short performances rather than a continuous flow.
5	Emphasis on difficult aspects	Deliberate practice will focus on more difficult aspects. For example, when flying an airplane normally only a small percentage of one's flight time is consumed by take-offs and landings. In deliberate practice simulators, however, a large portion of the time will be involved in landings and take-offs and relatively little in steady-state flight. Similarly, rarely occurring emergencies can be exercised regularly during deliberate practice.
6	Focus on areas of weakness	Deliberate practice can be tailored to the individual and focused on areas of weakness. […]
7	Conscious focus	Expert behavior is characterized by many aspects being performed with little conscious effort. During skill acquisition individuals acquire mental models that trigger immediate access to relevant actions and situational factors. In fact, if the expert had to attend to a few elements of the situation rather than the overall situation their performance [would be] degraded. During deliberate practice the learner may consciously attend to a particular element of the situation in order to improve some special aspect of task performance. After a number of repetitions attending to the desired element to ensure that it is performed as desired, the learner resumes performance while focusing on the overall situation rather than the particular element.
8	Work versus play	Characteristically, deliberate practice feels more like work and is more effortful than casual performance. The motivation to engage in deliberate practice generally comes from a sense that one is improving in skill.
9	Active coaching	Typically a coach must be very active during deliberate practice, monitoring performance, assessing adequacy, and controlling the structure of training.

Some observations are necessary to understand how these principles are best adapted to interpreter training:

i.   *Designed tasks* (1) are presented as more efficient in that they allow targeting of selected challenges rather than waiting until they occur naturally. In interpreting, to preserve authenticity and naturalness, speeches for practice would be carefully *selected* (as part of an MA project for example) and stored in school libraries, for a high incidence of target features like numbers, culturally loaded or 'untranslatable' items, speaker rudeness or incoherence, etc.

ii. *Repetition* (1 and 3): Most input speech for interpreting, though not necessarily 'original', is new every time in multiple dimensions, and a key challenge of expertise – in free SI, in particular – is to develop technique to deal with new, unseen material successfully at the first pass. Some trainers report repetition of the same SI exercise to be counterproductive, since students often repeat poor expressions (Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002: 176). But repetition may be effective for certain 'consistent-mapping' and therefore automatable responses (discussion in TG-3.2.3, 3.2.4), for example:

  –   for remedial correction of production problems that have relatively constant, clear-cut right and wrong responses regardless of context, such as stubborn errors of grammar and pronunciation in a B language. Also, in modes with more control like consecutive or sight translation, re-doing the same exercise can help to correct general problems such as verbal tics, voice melody, grammar, and even links and coherence.

  –   when practising on material that is not original, but rather frozen and formulaic (e.g. some institutional discourse), where performance (or the ability to 'survive', on fast and recited speeches) can be improved by knowing stock equivalents of both words and structures (CC-8.5.3–8.5.4).

Nevertheless, these are special cases. Repetition should be used sparingly, to avoid the risk that students might begin to dwell on word choice, thinking the solution lies there and never quite coming to terms with the inherent one-pass, never-repeated reality of interpreting.

iii. *Stop-and-start format* (4) can help for problems in these same two categories; but again, continuous flow must also be elicited frequently (as will be typical in class performance), building up to the fully integrated situation of mock conferences.

iv. *Targeting and automation* (7) is effective for isolated and identifiable local hazards as described above, and for various 'automatable' nuggets like cliché, jargon or boilerplate expressions for which interpreters should have ready equivalents – but again, the focus should always subsequently return to the whole ('gestalt') performance.

2.6.3 Private study and deliberate practice

Before they graduate, students should understand that to get from being *operational* (as of graduation – sometimes also called 'journeyman' level) to being *expert* (able in particular to deal with very difficult speeches) takes years of not only practical experience but also ongoing deliberate practice. This may include recording difficult speeches, keeping difficult texts, seeking out difficult speeches in particular genres for practice, recording one's own work, analyzing weak points in knowledge, language or skill, and then doing focused practice on them.

The disciplines and techniques for self-improvement can be taught in school, and should continue throughout an expert's career; indeed expertise research suggests that skills stagnate at 'journeyman' level without it. Colvin (2010) observes that "[great performers] isolate remarkably specific aspects of what they do and focus on just those things until they are improved" (2010: 68), and "never allow themselves to reach the automatic, arrested-development stage[11] in their chosen field [but instead] engage in ongoing deliberate practice in order to keep improving continuously" (ibid.: 83).

Interpreters who aspire to being true experts must naturally cultivate and nurture their skills constantly, just as concert pianists continue deliberate practice after they start being paid to perform concerts. Deliberate practice can bring actual improvement as distinct from mere maintenance.

2.7   Summary

Quality teaching is obviously key to successful training outcomes. In an updated apprenticeship model, the new 'master''s role is to guide and encourage, not just dictate and correct; to show rather than just tell; to sense when to slow down and explain, and when to speed up or put on a bit of pressure; to use whatever combinations of explanation, theory, imagery or demonstration it takes to be sure that your advice will mean something when the student next encounters the same problem ('do as I say, not as I do' won't cut it); to be clear and consistent, and careful not to contradict yourself; to be able to advise students on how to practise out of class; and not least, always to put yourself in the place of students who are probably at least as smart and keen as you, though perhaps less knowledgeable, and each of whom has yet to assemble the skills in their own way. All this takes dedication, and some

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11. The notion of 'plateaux' in skills acquisition that must be overcome to attain expertise goes back over a century (Bryan and Harter 1897, cited in Ericsson et al. 1993). For a recent study in interpreters, see also Tiselius (2013).

homework on *your* part (finding and sharing sources of materials, listening to student recordings, providing personalized feedback, coordinating with other teachers). Some key points to follow for successful teaching are summarized in Table 2.1.

Class size and configurations have already been discussed here in 2.4, but effective training also depends on certain 'upstream' enabling factors, not least an overall curriculum that provides for a progression in skills acquisition and task difficulty while covering all the other components of all-round professional competence. This design will depend on the overall pedagogical strategy, which in turn depends on our understanding of the task. This task analysis, and the rationale for our pedagogical choices, based on a critical review of 'component-skills' training approaches, are set out in the next chapter, followed by the main design features of our proposed curriculum, and an overview of assessment through the course.

Appendix A

Speech Difficulty Index (SDI)

This index (or calculator) uses four key parameters to estimate the general difficulty level of a speech for training or testing:

a. Subject Matter
b. Speed of delivery
c. Density and Style
d. Accent and Prosody

Each is evaluated on a 6-point scale. (This is considered good practice for several reasons;[12] the bottom and top levels anchor the extremes but will hardly be used in teaching applications,[13] leaving four operational levels, an even number that avoids a 'catch-all' dead-centre.)

Scores can be augmented with pluses [+] if more and finer distinctions are desired. As a very general heuristic, scores can be summed (when no values are extreme) to obtain a rough overall difficulty index (cf. Hönig 2002). The definitions of the four parameters and their levels are followed by some comments on this experimental scheme.

A. Subject Matter

Knowledge in conference interpreting trainees is expected to be at post-graduate level in general terms (roughly, up to level 3 on this parameter) but as the course proceeds, will increasingly be biased toward certain domains more often met in interpreting. From level 4, therefore, subject matter difficulty must be judged against the knowledge assumed or expected in trainees at the current stage in the course, not to general-population education levels. A topic that would be

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12. http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/vac/improvement/p_6.html (Accessed December 2, 2015).

13. With rare exceptions: for example, Density/Style 1 (very redundant, easy chatter) might be used in early 'Strand A' SI-Initiation exercises (CC-8.2.2).

considered 'specialized' in general education terms – for example, budgeting, climate change, renewable energies or development aid – will thus be considered 'moderate' for students if it is part of the mainstream target domain and has been abundantly covered in class, and for professional interpreters, even 'easy'. Conversely, an ostensibly 'high school' level topic – e.g. casual talk about football, golf, films – might be very difficult for a senior professional interpreter who happens to take no personal interest in that subject. To adjust for this 'subjective' factor, values can be lowered by a notch when the topic is within the target domain of the course, and raised if it has never been covered in class and probably unfamiliar to students. Difficulty also increases with any culturally-loaded, organization-specific, highly intertextual or original content.

1. '*Trivial*'.
2. '*Easy*' even for a high school audience to follow, relate to, understand, discuss.
3. '*Moderate*': pitched to an audience with university-level education, but readily within the grasp of non-specialists.
4. '*Professional*': mainstream in the market domain(s) targeted by the course (see CC-7.3.2, 'professional texts' for knowledge domains considered mainstream in most courses), and in which conference interpreting students are expected to have acquired relevant schemas and terminology.
5. '*Specialized*', drawing on knowledge, technical terms, categories and distinctions that most well-educated university graduates would not have outside their own discipline and experience. Professional conference interpreters without a personal background in the topic would need to prepare specially to do an adequate job. Students will have acquired some relevant knowledge and language, but such topics must be announced two weeks in advance of the final exam. Examples: in-depth discussions of financial architecture, doctrines of contract law or international law.
6. '*Technical*' and/or abstruse, targeting experts in a narrow and *unfamiliar* discipline. High density of unfamiliar technical terms. Would require extensive preparation for a professional conference interpreter, and many would not take this kind of assignment (e.g. medical, engineering), unless they had a background in the field.

B. Speed of delivery (wpm only indicative, of course[14])

1. '*Artificial*', controlled speed (<100 wpm).
2. '*Easy*' speed (100–120 wpm).
3. '*Moderate*' speed (120–140 wpm).
4. '*Challenging*' speed (140–160 wpm): professional conference interpreters can keep up, give a (mostly) complete if compressed version, but may find the pace uncomfortably fast and tiring.
5. '*Difficult*' speed (>160 wpm): even skilled professionals find it difficult to keep up, will drop content, must resort to gisting strategies.
6. '*Impossible*' speed: even skilled professional interpreters may well be overwhelmed (e.g. TV pre-election debate between multiple well-prepared candidates, journalists).

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14. 'Words per minute' is too rough a measure of delivery speed, yielding wide variations depending on the language and how we define a 'word' (whether agglutinative, like German, Turkish or Finnish, or isolating, like English or Chinese). Syllables per minute might be a better guide, but syllables are hard to count; also, the proportion of semantically-charged syllables seems to vary between languages (as well as speech genres, of course).

C. Density and Style

This category conflates information density (usually increased in prepared written presentations), style (register/formality, linguistic sophistication and complexity, lexical richness), and originality, or (un)predictability of concepts and arguments, as well as 'translatability'.

Density: the proportion of new to old, redundant or unpredictable information in context.

▶ *Low density:* e.g. one sentence with key new information followed by a few sentences of elaboration that is quasi-redundant or quasi-predictable.

▶ *Medium density:* one sentence with key new information followed by a few sentences of elaboration, but with lower redundancy/predictability and with specific facts, figures, names.

▶ *High density*: nearly every sentence contains new information; very low predictability; overall high frequency of names, terms, numbers, and detailed specific information.

Style includes factors such as 'literariness', register, lexical richness, syntactic complexity, sentence length, semantic density, discourse structure, rhetorical devices, originality or sophistication, but also translatability.

As with Subject Matter, in the case of **SI-text** the index of difficulty should be notched up one level if no text is provided, and down one level if text is provided in plenty of time to prepare (or for sight translation, if it is provided in advance or read out first). Values of this parameter are often correlated with the scale of *written-* or *preparedness*, given in CC-4.5 (q.v.).

1. '*Chat*': Redundant, predictable and/or unoriginal (but not incoherent) talk, using simple vocabulary, usually associated with (inexpert) impromptu delivery.
2. '*Informal (oral) presentation*': Low information density (comfortable redundancy) and/or high predictability; structured but in conversational style; may be impromptu or 'semi-prepared', as when delivered from a simple, clear PowerPoint or notes.
3. '*Formal (oral) presentation*': Some local high-density spikes with numbers, names, terms, but still mostly a comfortable oral presentation. Mostly spontaneous, but partly rehearsed and/or in more formal style, containing more sophisticated, crafted language. Usually associated with 'semi-prepared' delivery by a practised speaker.
4. '*Prepared Speech*': scripted, pseudo-oral speech, i.e. read out from a text but designed for presentation to a live audience, in a crafted style that interpretation would be expected to reflect (e.g. inaugural, valedictory, acceptance speech by a Nobel prize winner).
5. '*Statement*': recited text: declaimed written discourse in formal style that interested intended addressees can follow without difficulty, but has low redundancy and predictability and/or and striking, original style, and where interpretation is expected to be an 'oral translation' (Shermet 2012: see 8.2.1) that tracks the original closely and respects word choices, phrasing, etc. Examples: carefully drafted, nuance-rich official statement of position by a national delegation; legal brief, etc.
6. '*Manuscript*': Dense written discourse, unsuitable for oral delivery (e.g. complex written syntax that may bring even a reader up short); or any 'Statement' (category 5 above) that is read with poor prosody. This is a difficult task even for a professional conference interpreter, even with a text provided, due to style, density, complexity. Also in this category: highly creative, culture-specific or literary language (e.g. poetry); and incoherent discourse.

D. Accent and Prosody

1. *Standard mainstream accent with over-accommodating prosody* (student-interpreter friendly, or even 'for speaking to foreigners').
2. *Standard mainstream accent with natural prosody* that expresses contrasts, highlights new information, pauses between ideas, etc.
3. *Light regional* or *non-native* accent with intelligent prosody (e.g. in English: Henry Kissinger, Christine Lagarde, Kofi Annan), or native with subtle, low-key prosody.
4. *Marked regional* accent (Scottish, Australian, Québécois, Andalusian, Berner Oberland), or *stronger non-native* accent, that may be a challenge for non-natives to follow; OR speech delivered in a flat, unpunctuated stream that gives little clue to idea structure.
5. *Strong accent* that is difficult to follow even for some native speakers (e.g. some speakers from Indian subcontinent, South East Asia); OR *unnatural, opaque prosody*, or speech read out in a monotone, or with *poor diction* (mumbled, slurred, or in irregular staccato bursts, etc.)
6. *Impossible accent*, each sentence containing several words that are difficult to make out, taking some guessing even to get the gist.

Discussion and outstanding questions

No such scheme could cover all the many recognized factors of difficulty and their interactions. Some comments and caveats on this first or beta version of the index:

i. *Influence of interpreting mode*: The scales apply more fully to SI. At Density/Style 4 or higher, speeches are typically based on a script, which should be available to do ST (or Consecutive with Text, when there are significant deviations on delivery).
ii. *Cross-parameter comparability:* roughly, on each parameter, a value of (2) stands for 'easy', (3) is 'straightforward for a professional', (4) 'moderately difficult, commonly encountered by professionals', (5) 'challenging but doable for professionals', while (6) is impossible. However, the levels are not always guaranteed to be exactly aligned: Speed 4 especially (and for some regions, Accent/Prosody 4) would not normally be used in the first year, and may be more challenging than Density/Style 4 or Subject Matter 4 with preparation, both of which can be introduced towards the end of S2.
iii. *Interaction between parameters:* Subject Matter familiarity 'upstream' will determine how easy or difficult it is to cope with different levels of Speed and Density/Style. The interaction between Speed and Density/Style is perhaps the most critical text-related factor of difficulty, all other things being equal. Accent/Prosody will mainly have the effect of either facilitating or obstructing the whole process.
iv. *Adjusting to reflect direct experience:* an overall score could still be raised a notch or two based on an instructor's or a jury's subjective experience of doing a speech and/or a few of last year's good graduates' actual interpreting performance on the speech.

Different speech and text types are appropriate for each stage and test in the course – and sometimes, for each specific exercise – from Admission through to the final certifying exam [PECI]. Recommended SDI values are given in the appropriate sections throughout the book and recapitulated below.

CC-3/TG-4: Admission Interview

Speeches for retelling: Subject Matter 3, Speed: 3, Density/Style: 2(/3), Accent/Prosody: 2/3 (but should sample at least main standard varieties (e.g. for English: British, American).

CC-4/TG-5: Initiation to Interpreting

Short/dialogue interpreting (no notes): Subject Matter 1-3, Speed 2-4, Density/Style 2-4, Accent/Prosody 2-4.
Idiomatic Gist: Subject Matter 3, Speed, 2-3, Density/Style 5, Accent/Prosody 2
Listening Cloze: Subject Matter 3-4, Speed 0-1, Density/Style 3-4, Accent/Prosody 2
Discourse Outlining: Subject Matter: 3, Speed: 1, Density/Style: 2-3 Accent/Prosody: 2
Introduction to Sight Translation: Subject Matter: 2-3, Density/Style: 2-3

A **Trainer Speech** is an artificial speech, highly explicit and structured, that an instructor prepares and delivers in such a way as to control its key parameters – structure, delivery, accent, rhythm, etc. – as appropriate to the current stage in the progression, but usually only in the **Initiation and Coordination** phases of each new skill, after which authentic (but still carefully selected) speeches can be used. A Trainer speech should be plausible in terms of content and argument in the given context, and is therefore typically prepared on the basis of a real editorial, speech or article,[15] with appropriate oralisation and padding to include some redundancy, eliminate awkward or unusual expression or structures, or whatever is needed to keep the focus on the aims of the class.

A trainer speech will have a typical Difficulty Index of about 6-9, but no higher than a total of 10 or 3 on any one parameter. Trainer Speeches for early Consecutive and SI (Initiation and Coordination stages) are typically in the 1-2 range on all parameters, except where set differently for a specific purpose: for example, for a specific pre-SI-text offline drill, an appropriate text might be Subject Matter 4, Speed 0-1, Density/Style 5.

CC-5/TG-6: Consecutive Interpreting

Introduction to Note-Taking
Cue-words and Links: Subject Matter 2-3, Speed 1-2, Density/Style 2, Accent/Prosody 1-2
'Slow notes' (Trainer Speech): Subject Matter 3, Speed: 1, Density/Style 2-3, Accent/Prosody 2.
Coordination: Subject Matter 2-3, Speed 1>>2, Density/Style 1-2, Accent/Prosody 1-2.
Experimentation: As this stage progresses, occasionally notch up *one* parameter from Coordination (but only *one at a time*) – e.g. to Subject Matter 3, OR Speed 3, OR Density/Style 2 OR Accent/Prosody 3.
Consolidation (authentic speeches): Subject Matter 4, Speed 3-4, Density/Style 2-4 (if higher, script should be provided for ST), Accent/Prosody 2-4.
Advanced (Reality): Subject Matter 4-6, plus occasionally Speed 4-6, Density/Style 3-6, Accent/Prosody 2-6.

CC/TG-8 and CC/TG-9: SI and SI-Text

SI-Initiation
　　Strand A (easy on-line): Subject Matter 1-2, Speed 2, Density/Style 1-2, Accent/Prosody 1.
　　Strand B (paused-input): Subject Matter 2-3, Density/Style 2-3, Accent/Prosody 1-2.
　　Spoonfeeding (transition to real SI): Subject Matter 1-3, Density/Style 2-3, Accent/Prosody 0-1.
SI-Coordination
　　Training Wheels and Simultaneous Consecutive: Speed (2)-3, Density/Style 2-3.
　　Take-off: 'Trainer Speech' (see above).

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15. An example of an online source of raw material for preparing trainer speeches in English might be http://www.project-syndicate.org/ (Accessed November 12, 2015).

SI-Experimentation:

    Free SI: Subject Matter 1-3, Speed 2-4(>>5), Density/Style 1-4, Accent/Prosody 2-4. (Aim for total score in the range of 10-13, but not higher.)

    Introduction to SI-text: Subject Matter 2-4, Speed 1-2, Density/Style 1-3, Accent/Prosody 1-2.

SI-Consolidation: (free SI and SI-text): Subject Matter 4-5, Speed 3-4, Density/Style 3-5, Accent/Prosody 2-5. (For introduction to **relay**: Speed 1-2 and/or Density/Style 1-2, Accent/Prosody 1-2.)

Reality: Subject Matter 4-6, Speed 4-5(6), Density/Style 3-5(6), Accent/Prosody 2-5(6).

(Bracketed values show 'extreme' levels that should only be given once or twice, to draw 'object lessons' on coping strategies or on the limits of the possible.)

Assessment and exams

Indices for testing are indicative. Materials should be chosen to fully test the prescribed exam criteria, and may need editing to cover specific KSAs (see TG-11.6.3.4).

TG-3: Midpoint Exam (or midpoint tests for credit [see also TG-13.3.5])

Sight Translation: Subject Matter 3-4, Speed 2-3, Density/Style 3-5.
Consecutive: as for end-point of Consolidation stage.
Advanced Comprehension, e.g. of C language: Subject Matter 4, Speed 4-5, Density/Style 3-6, Accent/Prosody 3-5.

**TG-11: Professional Exam in Conference Interpretation
(PECI or 'Diploma' Exam)**

Subject Matter 3-5, Speed 3-4(5), Density/Style 2-5, Accent/Prosody 2-4(5).
(See TG-11.6.3 for details and explanation.)

One or two passages with Speed and/or Density/Style at level 6 may be included to test coping strategy under extreme conditions.

Curriculum and progression

3.1 Introduction

Traditionally, conference interpreters have been trained in a form of apprenticeship in which they practice in and out of class on more or less real-life tasks, first in consecutive, then in simultaneous, receive feedback from their instructors, and undergo strict eliminatory exams at admission, midpoint and graduation. Recently, regulatory reform in higher education and the influence of a componential approach to expert-skills training have challenged this traditional skills progression and assessment regime.

Interpreting fits the definition of a complex cognitive skill in some but not all respects. In this chapter we examine the appropriateness of the component-skills approach for conference interpreter training (3.2.3), and defend a curriculum design based on a progression from more static to more dynamic and time-constrained versions of the task, and on increasingly challenging materials and realistic conditions ('incremental realism', TG-2.1.2; 3.2.3.5), culminating in the full-task simulation needed to appreciate the social and relational dimension of the task required for mature professionalism. Each skill is trained in five stages – Initiation, Coordination, Experimentation, Consolidation and Reality (3.3) – but some constituent skills cross-cut these stages, and some are more 'automatable' and will benefit from separate focused drills.

In-course assessment is recommended, preferably including a midpoint test to check readiness for training in SI (3.4). (Alternative workarounds to meet regulatory constraints in some countries are discussed in TG-13).

This chapter completes our rationale and detailed proposals for updating the standard training paradigm (3.5) to embody a more scientific pedagogy, a more interactive student-teacher relationship (3.2.5), and best practices in assessment and testing (see also TG-11), but without sacrificing the realism and validity that have been the traditional model's strongest points.

3.2 Revisiting the standard training paradigm

The 'standard paradigm' of conference interpreter training (Mackintosh 1995) has been developed over two or three generations of experience across the world, and is still implemented with variations[1] by most leading schools. Some historical context will help to understand the state of the art and evaluate the improvements that we propose.

3.2.1 Origins: instinct and apprenticeship

Today's leading schools were born in response to an urgent demand for operational interpreters, first from the new international organizations, then sustained by the rapid growth of a market in both private and public sectors. Some of the first practitioners became trainers, teaching instinctively and from personal experience in master-to-apprentice mode, and in a handful of cases managed to retain enough autonomy as course leaders in their host institutions to run highly successful programmes, several of which survive today.

   Theory and research mostly came later, and have largely been pursued alongside practical, intuitive training rather than shaping it. Even where theory and practice seem to have evolved in a plausible symbiosis – as at the ESIT, in Paris, for example – trainers have generally looked to theory to confirm or support their intuitions, rather than to test or correct them.

   With institutional recognition, the intuitive training methods of these early pioneers, who had helped to set up interpreting in the UN or the European Communities, gradually crystallized into structured programmes in centres like Geneva, Paris, Washington or London (now closed or downgraded in these English-speaking countries: see discussion in TG-13). These were followed and emulated from the 1960s onwards in a series of similar, mostly two-year MA-level courses that found homes in a handful of European and North American universities and a few other centres (Cameroon, Lebanon and from the 1990s, East Asia), as well as shorter, more targeted or intensive courses of a few months to a year that were typically run for their in-house staff by organizations like the UN or the European Community.

   Many (but not all) of the methods recommended by early trainers have left their mark in contemporary courses. Herbert (1952), for example, recommended skills progression (consecutive before simultaneous) and some specific exercises like same-language shadowing, moving on to paraphrasing, first in the native then

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1.   See TG-13.2.

the B language. Ilg (1959) advised progression also in subject matter and style, from easier to harder topics and registers. In contrast, few today would subscribe to Herbert's belief that SI could be self-taught through practice from fast, crackly radio programmes (cited in Moser-Mercer 2005: 215), although the 'DIY' tradition seems to have survived in numerous manuals for students (especially in some emerging markets) that dispense with theory, progression or curriculum design.

One school, the ESIT in Paris, developed a more complete theoretical basis for training, emphasizing sense extraction over linguistic conversion, while also promoting a constructivist, step-by-step (though resolutely holistic) approach to building skills, supported by theoretical arguments drawing on the authors' own research. This approach was enshrined in the only 'systematic' handbook of conference interpreter training to appear before the present volumes, Seleskovitch and Lederer's *Pédagogie raisonnée* (1989/2002).[2]

With this one exception, however, theoretical inputs have remained discreet. Conference interpreter training in many leading schools still seems to rely primarily on the instincts of senior peers, translated into curricula (in their role as course leaders), exercises and feedback in class (in their role as individual teachers), and decisions to select and qualify candidates (in their role as jurors in initial selection, intermediate evaluation or final qualifying exams).

This model has been promoted by AIIC, and 'validated' to some extent by default, in the virtual absence of empirical research, but also by its apparent success in producing operational conference interpreters. However, some of its features have been criticized on scientific and methodological grounds, or have come under pressure from regulatory constraints (see TG-13.3). These challenges need to be addressed in any project to update the training of conference interpreters.

3.2.2 The call for a scientific basis for training

In the 1980s and 1990s, a movement emerged to challenge this model and call for more scientific, standardized or objective methods of training, testing and evaluation.

First, the dominant training paradigm and testing methods were criticized for being subjective, unreliable or ineffective (see e.g. Gran & Dodds 1989). Using 'realistic', holistic interpreting tests (retelling) for selection and initial training, for example, was challenged on the grounds that this was precisely what the candidates had come to learn (Dodds 1990). In the absence of any audit or evaluation

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2.   Published in English as *A systematic approach to teaching interpretation* (tr. J. Harmer): see References.

of training practices, even the added value of the traditional pedagogy could be questioned – perhaps the most famous schools simply attracted and certified talented candidates who would have succeeded under any training regime?

These questions coincided with a resurgent interest in research on interpreting, and calls for more 'scientific' training methods, in particular:

▶ modelling the task in terms of cognitive management, using schemas like Gile's (1995/2009) 'Effort Models';
▶ teaching component sub-skills before the full task (Lambert 1992; de Groot 2000);
▶ drawing on research in expert-skills training in other fields (air traffic controllers, chess masters, sports commentators, etc.: see Moser-Mercer et al. 2000: 108), known as the expert-novice paradigm;
▶ teaching explicit and specific strategies, rather than just letting students find their own way (e.g. Riccardi 1996, 1998; Kalina 1998);
▶ adapting pedagogical models from mainstream education, notably in language teaching (Arjona 1983, 1985);
▶ advocating more student-centred, interactive approaches, using techniques like student logs, journals and portfolios (Sawyer 2004).

In the past twenty years, schools have experimented with these inputs, but not to the extent of overturning the traditional model. Certainly we have little or no empirical data to compare the effectiveness of different methods, for the same reasons that bedevil all research in this field: a small, mobile and heterogeneous population, problems accessing comparable data – but also, year-on-year changes in school programmes and cohort composition, and the absence of commonly agreed performance standards. It is probably still the case that "[a]s a research topic […] the pedagogy of interpreting has generated little systematic investigation, but a comparatively large body of experiential description" (Pöchhacker 2004: 177).

On a theoretical level, many of these proposals reflect the belief that a more componential, analytic approach, drawing on research on expert performance and the training of complex cognitive skills, offers a more solid and scientific basis for interpreter training than traditional more holistic or intuitive methods.

3.2.3 Component-skills approaches

3.2.3.1 *Component skills (part-task) vs. holistic training*
Probably no serious interpreter training programme has ever applied an uncompromisingly holistic, black-box approach in which students would only ever practise the full task on fully authentic materials, even in a bygone behaviourist era. Trainers have usually tried to simplify the task in some way at first, if only to allow

a gentle progression towards real-life conditions. However, the underlying model of the process that informed training has usually been implicit, internalized by instructors from their experience, even when articulated in some respects (as in ITT for example), rather than an explicit 'task analysis' to be translated, for example, into a protocol for part-task training.

Today, trainers and researchers are said to agree that interpreting is a complex task composed of interdependent sub-skills (Kurz 1992: 245; Moser-Mercer et al. 1997), but there is less agreement on how to subdivide the task into such skills, on whether and to what extent they can or should be taught separately, in sequence or in parallel, and on how to ensure their subsequent integration in the criterion task. One important difference is the relative emphasis on decomposing and/or simplifying the task mainly for the purpose of *progression*, or on fractionation into isolated sub-tasks to be drilled with a view to *automating* them to free up attention for those components needing more conscious control.[3]

Subdivisions of the task theorized in the literature vary widely in their granularity. Most modellers recognize a rough split into reception (comprehension), language transfer (or translation, or deverbalization) and production; or analyse these further into such sub-skills as semantic analysis, reasoning, paraphrasing, generalizing, condensing, expanding, explaining, register shifting, anticipating, inferring or self-monitoring (e.g. Kalina 2000); some have isolated 'non-automatic' components such as listening/analysis, memorizing, production and coordination (Gile 1995/2009). Further examples of sub-skills identified by different authors include syntactic transformation (Kalina 2000: 23), public speaking (Weber 1990), situation analysis (Thiéry 1990), assignment preparation and terminology research (Schweda Nicholson 1989), etc.

Every school (even those reputed for their holistic approach) has students do partial tasks in the preparatory stages, such as counting backwards while listening for recall (sometimes called dual-task training), phonetic or semantic shadowing (repeating, or rephrasing, without a change of language), or talking *about* what the speaker is saying instead of translating ('*reportage*' or '*bavardage intelligent*'). Some tasks, like short consecutive without notes or sight translation, can be seen as part-tasks with respect to SI and SI-text, with the simultaneity constraint suspended, but also happen to be criterion tasks in their own right.

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3.   "One reason for the benefit of part-task training is that it allows automaticity to develop for those task components that remain consistent across conditions. As a consequence, when the whole task is performed, the performer can devote more attention to those aspects of the task that cannot be automatized" (Proctor and Dutta 1995: 291). (Note on terminology: usage varies, so we have kept 'automate' for both human and machine processes, to avoid the cumbersome 'automatization', 'automatizable' etc.)

Among advocates for a 'stronger' component-skills approach, some simply invoke the evident complexity of the task, while others rely on the theoretical complex-skills training literature.

According to Lambert, "there are […] so many ongoing activities in SI that […] any pedagogically sound approach should tease these ongoing activities apart, differentiate the component skills, and where possible, provide training experiences in each one" (1992: 265). Lambert (1988, 1989, 1992) advocates a mixed componental-progressive training protocol in twelve "clearly delineated steps interpreters should go through", from listening and memory exercises through shadowing, dual-task training, on-line paraphrasing, abstracting, closing, sight translation, 'sight interpretation' (i.e. SI-text), processing digits, proper names, technical words and acronyms, lagging (EVS) exercises,[4] anticipation and left and right-ear processing, before beginning consecutive and SI.

De Groot (2000) argues the case for part-task training both for automatable tasks, such as word-retrieval, and 'effortful' components, such as coordination or attention control (cf. Gile 1995/2009). She also proposes progressing gradually towards SI via shadowing, first phonetic, then within-language paraphrase (which we have called 'smart shadowing': TG-8.6.3), and exercises to develop attention control. Interestingly, de Groot cites positive results for transfer to the whole task reported in the literature (Gopher 1992), not by training this subskill in isolation, but in an 'emphasis change' (or integration) protocol in which trainees do the whole task but are directed to focus on different components at different times.

It is not too surprising that traditional practitioner-trainers might respond to advice from cognitive psychologists rather as an old craftsman who has learned his trade hands-on (and passed it on to his apprentices) reacts to the clipboard-carrying researcher who comes to tell him a more scientific way of teaching his skill 'by numbers'.[5] But while more open-mindedness is certainly called for when examining how a componential-skills approach might be applicable to interpreting, two key questions cannot be sidestepped.

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4. Lambert (1988, 1992) mentions drills for checking lag on "words, phrases, short sentences", progressing in technicality (general, economics, science, conference terminology). Students asked to repeat or interpret first with one-word lag then longer, up to 5 words or more, a technique said to help students find their optimal lag. As previously discussed, we do not favour teaching the management of lag in terms of delays counted in words.

5. As was somewhat apparent as early as the 1977 Venice symposium that brought these two groups together (Gerver and Sinaiko 1978).

First, "[w]hatever methods are used to teach […] specific sub-skills […], care should be taken to verify that these sub-skills are actually *relevant for SI*" (Kurz 1992: 250, our emphasis). The relevance of some proposed sub-skills – shadowing, in particular – has been vigorously challenged by many practitioners (e.g. Kurz 1992: 248; Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989: 168; see discussion in TG-8.6.3). Similarly, de Groot's (2000) proposal to drill fast translation of words known to be hard to retrieve because of 'non-straightforward mappings' between the languages can also be questioned, since as interpreters know, these are precisely the features that require more effortful, higher-order processing to conceptualize and reformulate, drawing on cognitive resources such as context. (In contrast, we also recognize the need for students to build up a 'bilingual phrasebook' for largely automatic retrieval – 'greasing the groove' in CC-8.5.3 – but this can only work for relatively all-purpose, context-neutral standard or recurring words, phrases and patterns that need only a small residual effort of vigilance.)

Secondly, according to Kurz, "interpreters, instructors and trainers agree that SI should be taught by […] isolating problems and focusing on variables one at a time, and at a later stage, combining them into progressively more intricate structures" (1992: 245). But what do we know (or can reasonably apply to our task) about how sub-skills are integrated? On this, the interpreting literature is mostly silent, but studies in part-task training suggest that some factors and training designs are more favourable to integration in the full task.

First and foremost, experts in complex skills training all agree that the most successful training programmes are those that start from a careful task analysis "that specifies the task components, interactions and the processing demands on the individuals" (Proctor & Dutta 1995: 291). Let us first see if and how published models of interpreting can help us with this step.

3.2.3.2 *Task analysis: models of interpreting*

In modelling the interpreting task, researchers from inside and outside the profession have drawn on intuition, observation and experiment, but also more or less directly on sociology, cognitive psychology and linguistics for concepts and component processes. All such models remain very tentative due to the complexity of performance data, small samples, high inter-subject variability, and the challenge of ensuring ecological validity. Two broad perspectives can be distinguished (for fuller overviews of models of interpreting, see Setton 2003a, 2013, 2015).

Cognitive process models focus on the interpreter's mental operations, and typically draw on cognitive psychology to model such component processes as speech comprehension and production, memory, attention/resource allocation and coordination (e.g. Gerver 1976; Moser 1978; Chernov 1979, 2004; Lederer

1981; Gile 1995/2009; Paradis 1994; Darò and Fabbro 1994; Lonsdale 1997; Shreve and Diamond 1997; Setton 1999; Mizuno 2005). Some models also highlight the linguistic transformations in interpreting (e.g. Chernov 1979, 2004; Lederer 1981; Setton 1999), drawing on theories of communication, discourse analysis or linguistic pragmatics.

Social or relational models focus more on the shifting dynamics of the communicative relationship between participants in the mediated event, including the interpreter (e.g. Kirchhoff 1976; Stenzl 1983; Salevsky 1994; Pöchhacker 1994; Feldweg 1996; Poyatos 1997; Kalina 1998; Wadensjö 1998; Kondo 2003). Alexieva's (1997) model, for example, addresses multiple parameters on which an interpreter's role can vary in different situations: distance vs. proximity (between speakers, addressees and interpreters); formality of setting and conventions; cooperativeness or initiative for negotiation; or the interactants' relative status and the convergence between their goals (from cooperative to adversarial, as in legal proceedings).

The distinction between social-relational, cognitive and linguistic models is not watertight: several models factor in context (which can be seen as either a social or a cognitive construct), to link the interpreter's mental states and productions to the unfolding situation.

Models of interpreting have not generally been 'designed' specifically for research or training, but some have been influential in one or both of these uses. Before adopting a research model as a basis for a componential approach to training, we need to be clear on what kind of a task interpreting is, whether all or part of it (cognitive, social-interpersonal and linguistic aspects) lends itself to part-task training; and if so, how such separate modules should be sequenced; and last but not least, how improved performance on each will transfer to the full task.

3.2.3.3   *What kind of task is interpreting?*

First, what exactly is a 'complex cognitive skill'? Van Merriënboer (1997) lists the main features as follows:

i.   Complex cognitive skills encompass a (sometimes large) number of constituent skills, […] at least some [of which] involve conscious processing, and the majority of which is in the **cognitive** domain, as opposed to the affective or motor domain. Language skills are an example of complex cognitive skills, [but] **interpersonal** and **social** skills fall outside the definition (1997: 19–20);

ii. Complex cognitive skills and their constituents exhibit **goal-directed behaviours** (1997: 21);

iii. A complex cognitive skill is not the sum of its constituent skills, but a hierarchy in which the constituents are controlled by higher level strategies – so constituent skills are better viewed as *aspects* of the whole skill than as its parts (1997: 21–22).

Let us first see how these characteristics fit interpreting, then try again to analyse the task for training purposes in this light.

First, in regard to point (i), we can accept that the majority of sub-skills in interpreting lie in the cognitive as distinct from the affective or motor domains. (Much of the complex-skills training literature deals with 'industrial skills' with significant perceptual-motor components: these are not entirely absent from interpreting – e.g. document handling – but clearly secondary to cognitive activity). However, as we have seen in an entire class of models in Interpreting Studies, interpreting also entails significant interpersonal (relational) and social skills. The relative importance of cognitive vs. social-interpersonal skills in the interpreter's task may vary between settings (and in conference interpreting, between consecutive and SI), but clearly a significant dimension of the task falls outside the scope of the (decomposable) complex cognitive skill.

As regards (ii) and (iii), to the extent that interpreting is a complex cognitive skill, it seems to fit the description of a goal-oriented hierarchy of interdependent constituent skills that must be combined and controlled by higher-level strategies in the service of the goal (i.e. enabling communication). In other words, this is not 'multitasking' in the sense of certain psycholinguistic experiments that challenge subjects to combine multiple, mainly motor-perceptual tasks with *different goals,* and which therefore each claim priority attention, so cannot be done simultaneously without one or more suffering a performance decrement (see discussion of 'multitasking' in CC-8.6.1).

The same (complex cognitive skills) paradigm broadly identifies two different kinds of constituent skills:

> **Automatic processes** are routine, **rule-based** behaviours that require little or no attentional effort, are applied in the same way every time to identical situations (recurrent skills), but can be dangerous when incorrectly triggered (for example, braking sharply if the road is icy).

> **Controlled processes** require focused attention, are easily overloaded, and are prone to errors, [but] are flexible and can be used in a wide variety of situations. These processes use **schemas** (abstract knowledge adaptable to situations, such as using a map when driving) (Van Merriënboer 1997: 22–23; our emphasis).

On this basis, let us tentatively sort interpreting into sub-tasks that typically claim different levels of attention (cf. similar hypotheses in e.g. Lederer 1981; Gile 1995/2009), and thus offer different possibilities for part-task automation:

a.   Higher-level cognitive tasks (analysis, pattern recognition, schema retrieval, conceptualization, reformulation, conscious monitoring of own production and situation);

b. Mixed cognitive + perceptual-motor (listening + note-taking, eye-ear-voice coordination for sight translation, SI-text);

c. Peak attention demands (for a cognitive, linguistic or social-relational component) at partly unpredictable times and levels: e.g. severe comprehension difficulty, demand for eloquence, diplomatic judgment, optimization;

d. Semi- or almost fully automatable procedures (transcoding one-to-one lexical equivalents, set phrases, perhaps even some structural patterns), for which isolated task drills are necessary.

This rough analysis of the interpreting task into sub-skills reflects a digest of suggestions in the literature already quoted, though terminology may vary. It is easy to see how interpreting will require varying combinations of these or similar constituent operations with their different demands on resources (or attentional/processing capacity).

In 3.2.3.2 above we asked two questions, raised directly and indirectly by Kurz (1992), that may be seen as implicit tests for the appropriateness of a componential-skills approach to interpreter training: how relevant are the proposed sub-tasks to the full task?; and how does competence acquired in separately drilled sub-tasks transfer to the full task? We have tried to address the first of these questions; let us now look at the second.

3.2.3.4 *Conditions for effective part-task training*

It is widely acknowledged that "for difficult tasks and tasks with independent components, part-task training [i.e. practice on some subset of task components as a prelude to the practice or performance of the whole task] can lead to improved learning efficiency" (Proctor & Dutta 1995: 275). Part-task training can be designed in various ways, but there is no universal answer to the critical question of how well training on components transfer to whole-task performance: "we can only try to predict [this] by applying task analysis to the task in question" (ibid.).

Many different part-task training designs are described in the literature: *fractionation* into tasks trained in isolation, or *simplification*, or partial *integration*, etc. The choice of an appropriate protocol, which will determine in particular how well the partial skills will then transfer to the whole task, seems to depend on some key factors, notably:

a. **How automatable is each (sub)task?** Which of the sub-tasks are 'consistent-mapping' (only one correct response to a given recurring stimulus), as opposed to 'variable-mapping' operations?

b.   How critical is the **time-sharing and/or coordination component** in the full task, as compared to the ease of doing each of the individual sub-tasks in isolation? (Proctor and Dutta 1995: 275 ff.).

Our brief digest of the collective wisdom of all those who have tried to understand and model interpreting, and our own tentative task analysis, suggest that we can indeed identify interdependent sub-skills in the task (essentially cognitive and linguistic, but also perceptual and motor) that may vary in number and complexity on different occasions (see the more complex, multi-source tasks described in CC/TG-9); and that some sub-operations are routine, recurrent or even consistent-mapping, and therefore presumably automatable to varying degrees (e.g. translating terms with fixed, invariant equivalents across languages).

Wightman and Lintern (1985) observe that **fractionation** (and recombination) of a task into components for training purposes works best when there is relatively little need for time-sharing between sub-tasks, but less well when each component is relatively easy to perform and the main difficulty is in coordination (1985: 278). In interpreting, clearly the time-sharing/coordination element is very significant (see e.g. Gile 2009) as compared to the difficulty of doing certain relatively easy sub-tasks (understanding, noting, speaking, translating…) in isolation. This would seem to rule out the effectiveness, for example, of breaking SI down into translation and shadowing.

By contrast, de Groot and others report good transfer results to the criterion task with an **integrated** method, in which trainees practise on the whole task but with changes of emphasis (Fabiani et al. 1989; Gopher 1989, 1992; de Groot 2000). These trainees were also found to be better prepared for resisting disruption when secondary tasks were introduced – perhaps an advantage in unpredictable 'multimedia' interpreting conditions as described in TG-9.6.

Some sub-tasks, however, may be both recurrent and of a *consistent-mapping* type (where the same stimulus always gets the same response) and – at least at first – difficult even in isolation, making them prime targets for automation. Separate deliberate-practice (intrusive and repetitive) drills might be beneficial for sub-operations in category (c) (see last section), such as learning ceremonial language formulas, pronouncing difficult proper names, or avoiding subtle false cognates; and category (d), such as abbreviating for recurring words in consecutive note-taking, converting numbers between Asian and European systems, B-language grammar enhancement and learning stock translations and formulas.

It therefore seems possible to distinguish at least three kinds of sub-skills of interpreting, suited for teaching on a continuum from partial/isolated to more holistic, integrated exercises:

a.   more or less automatable operations that can usefully be trained separately (**fractionation**) – e.g. number conversion, word abbreviation;

b.   controlled, semi-integrated part-tasks that already resemble the full task in some respects (**simplification**) – e.g. paraphrasing, short consecutive without notes;

c.   higher-level strategic behaviours that can only be developed when the cognitive sub-goals can be met with attention to spare (holistic, **full-task simulation**) – e.g. optimization, cultural mediation.

However, task analysis is only half the battle; authors on expert skills training are also attentive to practical pedagogical criteria such as maintaining trainee motivation.

3.2.3.5   *Incremental realism and motivation*

In our approach we have tried to reconcile the lessons that can be drawn from the wider literature on complex skills training with those of our own experience of both practice (interpreting) and pedagogy.

One such lesson, the need to maintain motivation through variety and realism (even where simplified) is corroborated even by authors training complex skills without a significant linguistic or social-relational component. For part-task training of air-traffic controllers, Schneider and Fisk (1982) advocate such rules as "vary those aspects of the tasks that vary in the actual situation", "maximize active participation", "maintain high motivation" – and especially, "present information *in a context that illustrates the criterion task* [our emphasis] without information overload" (cited in Proctor et al. 1995: 283).

Motivation is an important factor in preferring incremental realism as the dominant approach over fragmented, part-task training in sub-skills. Theoretical componential modeling leads to simplifications that do not necessarily fit the way humans actually do these complex tasks, or the way they integrate or combine the separate operations[6] (Setton 2002a). Theoretical breakdowns of complex tasks like chess or air traffic control, expert practitioners' own accounts of how these tasks should be carried out, and how they actually perform them in reality, are three different things.

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6.   This gap between scientific models and behaviour has been noticed before (and notably, exercises economists in times of economic crisis). In the 1960s, it was found that Chomsky's phrase structure rules, though an enlightening representation of the structure of language per se, could not simulate the way we actually combine linguistic elements to understand sentences.

Students are more motivated if they can see the relevance of the exercises to the task. Drilling them in isolated tasks that they cannot clearly link to the purpose of interpreting – as a service helping people to communicate an intended message in a live, contextualized situation – risks become boring and meaningless (Lotriet 2000).[7] An overemphasis on 'multitasking' in the analysis of interpreting may obscure the fact that, as experimental psychology has shown, some processes can be combined and coordinated without a loss in performance, while others cannot. Those that can – like the component movements and automatic calculations of fluent driving or bicycling, to take over-simplistic analogies – are at first experienced as a set of separate and conflicting actions, but can gradually be integrated into what becomes a new, single task. A key factor in this integration is the **orientation of all 'sub-tasks' towards a common goal**, achievable through mastery of the complete coordinated task, which must be visible to conscious awareness to supply the necessary motivation. This is the rationale for keeping the goal of communication in the forefront of the majority of exercises.

In practice, this can be called a 'phylogenetic' approach – from simple, embryonic versions of the task that simulate the real-life task in simplified or partial or elementary form through to fully realistic simulations – rather than an engineering approach that breaks the task down analytically on essentially theoretical grounds. For these reasons, the exercises we favour to prepare for SI – and that we have tried with some success in various training programmes – are mostly simplified or slowed-down approximations to the tasks involved in real SI (paraphrase, compression, reformulation[8]), with input adjusted to require gradually more sophisticated techniques.

We therefore favour 'incremental realism' as the guiding principle, but with some part-task training for particular constituent skills. This gives us a training protocol in three broad components:

1. **Incremental progression** as the main track, building on the part-skills that students have at admission – some language proficiency, some knowledge, some language-transfer ability – in three ways: incrementally raising the demands on each of these sub-skills, integrating them, and gradually introducing and stepping up what is specific to interpreting, i.e. real-time coordination (Coordination

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7. Lotriet (2000) makes an ex-post critique of a componential approach that was originally trialled for intensive training of interpreters for South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

8. For example, exercises described by Kalina (1992, 1994) to train anticipation (showing text a segment at a time) or inference (online cloze), etc.

stage: see 3.3.2) then adaptation to a changing live context (Experimentation stage), before turning to domain-specific subject matter and service-orientation. Table 3.4 (in 3.4.2 below) lists successive performance goals from admission to the final diploma.

The method is by exercises in controlled, semi-integrated part-tasks that already resemble the full task in some respects (simplification), such as active listening, discourse outlining, public speaking and short consecutive without notes; note-taking first off-line, then with gradually increasing time pressure; sight translation with increasing time pressure (towards simultaneity); online cloze or same-language paraphrase; SI at first without a change of language, but with meaning processing ('smart shadowing', i.e. on-line same-language paraphrase), then first into A, then into B, and at first without jargon, foreign accent, text or slides, etc.

2. **Part-task training** is of three kinds:
    i.   targeted teaching of a new sub-skill that is needed at a precise stage in the curriculum, such as note-taking (including largely automatable sub-sub-skills, like abbreviation or number conversion, that can be drilled separately), or chunking, for ST and to prepare for SI;
    ii. picking up on general 'cross-cutting' skills at teachable moments (3.3.3).
    iii. focused coaching in such component skills as language proficiency, domain knowledge, voice quality, etc.
3. Finally, more **holistic**, higher-level behaviours, often involving global judgments requiring socio-cultural, interpersonal or relational competence *on top of* the complex cognitive skill, for which we reserve the term **'strategic'** (see next section), are best trained in a more contextualized, full-task simulation, when the cognitive sub-goals can be met with attention to spare.

3.2.4 What can be taught and how?

As far as the cognitive components of interpreting are concerned, the complex-skills or expert-novice training paradigm typically identifies **rules (procedures)** and **schemas** as the resources that experts must acquire to master the automatic and controlled task components respectively:

> In contrast to competent skill performers, novices do not possess appropriate rules or schemata, [but] instead have to rely on weak problem-solving strategies such as means-end analysis.   (Van Merriënboer 1997: 24)

> Different learning processes underlie these two kinds of constituent skills. An effective training strategy to turn novices into experts who use a mixture of rule-based and schema-based skills "should facilitate rule automation for recurrent cognitive skills and concurrently promote schema acquisition for non-recurrent cognitive skills".　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(1997:28)

In principle, students should build up the (knowledge) schemas they need both implicitly and deliberately through exposure to representative materials, which can be intensified at certain points in the course (see CC/TG-8.5.2–3), reading, and attending lectures (CC-7). Trainers in the traditional apprenticeship paradigm have been much more reluctant to talk about teaching students 'procedures' for interpreting (still less rules, or automation, no doubt from distaste at any association with machine translation) – begging the question of what we can hope to teach, and how.

3.2.4.1　*Teaching interpreting 'strategies'*

In contrast to a more hands-off approach, some authors favour explicitly formulating and teaching specific interpreting 'strategies' (Riccardi 1996; Kalina 1998), which may first have been identified in meticulous corpus research (e.g. Monti et al. 2005; Tohyama & Matsubara 2006).

Takeda (2010) asked students about their expectations from training, and found that many students "want to know specific solutions for specific problems", and especially "explicit, focused instruction on strategies". Some expectations voiced by these students – such as avoiding contradictory teaching among instructors, or teaching techniques for dealing with numbers – are more than justified, and Takeda rightly draws lessons for teachers from the findings. However, the familiar demand for specific strategies may not always be realistic, depending on what exactly is meant or hoped for.

Can we hope to identify a set of generalizable procedures or 'strategies' (in transcripts of professional interpreting, for example) that characterize expert performance? Second, assuming they could be clearly formulated, how could they be taught? The second question concerns the relationship between declarative and procedural knowledge, which we discuss in the next section. First we need to distinguish between (enhanced) natural processes, skilled techniques, and 'strategies', a term that we prefer to reserve, as in standard usage, for conscious goal-oriented decisions at the highest, relational level (mediation) that draw on multiple and not necessarily purely cognitive sub-skills. A note on our terminology is necessary before addressing the question of what can be taught and how.

> **Natural processes vs. techniques vs. strategies**
>
> Processes, techniques, tactics and strategies are commonly used terms in the interpreting literature. For clarity, we need to define our own use of such terms.
>
> Interpreting is an adaptation of ordinary (instinctive or acquired) linguistic communicative abilities that rely on basic **processes** like decoding, parsing, encoding and articulating, but also what we call deverbalization (for deriving conceptual meaning from words), anticipation, and even 'mind-reading' (TG-12.2.2 (iv)). These are not techniques, but an automatic part of what we do when communicating linguistically in contexts. Such natural processes – like memory and attention – can and must be honed, but also coordinated, for interpreting.
>
> The applied skill of interpreting also requires a set of specific **techniques**, essentially for optimizing flexibility, efficiency and agility in managing this 'multitasking' between listening, understanding, (noting) and speaking at an externally-imposed pace – for example, to negotiate the imposed linearity or no-look-ahead condition of SI. These include chunking-and-joining, waiting, stalling with neutral material, and 'voiced' anticipation[9] (expressing some element of meaning not yet explicitly articulated by the speaker, for tactical ends).
>
> We use '**tactic**' to refer to the choice of a technique or combination of techniques, aimed at improving quality, managing cognitive processing load, or, in difficult conditions ('coping tactics', Gile 2009: 200 ff.), just keeping up and maintaining a meaningful and adequately accurate flow of speech, all subject to a second-by-second weighing of costs and benefits.
>
> '**Strategy**' has previously been very loosely used to refer to almost any interpreting technique or tactic, and even for natural unconscious processes like inference. We prefer to reserve this term for more conscious 'macro' choices, such as degrees of freedom or caution in translation, or positions deliberately adopted on the spectrum of optimization (CC-5.8.4 and TG-10.4), to serve the higher-level goal of communication and manage role and mediation norms or expectations.

In terms of these definitions, both techniques and strategies can certainly be taught. The natural *processes* involved in communication need not be, but in the early stages of training (Initiation), instructors must help students to better understand, sharpen and coordinate them. They can then show them some *techniques,* which students discover though experimentation how to combine into more complex tactics. Once all this is in place, strategies for various situations can be suggested, explained and discussed.

Teachable techniques may also include some language-pair-specific restructuring tricks (for students with these combinations), especially for dealing with stiff, formal/written input (e.g. a heuristic for dealing with a final 'by'-headed prepositional phrase in English when going into Chinese). Various phenomena have been noticed in authentic SI corpora that look like examples of applied technique (and

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9. These four were more loosely referred to as strategies in our previous writing (Setton 1999 and passim).

sometimes described as 'strategies'), but we should be cautious about inferring that all these are really examples of operations that are conscious, or even, that have been specifically learned and internalized – similar surface patterns may reflect different paths to an ad hoc decision to reconcile fidelity, time pressure and context on the spur of the moment. Similarly, in consecutive the symbols and layout guidelines are valuable techniques that help to capture and retrieve information, but are not instructions on how to process it. The diversity of speakers, context and possible utterances makes it unlikely that a set of all-purpose procedural rules could be discovered for interpreting any discourse; it is more likely that the human translator, at least, must build up and work with a set of flexible procedures, notes, techniques and reflexes that reflect her own strengths and weaknesses in memory, background knowledge and natural empathies.

However, the amount of effort that can be saved by rule-based processing, 'overlearning' and automating will vary with the degree of originality of the speech – and dealing with predictable, 'boilerplate' material is now a significant part of every professional's experience (see Shermet 2012, CC-8.2.1 and TG-8.5.2). Trainers can sometimes be too passive, offering only very general, vaguely-worded tips and techniques on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, forgetting how specific techniques and strategies that they have themselves long since internalized so that they now confuse them with natural processes are still new to students, who will be most grateful to have them spelled out and demonstrated. As explained below, new techniques can be shown and then elicited, when moving on to new or more challenging material, by first letting students try, then going through their performance with them in detail, then having them try again on the same passage or a very similar one that is carefully chosen to highlight the same difficulties.

3.2.4.2　*Bridging the declarative-procedural gap*

Some authors (e.g. Moser-Mercer et al. 2000) have described the stages in interpreter training in terms of an early model of expert-skills acquisition[10] proposed notably by Fitts (1964) and developed by Anderson (1982, 1990 and passim), in which declarative (explicit) knowledge is said to be converted to procedural (implicit) competence in three stages:

i.　*cognitive*: declarative encoding of the skill, in which skill-relevant facts are committed to memory;

ii.　*associative*: detection and elimination of errors, strengthening connections between skill elements;

10.　For additional discussion on the application of expertise research to interpreting, see 9.5.

iii. *autonomous:* skill acquisition nears completion as the subject converts declarative into procedural knowledge and procedures become more automatic. This conversion is often seen as the main challenge of training, but in practice is not so much taught as facilitated in the trainee.

The 'associative' and 'autonomous' stages as described here correspond quite well to Coordination/Experimentation and Consolidation/Reality in our own scheme (3.3 below), but the first, 'declarative' stage seems difficult to apply to interpreting. In this model of expertise development (which has its origins in *motor* skills acquisition: Fitts and Posner 1967), novices first "develop a declarative encoding of the skill, i.e. they commit to memory a set of facts that are relevant to the skill", then gradually "convert verbal or declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge", and finally "learn specific rules for solving specific problems, such as how to convert particular syntactic constructions in the incoming message to matching constructions in the outgoing language" (Moser-Mercer et al. 2000: 110). However, for interpreting it is more difficult to formulate clearly a body of declarative knowledge about how to do the task ('a set of facts […] relevant to the skill', ibid.), especially (once again) in view of the key requirement of *(first)-pass* competence, which reduces the value of declarative instructions for processing, except for relatively formulaic, 'boilerplate' material (CC/TG-8.5.2 and TG-2.6.2).

For this reason, instead of 'declarative to procedural' progression ('cognitive' before 'associative') through the course, our preferred technique for bridging the explicit-implicit learning gap is to alternate practice and feedback/explanation at a higher frequency, i.e. on each classroom exercise and performance, and on tasks that resemble the real criterion task from the start, but using materials carefully chosen to present new challenges incrementally. In other words, the focus must be on practice throughout, with detailed feedback then self-correction to assimilate procedures, and 'declarative' (theoretical, factual) explanation and other auxiliary teaching activities (such as instructor demonstration) interposed as appropriate.

3.2.5 Apprenticeship, scientific teaching and student-focused learning

Interpreter training was driven from the very start by immediate practical needs, not theory. The apprenticeship approach adopted by the early trainers – teaching through example, guidance and 'tips', rather than rules and prescriptions about how to translate this word, or how to deal with this sentence structure, reflected an instinctive preference for implicit over explicit learning as much as a lack of (or scepticism about) theory or educational science. Today, we can bring to bear an explicit task analysis and a science-based curricular plan for the optimal sequencing (or 'fractionating') of some sub-tasks. We can draw on cognitive science to better

understand how novices become experts by acquiring and integrating schemas and procedures, and refine our pedagogy to facilitate this process more efficiently. None of this is incompatible with the apprenticeship format, which remains the most natural way of training a craft. But apprenticeship should be more than teaching by mere inspiration. At the very least, it should involve teaching by example, with instructor demonstration, but also – again, traditionally – more hands-on and explicit teaching (of specific techniques and strategies, as discussed above), and more intrusive coaching wherever appropriate and welcome.

In particular, we do not see any contradiction between the tradition of apprenticeship and more student-focused learning (within sensible parameters, as discussed in TG-2.5.1). A first step to implementing this is to recognize the individual variability of students' learning trajectories.

3.2.6 Individual variability and flexibility

Interpreting is a task that is uniformly recognized as complex. But a human being is also a complex adaptive system in which behaviour is generated by the whole organism, including unconscious reflexes and instincts, innate dispositions and physiological limitations (see e.g. Gell-Mann 1995[11]). Given this double complexity – of the individual and the task – there are likely to be significant differences in the way that different individuals mentally juggle and combine the sub-processes, but also in the routes they take to learning this. In interpreting, the factors determining how different people may tactically manage Gile's 'efforts' (Gile 1995/2009) illustrate this perfectly. Speech contains items that stay only briefly in short-term memory (like numbers), and parts that can be remembered for longer if supported by relevant background knowledge. An interpreter's strategy in choosing whether to follow closely or re-order the information may depend on her short-term memory span and/or her background knowledge, both of which vary from person to person (not to mention her lexical availability, which varies from moment to moment).

Explicit teaching can still complement implicit learning, since as conscious, reasoning adaptive organisms capable of metarepresentation and analogy, we can also adapt our behaviour – i.e. learn – from schemas which can be represented, evaluated, exchanged (communicated) and adjusted according to feedback. We can try to describe and suggest schemas and strategies that have worked for us, but such procedures are probably too complex ever to be reliably described in words,

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11. Also e.g. Morowitz and Singer (1995), and in general the work of the Santa Fe Institute on complexity.

still less prescribed. A teacher is aiming at a twin moving target: the environment never stays still, never repeats itself exactly, and so is never fully predictable; while chance, natural variation and selection make each individual uniquely different.

These observations, and the experience of mistakes, missed potentials or opportunities, good and bad surprises or 'tough cases' in interpreter training, justify allowing for wider variation in the way students deal with each new problem, providing for **'low-pressure' periods** in the course in which students can experiment, and refraining from proscribing strategies and solutions which may never have worked for the instructor, but might work for the students.

Of course, these concerns must be balanced against other pressures: students must experiment intensively, not to waste too much time. Different speeds of progress should be tolerated up to a point, but with close observation. Students who seem to be streaking ahead may reveal serious undetected weaknesses as the exam approaches; others may be 'slow developers' but mature later, after an extended gestation, into excellent interpreters. We should therefore not only allow repeats of parts of the course, but also emphatically ensure that repeating, or taking longer, carries no stigma whatsoever.

3.3   Curriculum design

As explained in CC-2, the increasing complexity, speed and technicality of international meetings means that even the most qualified university graduates need at least two years of training to acquire, hone and integrate skills, knowledge, language proficiency and professionalism into all-round, market-ready competence.

The first key premise for success is a curriculum that is carefully designed as a reasoned and structured **progression**, with explicit intermediate objectives and formative and summative assessment at each stage. Content validity (TG-11.3.1.2) should run through the entire curriculum (Table 3.4 below) to the final exam (PECI: TG-11): based on a job analysis of the conference interpreter's job in the target market, the programme should define both the required skills and modes, and 'mainstream' and 'local emphasis' subject matter domains. In addition to skills training, it should deliver (L)KE classes focused on those domains, include sufficient contact hours for practice in them during interpreting classes and at mock exams, impart skills in event preparation, adaptive mediation and professional behaviour, and then test this all-round competence in the PECI on authentic discourse at a commonly encountered level of difficulty, complemented if necessary (but not replaced) by continuous or portfolio-based assessment or supplementary pencil-and-paper tests.

3.3.1   Curriculum components

The consensus that has prevailed on curriculum design for conference interpreter training, more or less from the earliest courses,[12] provides for a postgraduate course featuring:

1. progressive *skills training* (usually consecutive before SI) or 'practica';
2. some supporting *knowledge enhancement* ('area studies') in relevant domains such as law, economics, international organizations;
3. 'ancillary studies' such as *language enhancement*, theory, public speaking or voice training;

    and last but not least,

4. initial, in-course and final testing.

These components broadly cover the language-knowledge-skills-professionalism (LKSP) framework used in these books. The progression in the main track of skills training is described in the next section, with a discussion on staging (sequencing). Some cross-cutting skills are taught throughout the course, but there should be additional classes dedicated to language and knowledge enhancement (CC/TG-7), with some domain-specific modules in areas such as economics and law as well as modules in Theory, Conference Preparation, and Professional Practice (including professional ethics), with invited lectures (by a local AIIC official, for example). In consideration of the 'new world normal' we devote more attention than in the standard model to supporting and training into-B (especially Bsim) interpreting.

3.3.2   Progression: steps to expertise

Interpreting uses faculties which we all share – language, concentration, analysis – and most people in the world speak more than one language, making for billions of potential 'natural' translators or interpreters (Harris 1992). Casual observers may therefore see our extended, constructive, progressive postgraduate course as making heavy weather of a straightforward task.

   Although interpreting uses universal faculties, comparing novice and expert performance shows that they must be configured differently for professional interpreting. As ordinary language users, we speak and listen casually and selectively in furtherance of our interests; as interpreters, we must listen and speak carefully and deliberately, even convincingly, to represent other people's interests. These habits of

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12. See e.g. Velleman (1943) for the Geneva course.

thought and speech are peculiar to and necessary for interpreting, but may not be naturally present in the talented young linguist, thus justifying a general Initiation to the professional mindset (CC-4/TG-5).

Speaking for others without missing anything and still sounding natural and convincing, especially at the same time, obviously takes specific techniques: note-taking, reformulating, lag management etc. To fully develop each of the two main skills (Consecutive and SI), we have proposed exercises in four stages – Initiation (or 'Discovery'), Coordination, Experimentation and Consolidation – concluding with a final stage of intensive preparation for real-world conditions ('Reality'):

1. Initiation: acquiring basic mechanisms to capture and faithfully render oral speech input (a new attitude to listening and speaking).[13] The basics of a new skill (note-taking for Consecutive, speaking while listening for SI) are first introduced 'off-line' and/or pausing frequently and artificially to check and review the basic process, and deliberately excluding other complications.

2. Coordination: the new skill is now practised in real time, introducing or gradually accelerating 'simultaneity' in both cases (Consecutive with note-taking, real but easy SI in the booth), still on artificial ('trainer') speeches, but in longer and more continuous segments, with fewer pauses.

3. Experimentation: students try out, customize and adapt their skills on a wider variety of increasingly authentic material, in different speech genres, subject domains and styles, delivered at increasingly natural, real-life speed, aiming for accuracy and completeness of content. The focus of feedback is still very much on *process.*

4. Consolidation*:* as personal technique stabilizes and the resources temporarily devoted to learning and experimenting are freed up again, attention turns to momentum, fluency, style and making contact with the audience. Students now practise intensively on authentic materials, to familiarize themselves with the domain and discourse of the target market, and prepare more difficult topics in advance for class or mock conferences. At the same time, they are given a professional performance standard to aim for in terms of accuracy and delivery. The focus of feedback moves increasingly to the *product.*

5. Reality (the 'last mile'): in the final semester, students are exposed to a new level of difficult, complex and finally, even near-impossible conditions which challenge them to develop all-round integrated competence, and/or survival (coping) strategies. The ground covered ranges from SI with text, slides and

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13.   Similar stages have been proposed by trainers in the past. Seleskovitch and Lederer mention three stages in training SI: initiating, acquiring technique, increasing difficulty (2002: 167). The associative and autonomous stages described by Moser-Mercer (2010), based on Anderson (2005), correspond roughly to our Coordination-Experimentation and Consolidation-Reality respectively (though we are reluctant to see the initiation stage as 'declarative': see 3.2.5.2 for discussion).

other variations, through very fast or recited speech to dealing with incoherent speech, compressing on request, and making various professional and ethical judgments. Pedagogically, this stage can be seen as a kind of second initiation, with exposure to the real-life interpreting environment and an introduction to aspects of professional practice, including teamwork, working conditions, ethics, technology and market organization, through on-site visits and practica as well as informative lectures.

In each year and for each of the two main modes, each stage builds on the previous one, focusing on a new skill level while introducing new and increasingly realistic material.

A third important mode, Sight Translation (3.3.5.2, CC-6) returns at various points as a formative exercise, in variations that are used pedagogically – in Initiation, to train in scanning text and stepping back from source text wording (deverbalization, combating interference), then later in externally-paced, drip-feed form to prepare for the linear constraints of SI (S2), and finally, to limber up for SI-text. But it is also practised at progressive levels of difficulty as a task in its own right.

Since nearly all exercises approximate to the real task of interpreting, the course is cumulative. The first skills learned – short consecutive, consecutive with notes, ST or free SI – are not dropped but continue to be practised and perfected alongside the new skills (SI-text, complex tasks…); class time simply emphasizes the newer skill. Coordination, in particular, in which the trainee learns to combine listening, (noting,) thinking and speaking, should improve with each cycle, each building on the experience of the previous one. There will also be positive feedback between skills: the fast reactions, decision-making and language availability needed for SI will help to take fast and judicious notes, already thinking in TL, in consecutive.

When new skills are introduced, other difficulties must be provisionally kept muted, but the progression gradually advances in several dimensions:

▶ in *skills,* from listening and speaking through consecutive and sight translation to SI and its more complex variants (the rationale for training in consecutive before starting SI is discussed in 3.3.5.1);

▶ in *materials*, from explicit, structured and coherent but somewhat artificial 'trainer' speeches, delivered slowly, and/or with extra pauses, to realistic and authentic speeches that are increasingly challenging in structure, style and delivery;

▶ in *language direction,* from same-language paraphrase (A into A) through B and C into A, and then from A into B, on the premise that proficient production of a foreign language is more demanding than comprehension;

▶ in *performance expectations*, with goals set at each stage in terms of completeness, presentation, and quality of expression;

The final component – Professionalism – can be fully developed, through lectures and practica, only when the first three (L,K,S) are integrated at a high level of competence (CC-10 and 11).

3.3.3 Cross-cutting skills

Some skills and aptitudes, common and integral to all interpreting, are not really taught progressively, but are tested and cultivated in every class from day one through to the end of the course and beyond. In addition to the obvious language proficiency, these include

i.   *General and target-domain knowledge,* organized for easy retrieval and associated with more 'automatic' terminology across the working languages;
ii. *Language transfer skills:* the ability to come up with good in-context equivalences from SL to TL. 'Interpretivists' may baulk at the term, but it is meant to describe, not falling back on word-switching, but simply, the ability to find appropriate language in context as quickly as possible – i.e. *embracing deverbalization while recognizing processing constraints*, a fine balance that is critical to good interpreting. This ability is tested in every single exercise (though with ascending urgency as we move from Consecutive to SI then to Reality);
iii. *Delivery and presentation* skills;
iv. *Expression in the B language*;
v.   *Preparation skills*;
vi. *Situational and 'political' (diplomatic) awareness*;
vii. *Intercultural awareness* especially of the wrong assumptions, pitfalls, mismatches in typical communication styles, etc., that arise between the cultures we are mediating;
viii. *Coping tactics,* resourcefulness, stress control and poise;
ix. *Positioning on the mediation/optimization continuum* (CC-5.8.4 and TG-10.4): Throughout the course and especially with authentic materials, political, cultural, personal and elliptical items will come up and prompt discussion of how far to go in optimizing communication without slipping into over- or under-translation or risking a 'diplomatic incident'. This requires plausible scene-setting, since what the interpreter knows or can infer about speakers and their communicative intentions will determine her choice of strategy.

These skills all cross-cut the course and will be tested to some extent in virtually any interpreting task, at all stages from Initiation through to Reality. Our chapters on Consecutive and SI each focus on a newly introduced technical skill, but any of these general competencies may be elicited and discussed when they come up at 'teachable moments'.

3.3.4 Bridging theory and practice

It is widely agreed (including by the professional association, AIIC) that a conference interpreter training course should include a theoretical component, not least to meet the requirements of a postgraduate course at MA level. In vocational training, however, our experience is that theory is more easily assimilated if it is related to practice.

To make this articulation more explicit, we can consider Theory and Practice as a 'track' consisting of two modules. The Theory module (TG-12.3) can begin in the first semester, initially with the focus on helping students to understand and overcome the challenges – both cognitive and mediation-related – that they are experiencing during skill acquisition, with the help of relevant theories, models, metaphors and facts about cognition, language and communication.

As the course progresses and students emerge from the linguistic, then cognitive introversion of skills acquisition, and begin to see their task more globally in the context of an enterprise in communication, they should become more and more aware of the dependence of potential performance on working conditions – especially presence and access to information, but also proper equipment.[14]

Additional topics that can be addressed at the interface between Theory and Professional Practice include discussion of the flexibilities and constraints of the different modes of interpreting (CC-2.2) and an overview of the different settings that make up the landscape of the profession – community, media, diplomatic, court etc. (CC-2.3) with their different degrees of standardization and professionalization and variations on the interpreter's role (CC-2, CC-5.8.4, CC/TG-10). As in other aspects of training, instructors will complement and illustrate existing guidelines with examples from their own experience (or better still, documented cases involving controversial interpreter conduct).

Providing a theoretical framework in the early stages can help to convey the meaning and rationale of professionalism and answer unexpected or general questions from students. The key understanding that students must assimilate, linking theory to practice, is the interdependence between **three Cs**: the *cognitive* challenges of the interpreting task, its goal of *communication*, and the *conditions* in which that goal is pursued. This interdependence must be clear by the time students are initiated to the practical details of professional life.

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14. For example, instructors can show how the very *feasibility* of real SI (as opposed to what can be achieved in whispering or with a 'bidule') depends on a proper installation, for basic scientific reasons: the separation of input and output channels by the use of headphones gives the interpreter far greater control over the sharing of attention between them, allowing her where possible and desirable to produce complex and sophisticated structures in a strong, natural (prosodically rich) and confident voice – comfortably inhabiting the TL world – instead of being forced into choppy, hesitant production for fear of losing some of the input.

3.3.5 Course duration and staging

All other things being equal – resources, facilities, teaching – the time it takes to train a job-worthy interpreter depends on the student's qualifications at admission and the demands of the target market. We sometimes meet highly competent self-taught professionals, though more often in specialized markets. Some courses train conference interpreters in two or three semesters, but most leading schools provide **two years** of full-time postgraduate training. Given present-day market realities and demands (see CC-9), this seems to be a minimum duration for any complete course in conference interpreting in which a majority of students are young candidates with a recent undergraduate degree. A single year might suffice for students who already have extensive interpreting experience (say, 3–5 years of in-house consecutive for a national ministry) and who are looking for a skills upgrade, or who are being trained for a very narrowly defined sectoral market, such as a single corporate client, or a single institution that offers a top-up induction course for new recruits.

3.3.5.1 *Why Consecutive and Sight Translation before SI?*

In terms of **progression**, the standard (AIIC-approved) paradigm training programme (Mackintosh 1995) was a two-year postgraduate course in which consecutive was usually taught in the first year, alongside some other skills such as sight translation and public speaking, with SI training starting only from the second year or third semester for students who passed a qualifying (and eliminatory) Midpoint Exam, often with a high rate of attrition.

The standard practice of training students thoroughly in consecutive, and/or doing so *before* training in SI, has been questioned on the grounds that Consecutive is now marginal, that many conference interpreters never do it at all, and/or that a few warm-up exercises should be enough to prepare trainees for SI, given the requisite language proficiency, knowledge and maturity.

First, as to whether Consecutive should still be trained: although this mode is now overshadowed in the large multilingual institutions like the UN and EU, elsewhere Consecutive *is* still a large, albeit less visible market, notably in business and diplomacy, and demand for it tends to re-surface at irregular intervals even in the multilateral institutions.

As for the pros and cons of teaching Consecutive before SI or in parallel, we have no more or less solid evidence than we do about other aspects of interpreter training (Déjean le Féal 1997 explains the difficulty of getting such evidence). Our recommendation is based on (a) our experience of the starting qualifications and profiles of students who enter training as conference interpreters, (b) gate-keeping concerns – to discourage students who have left the programme after taking SI

classes, but without qualifying, from going onto the market claiming they have 'learnt SI' – and most of all, (c) the benefits of a year of preparatory exercises and Consecutive both in laying the groundwork for students to achieve competent SI within one short year, and providing a methodological basis for 'growable' expertise thereafter.

The pedagogical case for Consecutive as a prelude to SI has been made by several authors in the training literature (e.g. Palazzi Gubertini 1990; Kalina 1994; Ilg and Lambert 1996: 74–75). Seleskovitch in particular argued strongly for training students to near-professional level in consecutive before beginning SI, on the grounds (inter alia) that the competence acquired in consecutive is easily transferred to SI, that it is easier to detect students' errors of method in consecutive, and that consecutive is the only way of checking that the source language is thoroughly understood.

While the claim for direct transfer of skills is hard to prove, it is at least clear that trainees who complete the first year of training and are favourably assessed on their performance in both Consecutive and Sight Translation (either in CA or at a Midpoint Exam) will have learned:

i.   how to **listen actively** in ways specific to the needs of interpreting (CC-4.2), registering both the point of the message and all its details, anticipating, and recognizing structure to enhance memory;

ii. the need for **knowledge** of the **context** of speech to make sense of it, as well as general knowledge of the world; how to use associative techniques to boost memory, and how to prepare an unfamiliar topic;

iii. how to **split attention** and coordinate between tasks (attentive listening with noting, and some forward planning of TL expression) by attuning to the peaks and troughs of saliency, or new vs. given information;

iv. vigilance and practice in negotiating the **language barrier**: deverbalization, avoiding interference and staying idiomatic;

v.   about the **variety of speech genres and styles** that can be expected in international meetings;

vi. how to perform under (at least moderate) **time pressure**, and the need for **language readiness** (having some at least adequate expression to hand, if necessary using paraphrase) and **momentum**;

vii. good practice in **public speaking**, including coherence, rhythm, projecting confidence and engaging **with an audience**;

viii. the default conventions of **fidelity** and the interpreter's **role**, and how to stay **unflappable** and deal strategically with hazards such as jokes, proverbs, cross-cultural gaps or clashes, speaker error, rudeness, internal contradiction, incoherence, etc., weighing proactive vs. more cautious solutions.

In our own curriculum, the accumulated and progressive preparation for SI that is provided by the preliminary exercises we describe for Initiation (CC-4), plus training in consecutive (CC-5), plus sight translation (CC-6) – and crucially, the controlled-input variants on sight translation that we propose for a smooth entry into SI (CC-7 and CC-8) – justify delaying SI for the time needed for this preparation.

Another argument for delaying SI training until the second year, subject to eliminatory midpoint testing, is its 'gatekeeping' function of limiting the risk of students entering the market without being fully qualified in this key mode (see TG-13.3.6.2). Leaving this responsibility to the market does not seem acceptable in a 'strongly profession-oriented' training tradition (Pöchhacker 2004: 177). The gatekeeping argument is often dismissed on the grounds that the market will eliminate the less qualified. This seems to us to be inconsistent with the responsibility of schools in what aspires to be a profession, especially while they are still the only de facto repositories of professional certification (see discussion in TG-11). Competence varies even among rigorously trained and certified lawyers and doctors, but there is a backstop: uncertified dropouts are legally barred from practising.

However, there are increasing pressures to relax this requirement for strict staging. First, in the last decade, Europe-wide educational reforms aimed at improving transparency, mutual recognition of credits, and thus student mobility (known as the Bologna process) have favoured a move to a modularized system that makes this model difficult to implement. Also, some trainers have remained sceptical on pedagogical grounds, objecting that, in the absence of evidence from comparative studies, one might consider that consecutive and sight translation provide some but only *partial* preparation for SI, and that two or three months of these and other exercises might be enough, or even that a shorter Initiation period of training in generic component sub-skills might be enough to prepare students to start training in both modes in parallel. According to Kalina (1994), we can check comprehension no less effectively through summary, Q&A or commentary on the text.

Aarup (1993), though otherwise favourable to the ITT approach, claims that teaching only consecutive first will accustom students to working in a deferred mode with less immediacy than in SI and rely entirely on first making and then just translating their notes (i.e. "exactly the opposite of the essential character of SI"); instead, she says, SI should be taught from the start, using component (partial) skill exercises like paraphrasing, cloze, summary, or text completion (1993: 170–171). This would certainly make for a shorter course.

Regarding 'gatekeeping', it has also been argued that delaying SI training until the second year and making access to it conditional on earning credits for Consecutive and Sight Translation, or passing a Midpoint Exam, does not prevent dropouts from entering the market; and that the school's responsibility could be met by a combination of other checks, including testing of some SI-specific aptitudes at admission (CC-3/TG-4), then some additional pre-SI testing (by continuous assessment if a 'midpoint' test is not possible), and of course the professional exam for those who do complete the course.

The strongest argument for starting SI earlier is the need to provide enough hours of training in the mode that is overwhelmingly dominant in professional practice, and will count for most of the Professional Exam (and to ensure sufficient credits for schools in harmonised networks like EMCI, to allow portability and student mobility), and enough hours of training into Bsim where appropriate (after an initiation to SI into A only, which we consider essential pedagogically). Also, SI training seems to contribute to faster and more decisive note-taking and forward-planning of formulation in consecutive.

Be that as it may, against a background of changing relations between professions and the market, we believe we should do everything we can to ensure that students will succeed at SI once admitted to the booth. With the thorough preparation provided in a progressive, staged course, students who have qualified at midpoint should pick up SI technique within the first few weeks of S3, leaving a year to experiment and consolidate. This seems preferable to starting SI in S2 (Y1),[15] to avoid students being tempted to try it at home over the long summer break, picking up bad habits before even getting started. (Certainly, this might be avoided by beginning SI as of the first semester… but that would allow very little preparation.)

In consideration of these arguments and the needs and constraints of different markets, we have set out two options. Our default timeline (Table 3.1a) follows the standard model for core skills training and accompanying activities (group practice, LKE modules, practica etc.) in a two-year course with SI proper beginning in the second year (Option A). In Table 3.1b (Option B), Initiation to SI begins in S2. Needless to say, consecutive training and practice, once started, continues throughout the course.

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15. If local constraints restrict the course to three semesters (TG-13.2.4), introductory SI exercises – slow, easy speeches with interruptions and 'training wheels' – could begin in mid-S2, but being careful not to encourage the illusion in students that they have 'learnt' SI.

Table 3.1a Timeline of stages in conference interpreter training (Option A: SI from S3)

Semester 1																Semester 2															
Week 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Initiation			*Consecutive >*																												
Active Listening, outlining			**Note Taking**			**Coordination**			**Experimentation**											**Consolidation**											
		Sight Translation Intro								Consec into B >													Sight Translation proper >							Paused ST drills	
Public Speaking																															
			Independent study >						Group practice >																						
Language and Knowledge Enhancement >								+ General K modules (Economics, International Law…)																							
Theory and Practice (1) >																															
Join Mock Conferences as speakers, organisers…								*…then as consecutive interpreters….*																							**Midpoint**

Semester 3																Semester 4															
Week 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Consecutive >																															
Consolidation				Polishing													Advanced Consecutive														
Simultaneous >																															
Orient/Initiation			Coordination				Experimentation			Consolidation																*Reality (last mile)*					
on/offline >			spoonfeeding				+ SI-txt		SI into Bsim >								Relay														
Language and Knowledge Enhancement >							Conference preparation + general/special modules (Legal; Procedure; Research language, etc.)																								
Theory and Practice (1) contd.																	T&P (2): Intro to Professional Practice														
Mock conferences >																	Internships, practice visits														**PECI**

"Year 3"																															
Repeats…																															
Academic: complete MA, begin PhD;																															
Internships, mentoring…																															
Teacher Training…																															

Table 3.1b Timeline of stages in conference interpreter training (Option B: SI from S2)

Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4
Initiation (CC-4)			
Consecutive (B/C-A, A-B) to Experimentation	**Consecutive** B/C-A, A-B) to Consolidation	(practice continues)	
Introduction to **Sight Translation** (B-A, A-B)	**Sight Translation** (B/C-A, A-B) more formal texts, and 'drip-fed' for pre-SI training	(practice continues)	
	SI B/C-A Initiation and Coordination	**SI and SI-text** B/C-A, A-B from Experimentation to Consolidation	(practice continues)
	Midpoint Exam (or CA) testing ST, consecutive, easy SI into A, to qualify for advanced SI training in Y2	**SI and SI-text** A-B from Coordination to Consolidation	
			Reality/Advanced Tasks, practice visits

3.3.5.2 *Sight translation*

Sight Translation (ST) is a central feature of a well-rounded course and is widely recognized as a highly versatile pedagogical tool, but it has received less detailed attention than it deserves, since it is key to preparing for SI in general, and into 'Bsim' in particular.

The leap from consecutive to SI, in particular, has always been something of a pedagogical vacuum. The rationale for delaying initiation to SI until students have acquired certain key reflexes and competencies – learning to listen, think, speak, and mediate like an interpreter (CC/TG-4), then acquiring the two technical skills of full consecutive with notes and sight translation, has been argued above; but for the first contact with SI, schools are still somewhat tentative about specific initiation drills beyond shadowing, counting while listening, or practising on elementary material like fairy tales.

Sight Translation and its controlled variants are highly effective at several points in the curriculum (cf. Déjean le Féal 2009), as shown in Table 3.2 (see CC-6). First, to initiate students to the traps of language transfer ('interference-busting': CC-4.3.2); then, once consecutive note-taking skills are in place, resuming in earnest, building up in steps – by length (up to 4–5 minutes), difficulty and expectations of fluency and momentum – to quasi-professional 'ST-proper' as a task in its own right. For the gradual initiation of students to SI we recommend the use of various

Table 3.2 Sight Translation in the curriculum

Y1S1	Introduction to ST for flexibility and interference-busting
Y1S2	Steps to ST proper (after consolidating Consecutive)
End of Y1	Midpoint Exam (or continuous assessment) tests both Consecutive and ST for access to SI training
Late Y1–early Y2	ST variations (drip-fed, scrolled, etc.) as preparation for SI
S3	Introduction to and warm-up for SI-text

time-controlled, chunked (drip-fed) forms of sight translation (CC-6.3, 8.2.3.1) in alternation with free booth practice on easy, fluent oral input (CC-8.2.4).

Class procedures for Sight Translation at different stages are described in CC-4.3.2 and CC-6, but here are some ideas for instructors.

Most students will have done some translation, but this may be their first experience of translating live under some time pressure, and in oral form. When first introducing ST in Initiation, always begin by asking for a same-language paraphrase, to help ensure that the subsequent (B-A) rendition will be meaning-based:

i.   For impact, fun and to raise awareness, you can start by 'demonstrating' a deliberately unidiomatic sight translation of a paragraph or two containing both lexical and syntactic calques, faux amis, translationese, dictionary equivalents, cliché versions etc. – then invite a critique from the students… In mixed groups, or later on when getting students to do this exercise into B, the instructor will need to be more hands-on in explaining that certain phrases simply don't work in the TL. Some will be shocked that their pet stock-in-trade equivalents actually rile the native ear.

ii. Now ask one student to produce a clear and idiomatic version of the same paragraph in the same target language (her A). This can be briefly discussed, praising good solutions.

iii. Ask a second student to produce another clear but *different* version of the same paragraphs, also in A, avoiding using the same expressions as far as possible.

iv. (Depending on the stage reached): Continue, but now ask for a change of register.

v.   Then, pick out one or two tricky phrases from the paragraph and ask for multiple additional paraphrases (perhaps in both SL and TL). Show students any handy tricks or good ready versions that haven't been covered yet.

vi. Impose sentence beginnings: e.g. 'Start the next sentence with the word 'Unless…' or 'Had he been able to…', or 'Without…' (or as appropriate in the target language); also, suggest various discourse markers for students to incorporate.

vii. Finally, ask for shorter versions that capture the same meaning, proceeding through compression, summary and finally to bare bullet points, and discuss the student's prioritization choices.

Through S2, the passages read out can be gradually lengthened up to two minutes, with some time allowed at first (but progressively less) to re-read before interpreting. Expectations for fluency and momentum are gradually raised, and performances are timed. Sight translation into B should be introduced only gradually.

The ability to do a fluent, idiomatic but faithful sight translation is widely believed to be a good indicator of readiness for SI, so performance in this mode should be followed closely by instructors, and included in the end-of-year evaluation (whether this takes the form of continuous assessment or a Midpoint Exam).

Comparing processes in three modes

Pedagogically, it makes sense to introduce students to SI by highlighting the difference between its constraints and those of the consecutive and sight translation modes with which they are familiar. Alternating between the three modes (consecutive, ST, SI) on the same materials will help students understand how the basic reflexes and competencies of interpreting (deverbalization, analysis, fast target-language retrieval) must be mobilized differently (Figure 9.1 in CC-9.2.3.2 [or Table 12.4 in TG-12 Appendix] contrasts the dynamics and resources available – speech, memory, notes – in each phase of ST, Consecutive, SI, and written translation).

3.3.5.3 *Working first into A, then into B*

Incremental realism means giving a flavour of the real task from the start, but in simplified form, setting all parameters of difficulty at 'easy' until it is time to address them specifically, then focusing on each new challenge one at a time. One such parameter is language directionality. A broad consensus among trainers has therefore favoured training in each skill into the mother tongue (A) first (from B and C) – or possibly even first from A into A – before progressing to A-into-B.

This progression need not reduce the total practice time into B for Bsim students – increasingly the majority of students offering a B language – who will need to practise this direction quite intensively in some form throughout the course. All students with a B will make speeches in B as of Initiation (for Public Speaking), and work both ways between A and B (or even B into B) for fast dialogue interpreting. Full consecutive from A into B begins in earnest in the latter half of the first semester, or as soon as basic technique is in place into A. Intensive two-way practice in Consecutive and Sight Translation should continue through the second semester, with equal or more time into B (especially emphasizing into-B sight translation for Bsims) as these modes will be tested at midpoint. In a full two-year course, simultaneous from A into B can begin for all qualified Bsim students in mid-S3, or once basic SI technique into A is established at some point in SI-Experimentation. Additional classes should be provided into B for Bsims, as well as opportunities for practice, hands-on coaching (TG-2.5.8.2) and various drills in Language Enhancement class (TG-7.2.1).

3.3.6 Curriculum flexibility

Factors like course duration and the need for various ancillary and 'area-studies' (knowledge and language) modules will depend on the level of qualification of students at admission and the intended profile of graduates. But programmes should also have some built-in flexibility to adapt to some extent to the naturally *varying trajectories and situations of different students,* as a logical consequence of the principle of personalized instruction and individual variability (TG-3.2.6), but also because promising interpreters are not all that common a commodity. Some students may take a bit longer to 'get it' and have to repeat, some may need more time off for language enhancement or to gain maturity, some may change language combination and have to catch up on credits, and some may not get enough teaching, due, for example, to an unexpected staffing shortage in a little-used language. Student numbers and language combination distribution may also vary each semester with the results of admission, interim or final exams and the numbers of students who graduate, repeat the year, return from abroad, are eliminated or drop out (see TG-13.2.4.3).

3.4   In-course assessment

Students understand that interpreting is a performance-based and test-intensive profession. Having already passed a highly competitive entrance exam, they will expect to be assessed regularly, with detailed and constructive feedback, both on their class performance and after mock conferences.

In the traditional training paradigm students have conventionally been assessed in two ways: by individual instructors who note their performance in class and mock conferences, and by panels of internal and external examiners at the three 'rites of passage': admission, midpoint and final diploma exams.

Typically, the school's instructors also meet two or three times a semester to assess students' progress and needs, possibly assigning indicative grades if and as required by the university administration. In many schools, this procedure has been formalized in a Midpoint Exam of consecutive skills (at the end of the first year, before SI training begins), with four possible outcomes: pass (access to Y2 and SI training), a recommendation to take a gap semester or year in a B or C language country (for language problems), or to repeat a year (for problems of technique), or elimination from the programme.

Since midpoint testing in some form can have multiple functions, we set out a detailed protocol in this section. While *eliminatory* midpoint testing is now more controversial, and may even be legally impossible in some jurisdictions (TG-13.2.5.2), it may be replaced by continuous assessment, or tests for credits in each course module (TG-13.3.5.2). The content and procedure of such a test

as described below remain valid, and should be adaptable to local regulations if necessary, for example by making it indicative but not eliminatory.

In-course assessment may focus on the skill currently being taught, or on the whole performance, but tests at different points will have a more or less summative, formative and/or predictive focus (3.4.2). In 3.4.3 we briefly discuss the adequacy of some other forms of in-course assessment, such as portfolios and self- or peer assessment, that have been advocated in the literature.

3.4.1 The Midpoint Exam: selection for SI training

3.4.1.1   *Rationale, criteria and procedure*

An additional check on students before admitting them to training in SI – the key skill of the modern conference interpreting profession – is justified for reasons of both 'gatekeeping' and efficiency, to avoid wasting everyone's time (TG-13.3.5.2).

Midpoint or interim (pre-SI) assessment should test for good analytic reflexes, excellent language proficiency (critical for SI training into a B language), quick reactions and fast production, demonstrated in both full consecutive interpretation and sight translation. Although there is no guarantee that all those who can do serviceable consecutive will be suited for SI (as shown by the first-ever tests of aptitude for SI training for Nuremberg), this is the best indicator we have, combined with Sight Translation, which checks students' ability to deverbalize, to formulate incrementally with more limited look-ahead, and to handle more formal language. (The need for an eliminatory exam for access to SI may, however, be reduced if the additional 'pressure drill' tests of aptitude for SI that we propose at Admission [TG-4.3.3.5] turn out to be robustly predictive).

Like the exams for Admission, the Midpoint Exam (MPE) serves a primarily predictive purpose, but it also has a summative function, in testing basic mastery of Consecutive (and a formative one, in providing valuable feedback). As for any important test, an explicit test framework and specifications should be developed, as described in TG-11, but with some differences in tasks, input materials, criteria, and scoring: in particular, the focus of the MPE will be on technique rather than on aptitude (Admission) or on the product (PECI).

3.4.1.2   *Test items*

At the MPE, students should be tested in the two skills acquired so far, Full Consecutive and Sight Translation ('proper'), in all their active language directions (B/C > A, A > Bcons). Also, since the Midpoint is a test of readiness for SI training, schools might want to include a **listening comprehension** test for the 'advanced' (i.e. realistic) kinds of speech in their B and C languages that they will soon be working from in the SI class (see SDI in TG-2 Appendix for appropriate difficulty parameters).

Here as in the PECI, valid and reliable testing requires *multiple performances* in each task:

i. *Consecutive*: This task should include three or four authentic speeches or passages – for example, two 3-minute passages and a third longer one (up to 5–6 minutes) – covering different genres, subject matter and styles, and similar in difficulty to those done in the last few weeks of the semester, with sufficient instances of known difficulties, such as numbers. Candidates must be briefed ten minutes in advance (for all tests) on topic, speaker, audience, context and situation.

ii. *Sight Translation* must test the ability to handle more formal register, including long sentences with more complex syntax. The test should include

    a. Two or three passages in somewhat different styles, each of 2–3 minutes in length, in fairly sophisticated or crafted language (for example, substantive prepared remarks by a Minister or a Secretary-General), on (an) accessible topic(s) and without major terminological difficulties (in separate sessions if subject matter, context and therefore briefing are different). Each passage is read to candidates, then handed over to be rendered immediately in TL with good deverbalization and momentum.

    b. (Optional) Pre-segmented and scrolled ST (chunking and joining): Brief the student on the general content and background of a 300–400 word text in a fairly formal, written style with some complex sentences, then read and/or scroll (on screen) the text in pre-segmented chunks, requiring each chunk to be rendered, before continuing, in such a way as to produce an accurate, idiomatic and coherent version of the whole. This exercise will have already been done in class (CC-6.3).

iii. General test of B and C language **comprehension** on fast and/or (at this stage moderately) accented speakers, texts read monotonously from script etc., in domains with which students should by now be familiar. After some basic briefing (but no preparation) on context and situation, passages of authentic speech with these various characteristics are played (preferably on video), to candidates, who must then summarize and/or answer questions.

3.4.1.3 *Midpoint assessment criteria*

At the Midpoint assessment (Table 3.3), candidates can obviously not yet be held to the standards of professional readiness that will be required at the final diploma, particularly in regard to general knowledge, register control and style; but one predictive criterion from the Admission test, coachability, still applies – in this case, teachability of SI and survival in more realistic and rigorous conditions.

At Midpoint, the main criterion in deciding to pass or fail a student must be predictive: is s/he ready for SI? At this half-way, in-course test, instructors are

normally included in the jury, and the candidate's known performance in class can to some extent also be taken into account; but eliminatory criteria remain the same: speed of analysis and accuracy in capturing meaning, language readiness and *flexibility*, resourcefulness and unflappability. Only in the areas of linguistic expression, fluency and concision (time taken for the rendition) will expectations not yet be at the level of the final diploma (PECI), since students will continue to polish their performance in Consecutive and ST for another whole year.

Table 3.3 Midpoint assessment criteria

Test item	Pass criteria
Consecutive from each C and B into A	Render immediately, accurately and completely, with good deverbalization (idiomatic expression, freedom from linguistic interference), momentum and eye contact with audience, not exceeding time used for original speech.
Consecutive from A into B	Render immediately, accurately, completely, clearly and cogently, not exceeding 20% over time used for original speech (10% for **Bsim**). Linguistic blemishes accepted if they are below the 'distracting' threshold and do not affect the clarity of the message (cf. ILR-4, or ideally, 4+).
Sight translation from C and B into A	(As for Consecutive into A but with eye contact requirement relaxed.)
Sight translation from A into B	For **Bcons**: as for Consecutive into B. For **Bsim**: As for Bcons, but not exceeding time taken by original, and showing more flexible expression.

Otherwise, in terms of format, organization and testing procedures (rater qualification and jury composition, scoring, deliberations, and other measures to maximize validity and reliability), the MPE 'previews' the final Professional Exam in Conference Interpreting (PECI) as described in TG-11, and like the PECI, should be designed as far as is feasible to meet the criteria of validity and reliability of criterion-referenced testing (CRT) (TG-11.3.2). (Note also that it is easier to study the validity of a Midpoint Exam, by looking at student outcomes, than that of a PECI).

Analytic scoring will be useful for feedback purposes, as at Admission, but with rubrics now adapted to spotlight specific aspects of technique, like efficient use of notes in Consecutive and deverbalization and syntactic agility for natural, idiomatic production, in ST. However, a system of *conjunctive scoring* must be applied (TG-11.7.3), i.e. students must pass in every task, and in a viable language combination, to pass the exam.

In terms of inter-rater reliability, the target IRR *phi* score recommended for the Midpoint Exam is 0.90, for the overall pass/fail judgments made by each rater on each exam-taker's performance (cf. TG-11.6.5.5).

Many schools will find it convenient and economical to hold the MPE and PECI back-to-back with more or less the same jury, with invited external examiners. This is also conducive to consistency in standards, as well as rater training (raters must obviously be fully briefed on the course and the different criteria for the two exams).

3.4.2   Assessment through the course: progression of constructs and criteria

Each of the three 'rites of passage' in the course has its own purpose and design, but we can track the progression of constructs and criteria through the three tests, reflecting their different nature. Thus,

▶ the admission test is predictive, checking *basic 'embryonic' aptitudes* for interpreter training: language (L), knowledge (K), verbal intelligence and personal qualities.

▶ the MPE is summative, formative and predictive, testing an intermediate level of *integration of these abilities in acquired skills* (S), with higher expectations on performance;

▶ the final diploma (PECI) is summative, but more importantly, a credible credentialling exam, must also be predictive, testing for the full integration of (more advanced) L, K, S and P (Professionalism) in all-round market-ready professional competence, with additional checks on more detailed and specific KSAs such as the ability to deal with certain known hazards, and general behavioural qualities reflecting 'open' skills (TG-11.3.2.3).

In short, the admission exam tests aptitudes, but no technical skills; the Midpoint tests the skills taught in the first year, and the speed, agility and linguistic readiness that will be needed for SI; while the PECI tests the integrated mastery of all L, K, S and P components as applied to realistic professional challenges. The KSAs tested at MPE and PECI are thus the evolved descendants of those assessed in earlier stages, as shown in Table 3.4: for example, *curiosity* should develop into the *ability to prepare a topic*, and a general broadening of the knowledge base. *Empathy* when supported by technical skills becomes *fidelity*. *Sensitivity to relevance* (the ability to sort out what is essential from what is secondary or peripheral, even on unfamiliar topics), and a stronger and more agile B language, will both pay off in the speed and prioritizing needed for the fast speeches at the diploma and real life. *Coachability* has disappeared as a target construct, though it may be realized in a willingness to keep improving (which may be tested separately or in a continuous assessment element).

Assessment criteria for Admission and the PECI are described more fully in TG-4 and TG-11 respectively.

Table 3.4 Predictive and summative testing: evolution of constructs and test items

Construct	Admission	Midpoint	Diploma (PECI)	PECI Test item or rubric
Language	(scoring rubric)	(scoring rubric)	**Expression**	
Comprehension (A,B,C)	No linguistic obstacle, able to analyse, listen actively	(extended range and depth)	'Complete', supports **Fidelity**	Integrated (holistic rubric)
A and B active proficiency	Clear, coherent, fluent	More range, flexible (Bsim: ready for SI)	register, tone	**Expression**
Knowledge	General: basics and potential	Knowledge readiness (how to prepare a topic)	Prepare, mobilize and apply general and topical knowledge	Semi-technical speech, topic given in advance
Verbal intelligence	**Communicativity**		Communicativity	Integrated (holistic rubric)
Technical Skills	(none)	Consecutive: effective note taking	Full 'long' consec with notes	Integrated (holistic rubric)
		Sight translation	SI, SI with text	
'Open' skills	Curiosity	More knowledge	Domain familiarity, ability to prepare	Integrated (holistic rubric)
	Lively/analytical mind	Sensitivity to relevance	Strategic prioritizing, coping	Fast and wordy speech
	Empathy	Fidelity to all viewpoints	Tone, accuracy	holistic rubric
	Coachability	(none)		(none)
		Unflappability		Difficult input
		Concentration and mental stamina	Staying power	Full 30′ turns if possible, min. 15′
Professionalism			Mediation strategies; ethical, professional judgment	Speaker errors, rudeness, etc.

3.4.3   Other forms of in-course assessment

In addition to constant structured and formative assessment by instructors, in classes or events like mock conferences, and at the three 'rites of passage' of Admission, midpoint assessment and the final diploma (PECI), students will engage in self- and peer assessment both in class and in group practice. Some educators have proposed formalizing self-assessment in the form of portfolios or journals.

3.4.3.1   *Self- and peer assessment*
Self-assessment (and to some extent, peer feedback) is a routine part of students' practice both inside and outside class. Students comment on each other's performances in class, and should be regularly encouraged to critique themselves, to cathartic but also 'therapeutic' ends – to help them become aware of their problems – either immediately after a performance (though not necessarily every single time) or occasionally in writing, after replaying their recordings either in audio (SI) or video (Consecutive). Outside class, increasingly students will work together out of class in groups or in pairs, throughout the course. The group practice guidelines in CC-5 (Appendix C) set out principles for peer feedback.

Students in the same group will often be experiencing similar problems, to which they have themselves not yet found solutions, and so tend to tell each other what they already know, or are unwilling or unable to critique each other's performances as effectively (frankly, to the point, but constructively) as an instructor. Students working into the same B language should probably be advised against trying to correct each other on points of language, leaving this to a native speaker. Finally, giving students complicated evaluation sheets to use in their group sessions does not seem to help much.[16]

We should not therefore expect too much from peer assessment, but instructors and teaching assistants (TAs, see TG-2.2.6) who may supervise group practice should help students to keep it as constructive and useful as possible. Two measures that can help maximize the benefits of group practice and avoid misunderstandings are

i.   to devote a **full class** session to presentation, discussion and dress rehearsal of the **Group Practice procedure**, using the guidelines (CC-5, Appendix C);

ii.   as suggested in TG-2.5.10, to establish a common 'metalanguage' in the first weeks for discussing interpreting performance and technique.

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16. Hartley et al. (2003) piloted a detailed evaluation grid (AIIC or SCIC quality descriptors being too general) to guide effective peer feedback, but found that students used a much reduced and simplified set of criteria, disagreed on their meaning, and more or less ignored behavioural points (like booth noise or posture), and register and style.

3.4.3.2 *Student portfolios and journals*

A common argument in favour of student journals and portfolios is their ability to structure and give coherence to the learning process. One outcome of the Admission exam process should be the creation of an ongoing individual file on each admitted student, with samples of work, recordings, scores, exam juries', instructors' and the student's own evaluations of his/her strengths and weaknesses (TG-4.3.6). This can be copied to all instructors so that teaching and feedback can be individualized as of the beginning of the first semester. This resource will be especially valuable if regularly updated in programmes with many part-time instructors.

The educational and therapeutic benefits of keeping a diary or journal to articulate one's experiences, questions and issues, and to set oneself objectives, are well known. Experiments with student journals have been organized by AIIC's Training Committee,[17] though no results have yet been published to our knowledge.

Student portfolios have been suggested as a possible continuous assessment extension to test-based assessment (Sawyer 2004: 125–127). However, the principle of a portfolio is usually to collect and present examples of the student's best work. Like a diary, this may be motivating for a student, but it does not really have a place in credentialling: a UN examiner once famously said he was only interested in how the candidate performed on a bad day…

3.5   Pedagogy and curriculum: updating the apprenticeship model

3.5.1 Existing weaknesses

Even where training is left to professionals, is adequately funded and can essentially follow AIIC guidelines, the 'standard' model is certainly perfectible.

The most salient weaknesses contributing to inefficiency (high rates of false positives and false negatives), inequity, or inadequacy to meet market needs, are probably the following:

i.   *Under-qualification of instructors* (who have traditionally received little or no teacher training), and loose pedagogical coordination, often confined to agreeing on a monthly subject matter focus, and/or exchanging impressions on students' progress at occasional staff meetings. Intermediate skills objectives may be set, but (with rare exceptions) coordination often does not extend to sharing pedagogical methods, theoretical underpinnings or metalanguage, so that students often experience teaching as contradictory.

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17. Using web-based Moodle software.

ii.   *Loose testing procedures* that are not demonstrably valid, fair and reliable (see TG-11.4.1).

iii. *Inadequate control and care in the choice of materials* for difficulty and appropriateness to different stages in training, and in consistently defining realistic expectations of performance.

iv.   *Delays in updating training to contemporary market needs*, particularly in simulating the realistic conditions needed to complete the 'last mile' of training.

v.   Reluctance to provide enough *targeted language enhancement*, especially for Bsim students.

Leading schools have gone some way to ameliorating these weaknesses by organizing faculty seminars in pedagogical technique, staying strict on selection and certification, and developing into-B pedagogy, but still seem slow to 'push the envelope' of the traditional training model in other ways, by drawing on relevant recent science and practice in areas such as expertise training, second-language enhancement (CC/TG-7), testing (TG-11), or theoretical inputs from linguistic pragmatics (TG-12.2).

3.5.2   Summary of recommendations

The training scheme proposed in this book is an update and we hope, an improvement on the standard training paradigm model, rather than a fundamental recasting. First, there is no need to fix the parts of the model that do not seem to be broken. Second, adding multiple new untested exercises and activities would risk overloading courses, or worse, losing sight of the interactive, relational nature of interpreting that would result, for example, from blindly modelling the task on expert skills that do not share this dimension.

   We therefore still advocate an apprenticeship approach, but with close individual attention, a structured curriculum with theoretical, indeed scientific underpinnings (3.2), an articulated progression with objectives that incrementally approximate to the real task without ever losing touch with the communicative essence of interpreting (3.3.2), and a testing regime that is valid and reliable, but also humane, certifying only those with proven competence to practise as professional conference interpreters (TG-11), but also providing alternative 'off-ramps' or graduation paths in related specialities (TG-13.3.5.3).

   The changing professional environment also calls for some updating and refocusing, devoting more attention than in the past to institutional (often text-based) discourse, SI into B, and dealing with very severe conditions.

   In summary, a more structured and effective apprenticeship-based training model fit for contemporary purpose should have the following characteristics:

1. **Incremental realism**: a progression in which each stage builds on the previous one, with exercises tailored to the challenges of the present stage. With the exception of 'off-line' drills in some ancillary skills (such as learning the conventional devices of note-taking), exercises and tasks keep a flavour of real communication throughout, becoming increasingly realistic and simulating the full professional task ever more closely. Progression takes the form of the incremental addition of new conditions and difficulties on the one hand, to challenge the new skills acquired, and of expectations on the product on the other.

2. **Skills-oriented** rather than theme-oriented or linguistic training[18] – but making some effort to cover most common themes through the two years, and providing additional specialized lectures (TG-7.4), and training in conference preparation (TG-9.3.1).

3. **Trained instructors,** with a special emphasis on methodical classroom practices, and especially in how to provide '3D' feedback – observation, diagnosis and treatment (TG-2.5.8). Teaching trainers some basic science in cognition and communication (TG-12) will increase their confidence and credibility. (The stages in the progression can be linked to known facts about cognition, language and incremental learning.).

4. Clarity and coherence in the (**meta)language** (TG-2.5.10) that is used for explanations, feedback, discussion and assessment – which is shared between and among instructors and students, without precluding the use of imagery and metaphor if appropriate and well-received.

5. **Careful choice of materials** (TG-2.5.5): incremental difficulty will obviously also mean some progression both in terms of speech *styles* (less formal or ceremonial at first, more so later, for example), and of *subject matter* (with more technical material reserved for later), but speeches with certain parameters can be identified to serve specific intermediate pedagogical ends (SDI in TG-2, Appendix), while on standard speeches, **expectations** are progressively raised – illustrated, perhaps, by returning once or twice in the course to a speech or text done previously.

6. **Avoid course overload**. There should be just enough room in a skills-oriented curriculum for **a few indispensable complements**:
   a. **Language enhancement**, according to need (with priority to into-B combinations); programmes should not be shy of providing intensive language (and to a lesser extent) knowledge enhancement, without overloading the curriculum (CC/TG-7);

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18. New training programmes are sometimes tempted to organize the course by subject-matter domains, with the focus on acquiring terminology – possibly due to a lack of professional interpreters to teach skills. This will not work (see TG-13.2.4.2).

b. A '**Theory and Practice**' track in two parts (3.3.4, TG-12.3) taking students from a general overview of the 'workings' of cognition and communication, through the main variations on interpreting settings and situations to the essentials of professional practice in the real world (CC/TG-10, CC-11);

c. Two or three **general and specialized knowledge** modules (TG-7.4). No other incidental academic requirements (translation, thesis), should be imposed *during* core skills training. The requirement for students to complete an MA thesis validates the university-level status of interpreter training, and in itself provides an excellent exercise in research, analysis, rigour and clear thinking; but the bulk of work on the thesis (TG-12.4.1) is best postponed until *after* the Professional exam.

7. **Update the target graduate profile and simulate real-life conditions:** The standard training model still bears traces of the heroic era when conference interpreters worked essentially in assemblies or discussion groups where people either spoke freely or provided a text, were in direct contact with their clients who were also their users, and could work primarily into their native languages. Today's interpreters must be prepared for an environment where they can and should aim to secure essential working conditions, but usually cannot expect optimal comfort. They must now be fully prepared to work in all the conditions described in TG-9 (speed, technicality, accent, recited text etc.), and – as a matter of routine in many mainstream settings like the UN and increasingly, most other organizations – in the more controlled or constrained, though admittedly less gratifying 'oral translation' mode described by Shermet (2012). A fully-fledged, postgraduate interpreter training course should take students the **last mile to market readiness**, doing the whole job of professional training.

8. Provide an **introduction to professional practice** that is practical and informative (including ethics and working conditions), with visits, internships and/or mentoring, but also more practice in surviving in sub-optimal conditions (TG-9, 10; CC-11).

9. **Accommodate diversity**: Last but not least, any effective course must be flexible enough to accommodate a **variety of individual styles**, and to some extent, make allowance, without stigma, for progress at different speeds (including delays and repeats of parts of the course: 3.2.6, 3.3.6, 13.2.4.3) as well as provision for streaming out to alternative pathways to graduation in a different specialization.[19]

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19. In the Japanese system (where interpreters are mostly trained in the training departments of a few large private-sector translation agencies), the two-year curriculum is divided up into six discrete modules. Students who fail any module either leave or retake the modules in order until they have passed them all. Fast students will get to module 6 within 2 years; slow students might take 4–5 years.

In almost every field, a few rare and talented 'self-made' individuals may survive and even do well. But planned and structured training aims to turn out interpreters who do not just adapt quickly and well enough to the job to *survive* on the market, but are equipped to *go on improving* throughout their professional careers. Dealing with reality requires ad hoc decisions and expedients, but on a foundation of accumulated – and 'growable' – expertise.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Curriculum design
Mackintosh 1995: A review of conference interpretation: Practice and training.
    (brief description of the 'Standard Model' of interpreter training)
Sawyer 2004: Fundamental Aspects of Interpreter Education: Curriculum and Assessment
Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989/2002: Pédagogie raisonnée de l'interprétation
    (English edition: 1995. A Systematic Approach to Teaching Interpretation)

Selection and admission

4.1   Introduction

Conference interpreter training programmes, even when expensive, may receive many hundreds of applications each year. Some may be tempted or pressed by their host institution to take as many students as possible. But experience has shown that only candidates with strong aptitudes at the time of admission – a very solid starting level of language proficiency, oral communication skills, general knowledge, and certain personal qualities – will stand a chance of being ready to work as conference interpreters within two or at most three[1] years. Applicants must therefore be screened carefully to make the best use of resources, avoid unnecessary disappointment and ensure reasonably high success rates even while maintaining high standards. The aptitudes we should look for in prospective trainees are set out in CC-3 along with recommended testing procedures and tips to students on how to prepare. TG-13 discusses workarounds of obstacles from local regulations or resource constraints.

In some leading schools, the percentage of students who fail to complete the course or get their diploma is notoriously high: commonly, 50–75% of admitted students do not graduate, a figure that has reached 100% in rare cases (see discussion in TG-13.3.5). The responsible way to limit high attrition, and its associated disappointments and wasted resources, is *not* to lower the standards to qualify for advancing to the second year (whether at a Midpoint Exam, or based on continuous assessment) or for professional certification (TG-11). Rather, it is more careful testing at admission, a streaming system to provide students with fallback options (TG-13.2.5.2), and of course, ever better teaching. The entrance test is therefore one of the most important events in the year and deserves our close attention.

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1.   On repeat years and extensions, see TG-13.2.4.3.

4.2   Defining standards for admission

4.2.1 Language proficiency

The language proficiency level required for admission to professional training is often underestimated not only by applicants, but also by language educators and university administrators. While improvement in all working languages can be expected during the course, for Bsim in particular this dividend will be more than offset by the exceptional pressure placed on the B language by SI, especially in the more challenging conditions described in CC/TG-9.

For reasons of administrative efficiency, too, since weak languages are the main cause of failure at admission exams, it is advisable to pre-screen applicants by requiring results of standard language proficiency tests to be submitted with applications.

Language testing is now a well-developed discipline, especially in English, but there has been little exchange of knowledge between interpreting schools and language testing experts. In this chapter, we will refer in our discussion of language requirements at admission to standard language proficiency scales[2]: the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages[3]), used across Europe; the ILR (Interagency Language Roundtable[4]) used by the US Government; and IELTS,[5] a standardized test which is only available for English.

Ideal and borderline requirements for A, B and C
The characteristics of an A language sought in a prospective interpreter are described in our coursebook for students (CC-3.2.1.1.). Occasionally, however, a candidate from a mixed cultural background (and/or from a family that moved often during his/her childhood) may have a natural A-like feel for her best language in casual and colloquial registers, but an inadequate command of more formal

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2.   For a rough mapping between IELTS and CEFR, see http://www.ielts.org/researchers/common_european_framework.aspx (Accessed November 13, 2015).

3.   The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment is the pan-European standard for language proficiency assessment. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp (Accessed November 13, 2015).

4.   The Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale is the standard measure of language proficiency used across the US federal government. Source: http://www.govtilr.org/ (Accessed November 13, 2015).

5.   The International English Language Testing System, abbreviated as IELTS, is an international standardized test of English language proficiency that is recognized in over 135 countries. http://www.ielts.org/ (Accessed November 13, 2015).

registers, and major lexical gaps, in more sophisticated (academic, professional, technical) domains; or may be fully operational in two languages, but stylistically pedestrian.

Accepting such students, who do not have a true 'A' language (and have as a result been rather harshly termed 'alingual' by some trainers) is a gamble with long odds. It might be justified only in exceptional circumstances, such as a complete lack of viable candidates with a true A or strong B in this language combination. As a result, in some emerging markets (or language combinations), such candidates may be preferred over those with a rich native A but a very insufficient B.

In almost all cases, a strong B will be preferable to a patchy, uneducated 'non-A'. Many excellent interpreters who may consider an African language as their true A have trained to full professional proficiency in bi-active English-French, essentially working between two strong Bs. A similar issue arises when the native language or dialect (e.g. Sicilian, Galician, Luxemburgish, Shanghainese, Cantonese, a vernacular Arabic…) is different from the language of formal education. These candidates may speak the official language with a slight accent and be perceptible as members of a different language community, but for some, at least, it is nonetheless their A language. Indeed, the formal registers required for conference interpreting may not be available in their home tongue.

For an active B language ('Bcons' and 'Bsim'), examiners should look for a speaking proficiency level equivalent to ILR-4 (CEFR C2) at admission, preferring ILR-4+ where available, especially for a Bsim (Level 5 more closely fits A-proficiency.). A candidate at a level of ILR-3+ (CEFR C1, but nearing C2) in the active B might exceptionally be accepted as a borderline case, but with significant upgrading required in-course (see CC-7).

Although score equivalencies across different scales of language proficiency are not exact, the standard we are looking for in candidates with English B (ILR-4 or 4+; CEFR C2) appears to correspond to an *overall* IELTS score of 8 or higher. For 'linguistically demanding' academic courses (such as Medicine, Law, Linguistics, and Journalism), IELTS itself recommends as 'acceptable' an overall band score in the range of 7.5 to 9.[6] Conference interpreting being perhaps *the* most linguistically demanding course of study imaginable, it would seem well justified to require a minimum overall band score of 8 for applicants with English as their declared B language. (An IELTS score of 7–7.5 would be equivalent to CEFR C1, requiring upgrading; IELTS 8 is at the cut-off between CEFR C1 and C2.[7])

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6.   http://www.ielts.org/institutions/global_recognition/setting_ielts_requirements.aspx (Accessed November 13, 2015).

7.   http://www.ielts.org/researchers/common_european_framework.aspx (Accessed November 13, 2015).

We also recommend a standard of listening comprehension for B/C languages equivalent to ILR-4(+) (CEFR C2), with possible consideration of candidates with ILR-3+/CEFR C1 at the borderline[8] (but requiring in-course enhancement).

Note that IELTS scores are a composite of four components: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. For interpreting, we must put most weight on listening and speaking, with some consideration to reading. Our Chinese students have observed that those who achieve an overall IELTS score of 7.5 or 8 usually do so with a higher score in Listening and Reading, but a lower score in Speaking and Writing. It is therefore important to check that the *speaking* score (also the listening score) is at the required level (8), not just the overall band score.

4.2.2 The profile of a promising trainee: other criteria

Some of the remaining criteria can be tested in a preliminary written test, including general knowledge, language knowledge, verbal skills, and language transfer skills (some awareness of the traps of linguistic interference, the ability to identify good vs. less-good vs. poor equivalents in context, or to explain culturally different concepts clearly to speakers of the other language).

General knowledge for conference interpreter trainees should to a large extent be the same for students all over the world, with a few differences of emphasis according to the target market. However, what exactly a potential trainee *must* already know is hard to pin down, so we must look for a combination of attributes: a demonstrated solid base of general knowledge to build on, coupled with a lively curiosity and indications of a readiness to research, acquire, and mobilize specific knowledge, even in unfamiliar domains. This composite yardstick for the 'Knowledge' requirement at admission – including a university degree – is more fully described in CC-3.2.3.

Communicative skills and other **personal qualities** such as 'stage presence', sociability, empathy, intellectual honesty, integrity and 'coachability' must of course be judged at the live interview. Table 4.1 summarizes ideal and acceptable characteristics of the profile of a promising applicant for training, as outlined for students in CC-3.2.

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8.   The ILR skill level descriptions for listening can be found at http://www.govtilr.org/skills/ILRscale3.htm (Accessed November 28, 2015).

Table 4.1 Minimum and ideal qualifications for admission to conference interpreter training

Ideal qualification	Minimum qualification
Good undergraduate degree (high marks) from a demanding course	Undergraduate degree in any subject (completed or near completion at time of admission)
Postgraduate degree in non-language subject	
Several years' work experience in relevant field (diplomacy, journalism, management consulting…)	–
Rich, educated, flexible, robust A language (CC-3.2.1.1)	A true native A language; or, for special cases only (see above), two very strong Bs, if appropriate teaching available
Active B language(s): cf. ILR-4/4+ (IELTS 8–9) or equivalent	Active B language(s): cf. ILR-3+ (IELTS 7–7.5) or equivalent, with plan for enhancement
Comprehension of other passive (C) languages: ILR-4 in Listening, or better	Comprehension of other passive (C) languages: ILR-3+ Listening, with plan for enhancement
Well-developed verbal communication and public speaking skills	Reasonably confident and clear (though inexperienced) public speaker
Extensive real-world exposure with study and/or work experience in countries of languages offered	Good functional ability in B language and cultural knowledge (interacts effectively with native speakers, shows cultural awareness)
Age 22–32	Age 20–55
Extensive world knowledge, voracious reader	Curiosity and readiness to learn about world of work, business and society

4.3   Entrance examinations

The popularity of this career and the prospects that training gives access to have probably heated the lively debate about the fairness and reliability of testing in interpreter training programmes, from admission to professional qualification. These issues are discussed in 3.4 below, and more fully in TG-11, where we propose that testing for interpreter training and certification should comply with the principles of *criterion-referenced testing* (CRT).

4.3.1   General procedure and pre-screening

In practice, admission procedures may vary in different programmes for institutional or other reasons. In some jurisdictions, regulations or other institutional constraints may make some or all aspects of these selection procedures impossible to implement (TG-13). Alternative arrangements – such as streaming students into different specializations after a semester, for example – are discussed in TG-13.3.5.

Our recommendation for robust admissions selection procedure, especially for large numbers of applicants, will include the following steps:

I.   Online **publication of the prospectus**, with a full description of the curriculum, including ideally:
    a.   the course goals and sponsors;
    b.   total hours of training, the identities and qualifications of all instructors, and a breakdown of how total training hours will be allotted among different modules and instructors;
    c.   required standards for admission, advancement, and graduation, and options for alternate exit routes (streaming);
    d.   historical data on number of applications received, number of candidates interviewed, number of students enrolled, number of students advanced past midpoint (where applicable) and number of students graduated from Professional Exam (on first attempt and on second attempt);
    e.   information on graduates: How many are officially accredited freelancers working for the major international organizations? permanent staff interpreters with these organizations? members of AIIC? The school can also provide other indicators relevant in the regional or national market, to show that graduates are meeting recognized high professional standards and are successfully integrating into demanding market sectors;
    f.   application and admission procedures;
    g.   tips on how to prepare for the written and oral entrance exams.

For fairness and transparency, and to save time on the exam day, both the exam **procedure** and the **standard** expected must be described very clearly, in writing, for candidates to consult in advance. This precaution will help prevent 'false negatives' – candidates who fail the entrance exam simply due to a misunderstanding of what they are supposed to do (see Dodds 1990).

II.   **Public information sessions** or school '**open days**' on which interested parties can come and listen to a talk by the Director, meet instructors, past and current students, and possibly observe selected classes.

III. Receipt and **screening of application dossiers**, comprising:
   a. completed application form;
   b. copies of all degrees and diplomas (or proof of enrolment in the final year of a first degree course) and complete academic transcripts;
   c. required standardized test scores (e.g. IELTS for English) to pre-screen for language proficiency, and potentially for verbal and reasoning skills as well (e.g. GRE, LSAT, GMAT[9]);
   d. CV;
   e. letters of recommendation;
   f. letter of intent or personal statement. On the model of the **video résumés** now commonly submitted for MBA applications, applicants could be asked to submit a video (or audio) file introducing themselves, speaking in different languages and reading a text out loud, enabling assessment of voice, accent, presentation skills and motivation.

IV. A **written exam**, with a complementary **voice recording task** in the **B language**(s), for candidates qualifying on the strength of this documentation.

V. For shortlisted candidates selected for their performance on the written exam, an **aptitude test** in the form of a live oral interview with structured listening and retelling tasks before a panel of experienced interpreters and interpreter trainers.

Whether required or not by the local administration (TG-13.3.5.1), a written exam (Step IV) is strongly recommended to build up a more complete picture of candidates' skills and abilities and to **shortlist** applicants for the oral interview (Step V).

4.3.2 The written exam

Written tests can be devised to provide a good indication of a candidate's linguistic and analytic abilities and general knowledge. Where a B and especially a Bsim is offered, a majority of tests in the B language will be justified to ensure that it is strong enough. The written exam should include two kinds of tests:

a. a first group of tests, of language, basic verbal skills and general knowledge, comprising questions in **selected-response** format that can be standardly graded against prepared answer sheets;

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9. GRE: Graduate Record Examinations; LSAT: Law School Admission Test; GMAT: Graduate Management Admission Test. These are standardized tests designed to assess applicants to post-graduate studies, law school, and business school respectively. These tests include a verbal skills component, with assessment inter alia of vocabulary, comprehension, inference, critical reasoning and the ability to evaluate arguments. They would therefore appear well worth exploring for potential predictive validity in the context of conference interpreter training.

b. a second set of **performance tasks** to assess higher-order verbal skills and pragmatic competence, which must be rated (inter-[10])subjectively, with controls on inter-rater reliability, preferably by the instructors who will make up the oral exam panel.

4.3.2.1 *Standardly scorable tests*

These tests are designed to probe the candidate's knowledge of her working languages, their cultures, and the world. They can also be used to check some higher-order skills including text comprehension and analysis (reading and listening). The tests are in selected-response (SR) format – multiple choice, or matching across lists – which offers the advantage that items can be efficiently and objectively scored against an answer key.

In deciding which and how many such (SR) tests to develop in-house for their written entrance examination, schools should consider: (a) whether applicants can be required to submit standardized test scores for language proficiency (e.g. IELTS) and verbal skills (e.g. GRE) as part of their application; and (b) how many applicants can be expected. Schools that receive a large number of applications (>100–200) and that cannot require standardized test scores may need to develop more comprehensive screening of these prerequisites using SR tests. Schools that can prescreen applicants on standardized test scores may focus on developing in-house tests only of those skills and abilities that are not already assessed in those standardized tests; and if applicants are relatively few in number, such a school might administer the SR tests *and* all written performance tasks to all applicants, instead of using SR tests as an upstream filter.

But **careful test construction** is critical – and time-consuming. It is very important to ensure that items are well-chosen and at the appropriate level of difficulty (cf. ILR-4 to 4+ for language items and passages for comprehension). Making them too easy will be a waste of everyone's time; worse still, making them too difficult, or irrelevant, may eliminate promising candidates before they are ever seen or heard ('false negatives'). Test designers should therefore carefully develop and validate these test items, and ideally pilot them on current cohorts of first and second-year students and recent graduates to calibrate them to the appropriate level of difficulty. Cut-off scores can be set via a standard procedure (e.g. an Angoff or bookmark method; see References and Further reading).

These standardly scorable tests are in three categories, corresponding to the three sets of objectively-testable criteria: language knowledge, verbal intelligence, and general (and cultural) knowledge. Tests of vocabulary (one for each B and C language, optionally in A as well) should cover high register (formal) vocabulary as well as idioms and colloquialisms. Each category (formal vocabulary, idioms)

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10. i.e. by multiple raters.

should run to at least 20 items to avoid distortion of the result by lucky guessing. Some example formats:

A. **Language knowledge**:
   1. *Definition matching*:
      Which of ABCD has the closest meaning to the phrase provided?

To make a case for	*To disparage*
a. prepare to do a task	a. scatter
b. falsely accuse	b. draw distinctions
c. argue in favour of	c. criticize
d. set an assignment	d. give someone the sack

      (The correct answer in both cases is C.)

   2. *Phrase completion:*
      Which of ABCD completes the phrase idiomatically?

Barking up the wrong…	*Have an axe to*
a. alley	a. sharpen
b. bone	b. carry
c. house	c. bury
d. tree	d. grind

      (The correct answer in both cases is D.)

   3. (Optionally) *Grammar correction:* Candidates must fix mistakes in linguistically unacceptable sentences. The test can either be multiple-choice or (recommended) a hybrid in which several segments are underlined and the candidate must (a) indicate which segment is wrong and then (b) provide a correct version of that segment.

B. **Verbal intelligence**[11]:
   1. *Comprehension*: candidates read or listen to a passage, then answer multiple-choice questions on their meaning. In the case of listening comprehension checks, the recordings can include some mildly varying accents.
   2. *Antonym matching:* Which of ABCD has the *opposite* meaning to the word provided?

Magnanimous	*It's down to us*
a. Stingy	a. we can't change things
b. Sickly	b. not our cup of tea
c. Petite	c. we're winning
d. Ill-spoken	d. it's up to us

      (The correct answer in both cases is A.)

   3. *Paraphrasing/synonym replacement in sentence:*
      Which of ABCD has the meaning closest to the underlined phrase?…

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11. See also Further reading.

4. *Best equivalent in context*, in which a phrase is highlighted in a source-language passage and the test-taker is asked to choose the best translation of that phrase, in context, from a list of choices. For example:

English: We fully **subscribe to** your concerns and assure you that we will look into the matter urgently

French: a. Nous souscrivons (pleinement)… b. Nous nous abonnons…
c. Nous adhérons… d. Nous partageons…

Here (a) is too formal; (b) means to 'subscribe' to a newspaper, for example; (c) is usually used for principles or beliefs, rather than concerns; (d), meaning 'we share…' is the best equivalent in context. Examples for this test will be readily found in translations done by students at this level.

C. **General knowledge**:

1. *Cultural literacy test* focusing on the countries and the cultures of the candidates' B and C languages in particular: for example, famous people (authors, artists, inventors, literary works, films, historical and mythical figures); places, traditions, festivals, foods, games, brands, kinship terms, books/films, proverbs…). This test could arguably be given more weight than the current affairs test (below), but should stick to the mainstream, avoiding anything obscure or abstruse.

2. *Current affairs test* focussing on items (people, places, events, buzzwords etc.) that should be familiar to anyone keeping up with major international, regional and national events in the past year. The format can be multiple choice, or candidates can be asked to match terms in one list to items in another list of prepared descriptions in scrambled order. The interview will provide a further basis for checking general knowledge.

4.3.2.2 *Performance tests*

These are constructed-response (CR) tests that are used to assess higher-order verbal and language transfer skills and pragmatic competence, and must be scored qualitatively and 'inter-subjectively' (i.e. by multiple raters). To ensure sufficient reliability of scoring, we recommend clear scoring guides (rubrics), rater practice sessions, and independent scoring of the actual test papers by two (or more) raters with checks on inter-rater reliability (IRR). Full details on these and other best practices in scoring performance tests are given in TG-11.6.6.

i. *Paraphrasing in the A and B languages*

Candidates are presented with three or four short passages (20–80 words), each of which they must rewrite in such a way as to convey the same meaning as the original, but using completely different words and sentence structure. This is an excellent test of an ability at the core of both interpreting and translation. An example *must* be given at the head of the paper. For instance:

Original sentence:

> The consequence of the [US] federal government's current spending priorities is, regrettably, that poor people can't access high-quality healthcare.

Sample paraphrases:

> *The way Washington is now allocating budget expenditure unfortunately means that citizens with limited resources can't afford good medical care.*
> OR
> *Unfortunately only the rich can get good medical treatment since the administration has decided it's more important to spend money on other things.*
> OR
> *Sadly, the present federal budget allocation means that only the rich can afford good medical treatment.*

A small number of hard-to-paraphrase words – corresponding roughly to 'transcodables' (see CC-4.3.1) can be italicized in the original to indicate to students that these words don't need to be replaced – and that all remaining words do.

ii.   *Cloze test in A or B*

Candidates have to fill in blanks left in a text, which must be well-argued and on a topical issue. The deleted items can be individual words or multi-word phrases, chosen carefully to test both linguistic knowledge (grammar: tense, agreement, prepositions; collocation; usage) and a sense of logic and coherence (links, argument structure, conclusions). In most cases there will be no single right or wrong answer – and raters will be surprised – but the completed text must be grammatically correct, idiomatic, plausible and coherent. Candidates can be asked to round off the text by composing a short paragraph (3–4 lines) that continues in the same style and concludes logically.[12]

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12. The cloze test was developed to measure readability, has since been widely used in language testing, and can be adapted for interpreter testing (and training, see e.g. CC-4.2.2.2, 8.2.1.2). There are two classic forms, distinguished by their design (choice of gaps): *random cloze*, in which every n^{th} word is deleted from the text (the traditional approach); and *rational cloze*, where deliberate choices are made about which words to delete. We recommend the latter approach for both pre-screening and later, training, as a means of testing or training almost all aspects of linguistic competence – syntactic, semantic and pragmatic – as well as general knowledge, clear thinking and analysis.

   There are also two different approaches to scoring: in verbatim scoring, only one correct answer is recognized, namely the actual deleted word; this makes the test objectively scoreable, but is too narrow and rigid for T & I purposes (and moreover implies a one-to-one correspondence between sign and signification, ignoring alternatives allowed by context). More appropriate for our purposes is acceptable word scoring, in which any acceptable completion is deemed correct,

iii.   *Prose composition in the B language*

This can be an essay on a choice of one of three topics (say, one political, one economic, and one social issue), and or a pragmatic drafting task such as composing a letter or email for a specified purpose. This tests linguistic ability, general knowledge, analysis and mental organization. However, scoring essays can be tedious if the topic lends itself to platitudes, or difficult if it is too emotionally charged. Scoring rubrics should ask raters to look for linguistic accuracy (correct grammar and usage); a good range of linguistic structures and devices (not *all* simple sentences and common expressions); good use of connectives and cohesive devices; clear organization of ideas and logical argument; and intelligent expression, idiomatic usage and some apt turns of phrase.

iv.   *Written translation*

This should ideally cover each active direction offered, but at least from B (and C) into A. Institutional arrangements may make this test compulsory, but in any case, it certainly helps in assessing one aspect of a candidate's aptitudes for interpreting. The texts chosen should present some linguistic and stylistic challenges so as to test comprehension. They should, however, be on more or less mainstream topics and free of abstruse concepts and terminology.

If the exam also includes essay-writing in the B language (item iii above), the focus here should be on translating into A, so as to check comprehension of B and/or C language(s) on sufficiently challenging texts, and the ability to work fast under **time pressure**, for instance by setting a time limit of 45 minutes for a 350–400 word text. When scoring, a balance between quality and completeness must be found, for example by first rating the quality of the completed translation and then adjusting that score downwards in proportion to the amount of SL text left untranslated. In any case, a paper should be at least 2/3rds complete to receive a score.

v.   *Reading aloud (15 minutes)*

This test can be recorded in a language lab either locally or, for overseas candidates, at a corresponding institution under supervision. Each candidate is given a one-page text and five minutes to prepare, then reads the text aloud into a microphone, as if presenting it on the radio. We recommend one such recording in the A language and another in B. These recordings will give a very good indication of a candidate's pronunciation, articulation and voice in both languages, as well

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although this may be harder to score reliably since there will usually be many acceptable answers, and acceptability judgments may vary between raters (Davies et al. 1999: 23–24).

Cloze in different variants has been recommended for both aptitude testing and training of interpreters by several authors, including Visson (1999), Kalina (2000), Nolan (2005), and Gillies (2013: 94).

as fluency and confidence in the acquired (B) language, shown in the degree to which prosody and rhythm reflect the sense of the text. This test will also reveal significant gaps in vocabulary. The recordings are therefore very effective in short-listing candidates for the oral exam. The text must be chosen carefully, avoiding abstruse topics; it should preferably be an opinion piece containing both short and long, complex sentences, some less commonly encountered vocabulary, and perhaps some irony, humour or strongly expressed views.

4.3.2.3 *Choice of tests and grading: the decision tree*

Each subjectively-scored (constructed-response) paper should be independently scored by two (or more) raters with the appropriate A language. On the question of rater consistency in scoring written papers like translation, paraphrase, cloze and essay-writing, readers are referred to Bowen & Bowen (1989) for a useful discussion, with worked examples, of common points of divergence such as the importance given to terminological precision, or more importantly, weighting accuracy vs. style. Both intra- and inter-rater reliability can be improved by developing explicit scoring guides and implementing rater training (see TG-11.3.1.1, 11.6.5).

Time and personnel constraints may preclude using all the tests listed above. The cost-effectiveness of a preliminary written exam will also depend on applicant numbers and qualifications, but some leading schools who had dispensed with them for many years now find them useful, and preferable to interviewing many dozens of candidates directly. Requiring B-language proficiency scores as a filter will cut down the numbers sitting the written exam, and not all these tests are indispensable (for example, written translation into B can replace essay writing in B).

The objectively scorable (SR) tasks described above can be easily and quickly scored online against a standard answer key, but the more time-consuming, subjectively graded cloze and paraphrase are usually the most revealing. The complete exam must include both, but will be more efficient if all candidates do the eliminatory (SR) tests first, going on to CR tests only if they make the cut.

The following is a proposed **decision-making tree** for **shortlisting candidates for interview** using the above tests in the following order:

1. **Objectively-scored (SR) tests** serve as an initial filter by applying a carefully determined cut score. We cannot overemphasize, however, just how important it is for these tests to be well-designed and for the cut scores to be appropriate, to avoid filtering out people who would have made excellent conference interpreters. These items can be quickly and standardly graded by teaching assistants or computer.

2. **Voice and delivery**: Candidates who pass step (1) are then screened using the **voice recording** (reading aloud in A, and, for AB combinations, also in B). Those with insufficient fluency, or poor pronunciation, intonation, or voice are filtered out.

3.   Next, **translation** (B and C to A) eliminates from among the remaining candidates those with insufficient comprehension and transfer skills.[13] The **prose composition** in the B language will eliminate those with weak production skills.

4.   Finally, grades on **paraphrase** in the A language and/or **cloze** (useful in A, more telling in B) should enable shortlisting of the remaining candidates to a number that can reasonably be interviewed with the time and staff resources available. These are the trickiest tests to score but sometimes also the most valuable: a short paraphrase exercise in B will typically identify only the most gifted candidates, who should be interviewed even if they are only just above the cut score on other tests.

4.3.3   Oral test and interview

Promising candidates who emerge from this battery of written tests (including recordings) will then proceed to the live interview. This is an aptitude test for professional training in conference interpreting, and as such is the 'real' entrance examination. Each candidate is tested individually for up to 45–60 minutes (20–30 minutes per language pair-direction) before one or more live panels of professional conference interpreters, including native speakers of all the languages offered. The resource-intensive nature of this examination, in time and qualified personnel, is what makes careful upstream pre-screening necessary.

A typical oral aptitude test would include several if not all of the following components, for each pair-direction in turn:

i.   Retelling (starting with B-A), i.e. 'pseudo-consecutive' interpretation without notes, of a short, structured speech;
ii.   Q & A on that retelling, to prompt recall of any missed content and check comprehension of any distorted content;
iii.   Short back-and-forth dialogue interpreting building off that retelling;
iv.   On-the-spot pressure drills, again drawing on content from the retelling performance: instant grammar correction, paraphrasing, and sentence completion;
v.   (Optional) impromptu speechmaking: the candidate is asked to give a 2-minute speech presenting their own view on the topic at hand, or arguing the opposite, or even speaking on an unrelated topic (choice of three);
vi.   A brief interview.

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13. Some candidates will have had translation in their undergraduate courses, others will not, so to avoid any skewing of results this test should only be used as a filter, to eliminate candidates below a certain cut-off score, without any advantage for superior performances.

Detailed guidelines on each component are given below in 4.3.3.2.

4.3.3.1 *Panel composition and qualifications*

In performance testing, 'objectivity' is not possible, but the reliability of scoring can be optimized by using multiple raters with checks on inter-rater reliability (TG-11.3.2.2 and 11.6.5).

Panels should be made up of at least three, preferably four, examiners who are all professional conference interpreters – and optimally, also experienced interpreter trainers; minimally, at least two should be. An exception to the all-professional panel rule may be allowed only when training is being offered for the first time in a 'new' language for which no professional interpreters are available, with a view to training in a 'triangular' or team-teaching scheme (TG-2.4.5). In such cases the panel must rely on qualified informants (ideally, trained language examiners) to assess B-language production quality against a standard proficiency scale, and/or to make speeches in that language.

The panel should also include all the main instructors for the candidate's language combination, or if only one is available, preferably the head of that language section. Last but not least, the panel must include at least one native speaker for each of the candidate's active languages (but preferably two, especially for the candidate's B language).

It is strongly recommended that the *same panel interview all candidates in a given language pair and direction*. Having separate juries for different batches of candidates who are competing for places in the same class makes it impossible to compare performances reliably and rank the candidates fairly.

When candidates are offering *complex combinations* – AB(B)C, or ACC(C), for example, in multilingual training programmes – it will be more efficient, not least from the perspective of forming a qualified panel, to test such candidates on a *core subset*, such as AB and one strong C, and then move on to test the other language(s) only if the outcome is positive.

4.3.3.2 *Guidelines for speeches*

Exam speeches to be used in the retelling tasks should be chosen with arguments and ideas which are *original and unpredictable enough* to prevent candidates from compensating for weak linguistic comprehension by clever guessing. While resourcefulness in guessing or reconstructing the probable meaning of unknown words should be considered a plus, the aim is to weed out candidates with insufficient passive word-power and *excessive* reliance on top-down comprehension strategies. Ideal speeches for re-telling

i.   are complete, coherent and inherently interesting oral communications that by design require careful listening. It is hard to check the breadth and depth of a candidate's comprehension in a short exam, so speeches must be pitched to challenge language knowledge, listening and analytic skills at the right level;

ii. are on engaging, quirky, even unusual but accessible topics (avoid the mainstream, predictable, and banal);

iii. are generally around 2–3 minutes long (at most 4 minutes, if redundant);

iv. are clearly structured, with an introduction, body, and conclusion;

v.   involve one or more logical twists along the way;

vi. will contain some less commonly encountered vocabulary (idioms, colloquialisms, cultural references), without elucidation, and some humour, irony and subtleties as appropriate;

vii. avoid too many names, figures, and similar details, so as to keep memory load light and allow the listener to focus on the big picture (macrostructure);

viii. crucially, must be delivered as though to an audience of educated native speakers without any accommodation, i.e.

    a.   at normal-to-fast speed (>120–130 wpm), *not* in slow, easy language as though 'speaking to foreigners';

    b.   free of any needless explanation or paraphrasing of more difficult expressions, or wanton redundancy.

Indicative levels of difficulty for these retelling speeches on various parameters (speed/density, subject matter, accent etc.) are given in our experimental Speech Difficulty Index in the Appendix to TG-2. Avoid using as source material articles recently published in well-known sources (especially those recommended on the school's own website for reading practice).

4.3.3.3   *Live speech vs. video*

In many schools, input speeches are delivered by live speakers in the exam room. Other programmes prefer – or may even be required (see TG-13.3.5.2) – to use the same speech in a particular language combination throughout, either by having the live speaker give the same speech over and over again, or more commonly, by pre-recording it on video.

The risk with live speeches, especially if delivered spontaneously, from loose notes or by paraphrasing magazine articles in real time, is that they will vary too widely in difficulty (or clarity, speed or length), or in subtle ways that raters may not be able to factor in reliably. This approach therefore poses serious problems in terms of the fairness, validity and reliability of the test. Even when a live speaker delivers 'the same' speech over and over from point-form notes, it will vary in delivery, pacing and difficulty each time. Moreover, a live speaker may be tempted

or manipulated to respond (even unawares) to a look of incomprehension from the candidate by adding in a little explanation or paraphrase, which may seriously compromise consistency and fairness (cf. TG-11.4.1).

Finally, when speeches are delivered live from memory or loose notes, they may occasionally be botched – for example, if the speaker inadvertently includes some unreasonably difficult, illogical or technical element that might be distracting, or if the speech turns out to be too loose, fuzzy or ambiguous, or too different from speeches given to other candidates (much easier or more difficult).

The solution to these problems is either:

a. to have a live speechmaker who delivers exactly the same speech to all candidates. But the speechmaker must prepare and practise his speech in advance, writing it out word-for-word in pseudo-oral style so that it can be delivered communicatively but close to identically each time; and s/he must look at and address the target audience (as in real life), *not* the candidate, and strictly avoid any accommodating behaviour. However, using a word-for word text is not ideal for speaking naturally – and pacing and delivery will still be different each time.
b. to use (a) pre-recorded video(s).

On balance, **pre-recording a speech on video** to use for all candidates seems preferable on grounds of fairness and consistency, at a fairly small price in lost directness or 'naturalness'. Also, speakers are usually also jurors, and may get increasingly tired and less able to score fairly by the end of the day if they are also having to give multiple speeches. However, a few conditions must be met:

i. Projection *equipment* and its operation must be completely seamless and reliable, with a big screen and optimal sound and picture quality.
ii. The recording must meet the same criteria as a live speech – natural and communicative delivery (not dryly or stiffly read out), appropriate content, density, etc. Panel members can meet in advance and select the best from a choice of recordings.
iii. *Security:* Candidates should not be allowed to bring mobile phones, voice recorders, or any other electronic device into the exam room, but banning these devices even in the waiting room seems too draconian. The risk of leaks is obviously higher the longer the exams continue, especially when using the same speech; but fresh material and questions can be added if aspects of the performance arouse suspicion. Also, because there is a lot of interaction, with the examiners asking candidates to paraphrase, explain, summarize, correct, etc. after each retelling, plus dialogue interpreting on issues that spontaneously came up, a candidate may not gain a huge advantage even with a pretty good idea of the general content of a retelling task.

The best compromise is to use pre-recorded speeches on video that have been carefully prepared and chosen in advance. At least two or three such speeches should be available for use in each source language, rotated throughout the exam – enough so that retelling tasks can be somewhat customized to give candidates topics that are remote from their own discipline or experience – e.g. for a candidate who worked in a health-related job, skip the speech on diabetes and give the one on financial crises instead – but of similar difficulty.

4.3.3.4 *Rater training and preparation*

Just as practitioners are not automatically good teachers, teachers may not necessarily be consistent exam raters. To ensure acceptable reliability of scoring, a rater training session should be provided in advance for all examiners. One day of training should suffice the first time, with a refresher each year before the exam session. This will ensure that raters understand and are working with shared, explicit evaluation criteria, know how to use the scoring guides, have calibrated themselves against each other by doing test ratings on videos of candidates' performances from previous years, and have achieved the necessary level of inter-rater reliability (IRR). For details see TG-11.6.5.5.[14]

> An excellent additional practice is for panel members to **do the retelling tests themselves**, either on the eve or on the morning of the examination before the first candidate is called in.

4.3.3.5 *Oral exam procedure*

This section describes both core and optional add-on tests, with rough estimated durations. Since even a core subset of tests may add up to an hour or more in the case of candidates with three or more language directions (ABC(C), ACCC…), schools might consider testing these candidates in two sessions (say, A and B first, or A from one C first).

i. *Introductions*: The Chair checks the candidate's name and language combination, (optionally) introduces panel members, then chats briefly with the candidate to break the ice, perhaps asking a few questions about her/his background (work, study or travel experience mentioned in CV) and motivation (some candidates are looking for high-level language training, or have another career in mind, which is a waste of resources); and briefly recaps the exam procedure.

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14. For Admission exams, we suggest targeting 90% rater agreement (exact and adjacent) on a six-point holistic rubric (see Appendix C and TG-11.6.5.5 and 11.6.6). Alternatively, if raters return dichotomous judgments only (admit/do not admit), we suggest aiming for phi scores of 0.80 or better.

The best applicants will be able to turn their tension into energy ('constructive stage-fright': Thiery, p.c.). But nerves are a natural response to a test of this kind, and the panel should act in a friendly and relaxed way from the outset. Keep to the timetable as far as possible to avoid making applicants wait for hours in a classroom or corridor.

ii. *Retelling*: This task involves the oral reproduction in another language, without notes, of a short, structured speech (generally 2–3 minutes in length) delivered by a native speaker, and should be done at least once for each active language combination offered (from each B and C into A, and A into B – but see 4.3.3.6 below). The candidate may be given a choice in the order of the tests (e.g. first B to A, then one C into A, then A into B).

The Chair first explains to the candidate what is expected in 're-telling'. For example: "Listen carefully, and then give back the content speaking in the first person, as if you have become the speaker, addressing my colleagues here who don't understand [the source language]. Try to convey the main ideas and arguments as clearly as you can, with as much accompanying information and detail as you can remember, but without embellishing or adding anything".

The speech is then delivered (live or on video), if necessary after a very brief explanation of any unusual terms or proper names, and/or the speaker's pretend-role and context, and is then retold immediately by the candidate, from memory.

iii. *Q & A (3–5 minutes):* After each retelling, the panel asks questions of the candidate to probe comprehension, analysis and memory, focusing on any points that the candidate may have overlooked, truncated, distorted, misunderstood, or (worst of all) fabricated. This probing questioning helps the panel to check not only comprehension and memory, but also key qualities such as intellectual honesty, coachability and acceptance of criticism. Here is a possible procedure:

  a. Check understanding, analysis and memory by challenging faulty content;
  b. Check memory by probing, or gently prompting, to elicit missing content;
  c. Check active language proficiency without the stress of retelling, by confronting the candidate with linguistically faulty expressions from her rendition and giving her a chance to correct them.

iv. *Pressure drills (2–3 minutes):* To check flexibility and verbal skills under time pressure and production constraints, and thus get some idea of the candidate's **future aptitude for SI**,[15] – but adjusting expectations for A vs. Bsim – the candidate is asked to provide instant

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15. Our proposed admissions test does not directly test skills specific to consecutive (note-taking) or SI that will be trained on the course. This meets Dodds' (1990) objection to testing students in translation or interpreting skills for a course meant to teach these very skills (see 4.4.2 below for discussion).

      ✓   *Paraphrases* for different ideas in the speech, giving several different versions that mean the same thing;

      ✓   *Sentence completions* after being given the start of a sentence that again recaps content from the speech, but imposes a syntactic constraint that must be observed in the candidate's continuation of the sentence. With appropriate sentence beginnings in a context, this test also gives some idea of another SI competence, the ability to project and anticipate.

v.   This may be immediately followed by a short session of *dialogue interpreting* (3 minutes), in which one panel member, speaking in a different language through the test-taker as interpreter, challenges a point made by the original speaker, and a brief debate between panel members ensues, with several rounds back and forth. The candidate must play the role of an impartial, neutral interpreter between two parties having a lively exchange (or even an argument).

      This serves to check that the candidate can get into the role of interpreter, especially if the speakers express some unusual views. Some candidates may require a bit of prompting to understand the parameters of what they are being asked to do, but the best ones will visibly warm to the task and enjoy the challenges.

vi.   *Improving on performance (coachability check, optional, 2–3 minutes):* A member of the panel points out some problem in the performance, and asks the candidate to try to improve on it. For example, a candidate who was particularly wordy could be asked to deliver a succinct summary of one of the presentations, as tersely as possible; one with a weak voice and timid demeanor could be asked to stand in the far corner, assume a confident posture, and PROJECT to the panel; or a candidate who had enunciation problems could be asked to read a passage aloud focusing on enunciating clearly. This is a good test of receptivity to training.

vii. *Impromptu commentary in TL (optional)*: ask the candidate to explain or give an opinion on something related to the speech, or argue the opposite point of view (45s–1 min). This seems a more natural, economical and less stressful way of checking for knowledge and verbal skills in self-generated speech than asking for a whole impromptu speech on one of three topics.

    On the other hand, these sub-tests of reaction speed and of resourcefulness of reformulation – similar to the SynCloze test described by Pöchhacker (2011) – can give a valuable clue to candidates' ability to acquire SI one year hence. Regarding paraphrase, Russo found that "the best performers at paraphrasing complete the course at a faster pace and receive better evaluations by their interpreting teachers in both their language combinations and throughout their school careers" (2014: 23).

If there is any residual *doubt about the candidate's A language*, one possible additional test is to ask him/her to produce as many words as possible in a given semantic category (e.g. kitchen utensils, African animals, astronomical objects) in a given period of time (e.g. 30 seconds).[16]

viii. *Interview* to assess background, motivation, and expectations. This can be done at the beginning of each candidate's test session, as part of 'breaking the ice', and/or at the end, and to answer (briefly) any questions that candidates may have. The panel also studies the candidate's file, including CV and letter of intent. It is important to check the candidate's motivation and commitment as well as his/her abilities and aptitudes, since the course will mean an investment of time and money (in fees and living expenses) over a period of two years and possibly more.

4.3.3.6 *Adapting or varying test procedure (on the fly)*

Fairness requires administering the same test to all candidates, but rigidly identical procedure may not be feasible or compatible with the interactive nature of the interview (nor advisable for security reasons). Time will also be a factor. In some circumstances, unless strictly forbidden by school regulations (see TG-13.3.5), some variation may be possible or beneficial within these parameters.[17] For example,

- ▶ If A-B and C-A are satisfactory, B into A may be dispensed with for reasons of time;
- ▶ Conversely, for Bsim a second same-language retelling test into the Bsim may be desirable if there is time;
- ▶ Two retelling tests should be the minimum tested, but there is no reason to continue testing a candidate who has clearly failed on the basis of two retelling tasks. One or both may also be shortened if the opening interview shows very poor command of one or more of the languages.

It is also vital to ensure that a candidate is not having difficulties because s/he has not properly understood the task. If this seems likely from the candidate' response on the first retelling task, the panel should make sure s/he has properly understood

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16. This test for A authenticity has a venerable history, going back to Nuremberg (Gaiba 1998: 43).

17. Note however that while some variations may save valuable time without compromising fairness, and perhaps mercifully shorten an unpleasant experience for all concerned, in some jurisdictions there may be a risk of appeal by the candidate and litigation, depending on the information published about the exam procedure in advance. Vagueness on the number of tests is not ideal for transparency, but complete honesty will mean that some candidates will know the (negative) outcome immediately.

what is expected, if necessary explaining again with a short demonstration, then proceed with the second retelling task. If this is still completely unsatisfactory, the test should be terminated.

If a candidate is otherwise doing well but has a temporary mental block in the middle of a retelling, the panel may consider gently prompting with a simple cue-word to help trigger recall; or a candidate who is becoming impossibly slow and long-winded can be asked to move to summary mode; but if this does not help, one may dispense with some tests or otherwise terminate the interview. Be sure, however, to extend the same opportunities to all candidates.

Interviews should be recorded (ideally on video) for replaying during final panel deliberations if necessary to check specific points and settle tie-breaks,[18] since examiners may have to choose, for example, between candidates who appeared at the beginning and the end of an exam week.

4.3.4 Assessment, grading and deliberations

4.3.4.1 *Scoring procedure*
Comparability and consistency are always a challenge for juries faced with candidates with different mixes of skills and abilities that are not so obviously commensurate. One central issue that pervades all human resource evaluation and assessment is the conversion from qualitative and subjective impressions into quantified assessment in the form of scores or grades. The best way to do this reliably is by creating clear scoring guides and checklists for raters, and training them in their use (TG-11.6.5.3–11.6.5.5).

For the oral entrance exam, we recommend a three-step scoring procedure in which:

1. Each rater independently scores the candidate's retelling, pressure drill and other performances, on analytic rubrics. A sample rubric for the retelling task only is given in Appendix A.
2. Afterwards, each rater reviews these analytic scores and their notes, reflects on the candidate's level of performance in each task, and the strengths and weaknesses observed, then assigns the candidate a *holistic score* on a six-point scale of readiness and suitability for conference interpreter training (for a sample holistic rubric, see Appendix B).[19]

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18. Recordings also help to ensure accountability, and are useful for future training and even research purposes.

19. This procedure for moving from analytic to holistic scoring is described in Johnson et al. (2009: 171).

3. The Chair then collects the holistic scores assigned to the candidate by each rater, and aggregates them into a *panel score* for that candidate, following the procedure described in TG-11.6.6.

This analytic-to-holistic procedure has the advantages of

i.   helping to remind examiners to consider all relevant aspects of the performance (the 'checklist' function of rubrics and grading sheets);
ii. furnishing more detailed and itemized diagnostic information to go into the student's file and be shared with admitted students and their instructors (and unsuccessful but near-miss candidates);
iii. still retaining expert judgment (as opposed to a formula or weighting algorithm that would be less valid) to derive an overall holistic score from each rater.

Importantly, these scores are first compared for sufficient agreement (exact and adjacent) among the raters, with review and rescoring when the scores are not in adjacent agreement (TG-11.6.6.1–2), and only then aggregated into a panel score.

This resulting panel score for each candidate can be used to rule out candidates *below* the required cut-off score, and to rank candidates above the cut score so as to make final admission decisions. Based on our own sample rubric in Appendix C, we would suggest a cut score of 4.5/6 (but see TG-11.6.6.3 for caveats on setting cut scores, and Further reading here and in TG-12).

4.3.4.2 *What to look for*
Time is usually limited, so panel members must be alert for key indicators, but also for illusions and artefacts of preparation. Also be sure to

✓ Check the candidate's staying power.
✓ Beware of being 'charmed' by a pleasant manner, good pronunciation, or good rhythm and melody. These are advantages, but should not distract jurors from listening attentively for the complexity of syntax, the appropriateness of links, etc.
✓ *Coachability* is an important factor, including readiness to accept criticism – but note that a clever but somewhat 'cheeky' student may be more promising than a sullen or ostensibly compliant candidate who appears to agree on everything but never corrects her/himself. The most promising candidates often seem visibly to progress and learn *during the interview*, and are quick to understand the simulation game being played.

4.3.4.3 *Final selection*
If the school is lucky enough to have more candidates with panel scores over the cut score (say, 4.5) than available places on the course, then offers can be made to those with the highest scores first, to fill all the available places.

This will not always be the case, however. It is therefore crucial to have a clearly defined policy determined in advance in writing, spelling out what should be done if there are not enough candidates with panel scores over the cut score to make a full class. The options are:

a. To admit only those with scores over the cut score, which may mean having a class with just 2–3 students, or in extreme cases, one student.
b. To consider admitting candidates with borderline scores (say, from 4–4.5) in order to fill in the empty places.

If there are more borderline candidates than places to be filled, some schools may require the entrance examiners to hold another round of discussions and attempt to identify which seem to have better potential for improvement.

Typically, this last 'tie-breaking lap' will be tricky, and inevitably involves an element of prediction, as in all aptitude assessment (Carroll 1962, cited in Bowen & Bowen 1989): Can this young applicant acquire enough world knowledge in time? Will the older or more confident candidate be teachable? Will the incisive but somewhat bookish science or philosophy major be able to make her English into a viable B for SI? Sometimes it may help to return to the candidates' files for possible background 'pluses' or 'minuses' – for example, a candidate whose B is still weak or sloppy after spending several years in that country is not a good bet – or to revisit their written work; and in particular, to re-listen to the recordings, especially in deciding between candidates interviewed early and late in the exam session.

Borderline cases and conditional passes
In emerging markets and for 'exotic' language combinations, it may not be possible to find candidates whose B language is at the level of ILR-4 or 4+ (CEFR C2; IELTS 8–9). In such cases, it may be acceptable to consider applicants with B proficiency in the range of ILR 3+ (CEFR C1's upper reaches; IELTS 7–8), but not any lower. Getting these candidates to a solid Bsim under the pressure of simultaneous interpreting is a tall order, so to maximize their chances of success it is important that:

a. they are very strong in all other respects;
b. they understand that their prospective B language needs significant improvement, are highly motivated to improve their B and have time on their side;
c. all their into-B interpreting classes are taught by qualified interpreter instructors who have that language as their own A language;
d. there is a strong focus on systematic language enhancement built into the training course, including at least four hours a week of B-language upgrading taught by qualified native language teachers, plus six to eight hours of into-B interpreting classes;

e. they have daily opportunities for group practice and interaction with students who are native speakers of the language;

f. the course lasts two years (one year is not enough time for both language enhancement *and* skills acquisition, even if the course is in the student's B-language country), and allows for a repeated year.

Additionally, some schools may mandate a sandwich year abroad in an appropriate B-language country between the first and second years of study. This can be very helpful, if the time is used well (see CC-3.5 and CC-7.4.2).

For ethical reasons, we recommend providing an alternate off-ramp for students who cannot reach the required standard for international conference interpreting but who could provide reliable business or in-house consecutive (cf. NAATI 'Professional Interpreter' level, CC-2.5.2). For discussion of systems for streaming and certification at different competence levels see TG-11.7.5 and TG-13.3.5.3.

Both authors have observed young, motivated students with English at the ILR-3+/ILR-4 (CEFR C1/C2) borderline at admission go on to work hard and achieve a viable Bsim. But it will always be preferable wherever possible to recruit students with a sufficiently strong B language in the first instance. Most interpreting programs we are aware of do not provide for the substantial language enhancement support required for such students (CC/TG-7).

On grounds of accountability, ethics and optimizing training efficiency, if the school intends to offer admission to borderline candidates in order to fill up spare places on the course, then these candidates should be told that their scores were borderline. They should be informed of the historical pass rate for similar candidates (if the data is available – if not, it should be collected), and the amount and focus of additional work they will have to do to 'beat the odds'. They can then decide whether or not to accept. In some schools, this is called a **'conditional pass'** (at admission or at the Midpoint Exam). We can only recommend offering such 'conditional passes' at admission if there are alternate exit pathways available, e.g. programmes into which students can be easily transferred if they are not up to Conference Interpreting standards after a semester or at most after the first year of training (TG-13.3.5.3).

In terms of numbers, interpreter training is most successful with small classes of four to seven strong students, or at the very most eight to ten if long classes of 2.5–3 hours (with a break) can be arranged and TAs are available to supervise additional group work. Each annual intake (cohort) should ideally be mixed in terms of native languages and background, so that they can practise together and help to fill each other's gaps in language and knowledge (TG-2.4.3). This balance may be difficult to achieve in some parts of the world (like China, where over 95% of all interpreting students have the same Chinese A-English B language combination), but

the school should do its best to attract at least one or two native speakers of each of the languages involved in the course in each academic year (student cohort).

Successful candidates can be given some extra tips about how to bring themselves up to speed in the weeks or months before the course begins (see CC-3.4).

4.3.5   Candidate profiles

Many trainers have traditionally seen the ideal trainee interpreter[20] as a young graduate – age 25–32, preferably an early bilingual or multilingual, or who has lived in two or more countries, with work and life experience, keen and highly motivated. Today, however, some course leaders in leading multilingual schools are less inclined to report any 'standard' profile for the student who will finally succeed: s/he may be 22 or 50, come from an international or provincial background, and be an early or late learner of her non-native languages. Those who have grown up with several languages have an advantage in fluency, accent and cultural awareness, they may suffer from language contamination and identity issues; and older students have the advantage of experience and can still learn if flexible and coachable (Clare Donovan [ESIT, Paris], p.c.; Jade Lim Hyang-ok [GSIT,[21] Seoul], p.c.).

At the time of writing there are still significant regional differences in the mix of candidate profiles, especially in terms of exposure to foreign cultures. In Europe, the Americas and Africa there is a pool of *educated* (near-)bilinguals in close touch with at least two cultures. In emerging markets like China, most candidates will be locally educated (many but not all English majors) with little or no opportunity to go abroad before or during training, calling for significant individual efforts on language enhancement and cultural awareness. Some will have work experience, and some will have travelled (or both), but this is no guarantee of admission or success, as they may have become used to getting by with only a colloquial command of the learned (or even the native) language that is hard to upgrade.

A serious handicap in East Asia, in particular, is the dearth of applicants who are native speakers of English with a sufficient command of the national language (e.g. Chinese, Japanese or Korean). For a realistic chance of success, adult or

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20. We can trace this back to the sketch drawn by the Nuremberg selectors (Gaiba 1998: 47), who claimed 'best results' with older candidates, between age 35 and 45 – but they were looking for potential interpreters able to start immediately after an accelerated course with no time for language and knowledge enhancement.

21. GSIT: Graduate School of Interpretation and Translation, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Seoul.

'second-language' Western learners of these languages will usually need four years of university language studies, plus another two or three years of further study or working experience in-country, just to pass the admission test (even for a C, which will bring very little work on the market).

   Many (and in some places, most) candidates will have done some translation or interpreting at university, or even on the market. Again, this is not automatically a plus: the experience may have honed their language transfer skills, but depending on the type and quality of their earlier training, or their previous work environment, it may have encouraged habits of superficial translation, or illusions about their real ability, that are hard to correct. Assessing 'coachability' will also include judging whether such students are open to adopting *standards of professionalism* (CC/TG-10) at odds with their past experience on the grey market (see TG-13.3.6.2 for a discussion of this issue and rules for students taking jobs while on the course).

4.3.6 Admission exams and pedagogy

The kind of selection procedure described above is resource-intensive, but critical to the success of a training programme. One of its significant benefits is to generate an archive of material that will support both pedagogy and future research, by helping to track the progress of successful students and give them individual feedback, enabling iterative review of the exam procedure and its predictive validity (comparing scores on entrance tests, classwork, midpoint and final exams), and training new generations of examiners with video recordings of entrance interviews, as has been done at in at least one EMCI school.

4.4   Research on aptitude testing: criticisms and solutions

Aptitude has been defined as "any characteristic of a person that forecasts his probability of success under a given treatment" (Cronbach and Snow 1977: 6); or "psychologically […] whatever makes a person ready to learn in a particular situation" (1977: 107); or "a predictor or forecaster – a facilitator of learning or performance" (Messick 1980; both cited in Arjona-Tseng 1993).

   In this section we review the debate on aptitude testing for admission to interpreter training and argue for our proposed five-stage design as a viable compromise between objective and subjective assessment that provides a fair basis for implementation today, but would need ongoing review and iterative refinement, with help from assessment specialists and based on actual data, to support its predictive validity.

4.4.1 Consensus and best practices

Leading interpreter schools have traditionally checked candidates' aptitude for training with a small set of tests, some written (summary, gisting, translation), some oral (retelling, speechmaking). As to the number and choice of tests, surveys reveal some consensus among European schools especially on the oral tasks (Donovan 2003; Timarová and Ungoed-Thomas 2008; Pöchhacker 2011), although the only tasks common to all 12 institutions reviewed by Donovan were an interview and re-telling across languages. These can be seen as the traditional core of the aptitude test. Examiners across schools seem to agree that the retelling exercise is a valid and useful test of linguistic, cognitive and communicative prerequisites for conference interpreter training (with a short interview as a check on other personal qualities and motivation), at least for consecutive. Aptitude for SI may involve additional factors (see below).

Until the late 1980s, the core retelling-based aptitude test was generally accepted by trainer-practitioners as adequate, without any further procedures to optimize validity and reliability. These were being developed elsewhere, notably in the field of language testing and performance assessment, but this was not seen as a valid model for testing interpreter aptitude, in which knowledge, personality and performance dimensions seemed to demand a looser, more heuristic approach. Also, time and staffing resources often precluded more elaborate procedures. Lastly, research to validate or invalidate the model by comparing performance on the entrance test to subsequent outcomes seemed impossible, since only students who passed could be followed, not to mention untangling factors such as subsequent teaching quality and motivation.

Even statistical analysis of the outcomes of admitted students is hardly feasible on tiny samples. Many schools admit no more than between 10 and 30 students each year, often in multiple different language combinations, and even where cohorts are somewhat larger and more homogeneous, it would be difficult to aggregate them across schools with different test procedures and standards. As a recent collection of papers reflecting the state of the art on aptitude testing shows (special issue of *Interpreting,* 13:1, 2011), research still seems to be hamstrung by a lack of basic data specific to our field:

> Attempts to put the selection of candidates for interpreter training on a more scientific footing have been made since the 1980s, often drawing on insights from cognitive psychology (e.g. Moser-Mercer 1985). And yet, relatively little empirical research on aptitude for interpreting has been carried out to date, despite recurrent doubts over the reliability, validity and predictive power of tasks designed to test candidates for interpreter training programs (e.g. Dodds 1990). What is more, those studies that do exist do not yet provide us with sufficient guidance on the effective screening of applicants…   (Shlesinger & Pöchhacker 2011:1)

The general editors recognize that readers "may come away with the impression that the paucity of conclusive findings appears to persist" (ibid.: 2). The lack of conclusive or even indicative findings on the effectiveness or predictive validity of different tests or scales has favoured the continuation of traditional practices – as often in interpreter training. However, the criticisms that have been levelled at these practices, as well as rare attempts to make them more rigorous, suggest that improvement is possible.

4.4.2 Criticisms of the traditional aptitude test

In the late 1980s and 1990s some authors began to challenge aspects of the traditional aptitude tests (e.g. Dodds 1990), or sought to develop procedures guided more rigorously by testing theory (Arjona-Tseng 1993).

Ironically, it was an Italian regulation forbidding schools from refusing candidates regardless of their results in such tests that provided an opportunity to compare pass and fail scores on the entrance exam with subsequent outcomes. Following one intake cohort at the Trieste school, Gringiani (1990) found that 36% of 'fails' had gone on to complete the course and become professional interpreters, while 45% of candidates 'with aptitude' had failed.

Commenting on these findings, Dodds (1990) recognized the difficulty of judging on results for a single cohort, and the complicating factors of subsequent teaching quality and student motivation, but observed from his own exam panel experience that while tests 'look good', the candidates do them wrong, because they are unprepared for or untrained in these tasks, or don't understand what is expected of them and wrongly assimilate the exercise to what they know – for example, sight translation, which they do slowly and hesitantly as if it were a text translation, or gisting, which they may never have practised as undergraduates.

Dodds generalized these objections by questioning the whole practice of assessing aptitude on "tasks that most candidates have never performed". Using translation and interpreting tests to assess aptitude for training courses in these disciplines, he says, is like "testing a car driver for a pilot's course by asking him to fly", or testing a child's aptitude for swimming by throwing her into the pool.

This challenge struck a chord at a time of widespread revolt against the perceived 'unscientific' nature of interpreting theory and training (see Gile 1990). However, as Pöchhacker has observed, inferences from such a finding are inevitably complicated by a wide array of factors, from the quality of teaching to the reliability and consistency of pass rates on the subsequent qualifying and recruitment exams (which may be subject to political/institutional influence, and adjustable to the intake standard from year to year), different standards applied to language combinations in more or less urgent demand, institutional changes in

the intervening period, and individual students' course completion times and individual trajectories[22] (Pöchhacker 2011: 118–119).

Dodds' analogy is striking because the retelling task is indeed a kind of interpreting. But this task, and the standard expected, are very elementary compared to the expertise to be attained at the end of the course, i.e. polished SI of fast, even accented speakers reading texts on formal or technical topics. The retelling task requires little more than a slight stretching of a trick that comes naturally to many educated bilinguals. Even preschool children have often been observed to 'retell' a story told by one family member to another in a different language. But this ability may develop differently among individuals. The retelling test is a good way of checking *intrinsic* abilities like comprehension, clear thinking, linguistic proficiency, speaking ability and communicativity – not *acquired* ones like sight translation, full consecutive or simultaneous interpreting of challenging conference speech or technical presentations. To keep Dodds' metaphor, the written and oral exam are not equivalent to checking the ability of prospective trainee pilots to fly an intercontinental airliner, but only for 20/20 vision, steady hands, a grasp of trigonometry, and freedom from motion sickness.

Dodds' other objection – that the test doesn't make sense if candidates do not understand what is expected – is justified, and should be met by making sure that clear descriptions of the exam and each of its tests are posted well in advance, with samples; or, as Dodds suggests, in the form of short undergraduate modules preparing for admission to the professional interpreter training (see TG-14.2 and footnote in CC-3.4.2).

4.4.3 The search for (more) objectivity

There have been repeated calls in the literature for more 'objective' or 'replicable' interpreter aptitude testing (e.g. Pippa & Russo 2002). These terms first need clarifying to identify a realistic standard to aim for. 'Replicability' obviously cannot have the same meaning in this context as for experimental procedures in the hard sciences. Evaluation categories and procedures for scoring, weighting etc. can be made fully explicit; but individual variation, and the subjective element in the human evaluation of human performances, rules out any expectation that different juries would reach strictly identical judgments.[23]

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22. "given such factors as study-abroad periods, ambitious MA thesis projects, part-time work, parenthood or, quite generally, individual learning styles and motivation" (ibid. 2011).

23. With clear scoring guides and effective rater training in place, a high level of inter-rater reliability should be achievable (see TG-11). Also, one overdue topic for research on interpreting exams is **test-retest reliability**, comparing the outcomes of tests of the same candidates by different juries.

Accepted principles for testing elsewhere in the humanities provide an initial guide. Writing about language testing, Baker (1989) identifies three criteria for a good test: **reliability**[24] (including consistency and therefore fairness), **validity** (whether it is a good test of the skills sought, and more specifically predictive validity), and **practicality** (or feasibility, administratively or otherwise) (TG-11.3.1). However, it is generally recognized that aptitude for conference interpreter training is a complex and multidimensional construct (Pöchhacker 2011:119) in which language is only one component, necessary but by no means sufficient. Aptitude testing for interpreting must steer a difficult path between these criteria. But this should not preclude measures to optimize the validity of the tests and the reliability of intersubjective assessment at each level by adopting methods to improve both the efficiency and ethics of testing.

We should therefore understand the search for 'objectivity' as a quest for better reliability and validity, set against feasibility to identify workable procedures without compromising on the interpreting-specific nature of the test criteria.

The first issue to address in meeting the criticisms that have been levelled at the traditional test is its **reliability**. In our proposal we have assumed that the traditional tests (especially retelling) are basically valid, based on professional consensus, experience, and theoretical analysis of relevant constructs, and we have aimed to develop a test combining objective and subjective scoring with controls for reliability. This should produce sufficiently reliable outcomes to proceed to the next level: reviews of **predictive validity** and ongoing refinement of the testing process.

Since the 1980s, some trainers have explored the possibilities of testing aptitude for interpreting using psychometric approaches (Carroll 1978; Gerver et al. 1984; Longley 1989; Moser-Mercer et al. 2000). This line of research could make a significant contribution if it can establish strong correlations between scores on psychometric tests and subsequent training outcomes, such as scores on in-course formative and summative assessments and final diploma exams, and possibly, the number of training sessions required to reach proficiency (Russo 2011:14).

However, as the editors of the collection of papers mentioned above acknowledge, despite interesting developments, this research still does "not yet provide us with sufficient guidance on the effective screening of applicants" (Shlesinger & Pöchhacker 2011:1).

Any success in improving reliability and validity should have the very desirable result of reducing the high attrition in interpreter training courses. Recent survey data from 18 interpreting schools indicates that, despite careful selection, fewer

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24. In interpreter trainers' writing about admission tests, 'reliability' is often used in an everyday sense to refer to predictive power (i.e. whether the test 'reliably' selects candidates with the best prospects for success). We think it advisable to align our use of terms on mainsteam testing literature.

than 60% of admitted students successfully complete the training programme – i.e. qualify as interpreters (Timarová & Ungoed-Thomas 2008).

'Objective' scoring is possible only on selected-response tests (like multiple choice, with only one correct answer), with cut scores established by a best practice such as an Angoff or bookmark method (4.3.2.1 above; Lewis et al. 1999). But to test many higher-order cognitive, social and performance skills – speaking, writing, creativity, human interaction – there will always be a need for performance (constructed-response, CR) tests, which can only be scored subjectively. The most promising tests still appear to be oral tests of verbal intelligence and word fluency factors (as originally suggested by Carroll 1978), especially synonym-finding and paraphrasing (e.g. Kalina 2011: 151; Russo 2011: 23; Pochhacker 2011). We have therefore included these exercises in our own proposed entrance examination, in both written and oral versions, and in all active languages.

The personal and interpersonal qualities that will mature into the Professionalism component of overall expertise (CC-2.4) are the most difficult to capture. No study so far has been able to find any clear correlation between the results of standard *personality tests* and interpreter trainee attainment (Longley 1989: 106; Frishberg 1990: 36), and even critics of the less-controlled traditional testing practices agree that personal qualities like motivation, learning style, stress management, and the ability to assume a mediator's role cannot be reliably assessed in a one-time selection test (Dodds 1990; Frishberg 1990: 36; Moser-Mercer 1994; cited in Pochhacker 2004: 182). Performance testing can, however, be both **valid** and **reliable** if best practices are followed. These include carefully defining the characteristics of input speeches for retelling, developing detailed scoring guides, training raters and checking IRR, etc. For a fuller discussion of best practices in performance testing, the reader is referred to TG-11 and the literature referenced there.

Although no entrance exam will be perfect, we can certainly attempt to design it in line with best practices for validity and reliability, and continually improve it by collecting validity and reliability evidence.

4.4.3.1   *An early experiment with psychometric testing*
Arjona-Tseng (1993) applied established testing theory and psychometric methods to design aptitude tests for Taiwan's first interpreter training programme[25] (Arjona 1991), in what is perhaps the most resolute documented attempt to date to apply these principles to interpreter aptitude testing.

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25. At the Graduate Institute of Translation and Interpretation Studies (GITIS), Fu Jen Catholic University. (This institute was recently merged into a larger Graduate Institute of Cross-Cultural studies, together with linguistics and comparative literature.)

Arjona developed a two-stage procedure, similar to the one described in this chapter, but notably lacking the retelling task that is at the core of our own and other admission tests. The first stage was a five-part written exam to screen out candidates with less than acceptable minimal proficiency in their A and B languages, consisting of tests of vocabulary (synonyms), analogical thinking (antonyms), grammar (stylistics and usage), use of language (writing sample) and knowledge of current events and world culture. The second stage consisted of oral tests, including

a. two tests in a language lab (recall in the A and B languages, and error detection in all working languages), to be used not to rank candidates but "only to guide and inform, when necessary, the panel's final decision-making, [being] especially valuable in close, borderline cases" (1993: 95);
b. individual tests consisting of an interview and two sight translations and lasting from 50–75 minutes per candidate, before a live panel of six professional interpreters from the US, Europe and Asia-Pacific regions, who underwent a full day of rater training to standardize procedures and become familiarized with rating sheets, scoring criteria, etc.

These two steps eliminated all but four of the programme's first batch of 225 applicants for training. One dropped out after a month, "having realized that T&I was not an appropriate career choice" (1993: 102), while the other three all completed their two years of training and passed their final certification exam, one in Translation, two also in Interpretation, before an "international panel of top-level conference interpreters with impeccable professional credentials" (1993: 102), a result that Arjona claimed as a pass rate for the training course of 100% for the first intake, which was subsequently maintained at 91% over the first three cohorts (Arjona-Tseng 1993).

The unprecedented effort put into this project is partly explained by the stakes: to secure official approval to create the first ever professional T&I training programme in Taiwan in a university setting, in the face of academic opposition alert for any hint of amateurishness, rigid traditional rules (going back to 11th century Chinese imperial examinations) on selection procedures, huge numbers of poorly qualified applicants, a policy directive to minimize the post-selection attrition rate – and the challenge of producing market-ready T&I professionals for a virgin market within two or three years. Arjona-Tseng's scheme therefore included a demonstration dimension (entailing resources that few schools could count on maintaining over the long term), and leaned towards strictly avoiding false positives – i.e admitting unsuitable candidates – but at the risk of false negatives, i.e. eliminating candidates who might have succeeded had they reached the interview stage.

In all, then, this was a more than respectable attempt to apply rigorous testing procedures to aptitude screening, drawing on Arjona's experience in developing

court interpreter certification in the US (see FCICE case study, TG-11.5), but in a costly and resource-intensive demonstration context. A more efficient and sustainable system is needed for multilingual schools, where more candidates will pass routine screening for language proficiency and the most critical decisions are focused on the oral interview, in which retelling must be a key test.

4.4.3.2 *Staggered or extended selection procedures*

One technique that is used widely in the private sector and that may improve decision-making in hiring is to have candidates come back for several rounds of interviews. Similarly, reliability in admissions testing could potentially be improved by extending the oral exam process over two or more sessions, with successive elimination, perhaps with different raters – but at extra cost.

An extension of this same approach is to screen candidates over a longer 'probation' period instead of a single admission test. Moser-Mercer (1985) trialled this system over four years (1978–1981) and found a high correlation between grades awarded at the end of a 10-week introductory course (monolingual introductory exercises to SI) and students' results on subsequent midpoint and final exams; she concludes that this method "not only gives the student a chance to develop according to his own learning abilities, but also allows the teacher/professional to judge the student's potential with greater accuracy" (1985: 100). However, few details are given of the scoring system used, nor is it clear why this couse was limited to a single (monolingual SI) exercise for 10 weeks.

A simpler approach would be to admit students to a generic induction curriculum, including introductory translation and spoken interpretation exercises (dialogue and consecutive), lasting from one or two months up to a semester, followed by streaming into different tracks (e.g. conference interpreting; T&I including consecutive for in-house and business interpreting, but not simultaneous; legal translation; software localization and project management). This would essentially be an accelerated 'Y-fork' model (Mackintosh 1995) as described in TG-13.2.4.1. Such an extended 'internal' admission system, allowing for several months' observation of candidate performance, would almost certainly be more reliable and predictive than a single short interview, but at the cost of delaying conference interpreter training proper.

Whatever the method chosen, ethical and quality considerations favour maintaining strict selection while allowing those students who may later turn out to be unsuited to conference interpreting (after the first year of study, for example) to transfer directly to other streams such as T&I with consecutive interpreting, or written translation, without losing a year.

Finally, **transparency** and clarity about what is expected of candidates at the tests can only be beneficial to all concerned (Kalina 2000), and can easily be

achieved by posting or otherwise making available to applicants a full description of test procedures and scoring criteria (and possibly video examples of the kind of speeches to be retold), along with a brief exposition of the rationale for this scheme.

4.4.4 Aptitude testing in practice – the challenge of feasibility

In practice, optimal validity and reliability may often have to be traded off against **feasibility**. The most telling tests of the verbal skills believed to be at the core of interpreting – discourse analysis, paraphrase, cloze, anticipation – appear to be the most difficult to score. Moser-Mercer (1985) designed a battery of tests, but was later obliged to drop prediction (anticipation); Russo and Pippa (2004) found that paraphrase called for a more complex scoring system than first thought (Pippa and Russo 2002). Pöchhacker (2011) found that "contrary to somewhat naïve initial expectations, the varied nature of the responses [to an online 'SynCloze' test[26]] made it evident that scoring would need to account not only for the quantity of completions but also for their quality", so the test's possible predictive power might be offset for practical purposes by the difficulty of administering and scoring it (2011: 114).

In general, to be adopted in schools worldwide, any testing regime must pass the final test of practicability and cost-effectiveness under constraints of time and personnel. The final Professional Diploma should no doubt be the first priority for reform (as reflected in our fuller discussion of that exam, set out in TG-11), but the initial selection of trainees for admission arguably comes a close second in importance.

4.5   Summary and recommendations

When testing aptitude for training in a complex human behaviour, the nearest we can get to 'objectivity' –in the absence of robust statistical findings on the predictive validity of different tests – is to follow best testing practices to optimize validity and reliability. This means carefully identifying the key aptitudes sought (CC-3.3.2) and their relative importance, for *construct validity* (TG-11.3.1.2); and then designing tests to assess these constructs as *reliably* as possible (TG-11.3.1.1). Some can be assessed more standardly, such as language proficiency (which has been benchmarked elsewhere) and some aspects of verbal intelligence, general knowledge and cultural literacy.

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26. 'SynCloze' combines sentence completion (cloze) and expressional fluency (synonyms) under time pressure (Pöchhacker 2011), and is thus similar to our own proposed pressure skills.

How can we do better? Clearly, by documenting our test design and implementation carefully, by collecting and analysing evidence relevant to the validity and reliability of these (and additional[27]) tests and procedures, and by working in concert with testing specialists to iteratively improve aptitude testing over time and achieve high, documented levels of predictive validity.

This should lead to lower attrition rates than currently seen in leading schools.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Aptitude testing
Special issue of *Interpreting* (2011: 13 (1)) on Aptitude Testing

Verbal intelligence
Gardner 1983, 1993, 1999: theory of multiple intelligences

General guidance on developing multiple-choice and criterion-referenced tests:
Haladyna 2004: Developing and Validating Multiple-choice Test Items
Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: Criterion-Referenced Test Development

See also Further reading in CC-3, TG-10 and TG-11

Appendix A

Sample analytic rubrics for scoring of retelling performance

Rubric 1: Fidelity/completeness of content

Score	Description
VG (A)	The retelling is full, coherent, structured and logical with all main and secondary points reproduced accurately, most if not all examples, and additional detail appropriately distributed even if incomplete. The candidate is aware of any omissions and minor inconsistencies and is able to retrieve them easily on prompting.
OK (B)	The retelling is reliable and coherent, with macrostructure clearly conveyed despite some minor omissions and local problems; for example, one non-vital step in the argument, and/or one or two secondary points are missed, but not at the expense of overall message integrity. The candidate can reconstruct these omissions with some prompting, thus indicating a memory slip, not a problem of comprehension. The candidate is aware of any minor inconsistencies, some of which can be retrieved.

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27. Additional tests might include SynCloze (Pöchhacker 2011), or Carroll's (1978) tests of verbal intelligence, which could easily be added to enable retroactive analysis of predictive validity.

Score	Description
? (C)	The retelling is incomplete at the level of its macrostructure, with a major point, key logical step and/or significant amounts of detail missing; the candidate seems aware of this and 'means well', but cannot reconstruct or fully restore coherence without extensive prompting. (Note to interviewers: it is advisable to prompt in the source language, without rephrasing, to check if the problem is language comprehension.)
x (D)	The retelling is unreliable or incoherent (fuzzy and/or patchy) betraying failure to grasp key points and arguments. The candidate seems unaware of inconsistencies or incoherence, and when prompted may make changes that introduce new inconsistencies.

Rubric 2: Communicativity and presentation

Score	Description
VG (A)	Delivery is professional[28], confident, assertive, fluent and well-paced. Candidate engages audience, projects voice, and is clearly poised and comfortable.
OK (B)	Delivery is sincere and natural, easy to follow, and mostly clear and expressive though with occasional hesitation, self-repair, or minor backtracking.
? (C)	Delivery lacks confidence and indicates a lack of comfort with public speaking. A motivated audience would find the presentation unpolished but tolerable. Problems might include a monotonous tone, problems with voice quality, projection or articulation, wordiness and/or constant hesitation, umming and erring, backtracking etc., and/or problems with momentum and time control.
X (D)	Delivery is offputting and/or painful, even to a motivated audience. Problems could include a combination of e.g. tiny voice, serious lack of confidence, mumbling, monotone, backtracking, failure to address audience, lack of eye contact, gross wordiness, failure to overcome stagefright, etc.; or conversely, an over-aggressive style inappropriate to the message.

Rubric 3: Language and expression (assessed differently for A vs. B languages)

Grade	Descriptor
VG (A)	Language quality meets explicit written criteria for a strong A or B language.
	Cf. ILR-5 (native, A language) or ILR-4+ (Bsim) on the Speaking scale, with clear, standard pronunciation and diction and appropriately expressive modulation.
OK (B)	Expression meets explicit written criteria for an acceptable A or B language: flexible and accurate (B), also fast (Bsim), also rich and nuanced (A) (different for A, and B, with higher requirement for speed of expression in Bsim).
	In B, cf. ILR-4 on the Speaking scale, with clear, standard pronunciation and diction; and acceptable modulation.

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28. Delivery in itself may already be 'professional' at admission, for example in a candidate who has experience as a radio broadcaster, or in teaching or giving business presentations.

Grade	Descriptor
? (C)	Language is thin or simplistic (A language), or not quite at convincing B-level due to awkward usage, too many grammatical errors or wrong use of words, register etc., lacking in expected accuracy, precision (B) and idiomaticity (Bsim). In B, cf. ILR-3+ on the Speaking scale.
x (D)	Either the A or B language (or both) is not viable nor likely to become so during the course.

Appendix B

Sample grading sheet for raters
(for candidate with A-B language combination)

Candidate name:
Candidate no.:
Date and time of interview:

Language combination:

Task 1. Retelling B-A

Content/macrostructure:	VG	OK	?	x
Language/expression in A	VG	OK	?	x
Communicativity/presentation	VG	OK	?	x

Notes:

Task 2. Verbal fluency/flexibility in A language

Instant sentence completions	VG	OK	?	x
Synonyms/antonyms	VG	OK	?	x
Sentence paraphrases	VG	OK	?	x

Notes:

Task 3. Retelling A-B

Content/macrostructure:	VG	OK	?	x
Language/expression in B	VG	OK	?	x
Communicativity/presentation	VG	OK	?	x

Notes:

Task 4. Verbal fluency/flexibility in B language

Instant sentence completions	VG	OK	?	x
Synonyms/antonyms	VG	OK	?	x
Sentence paraphrases	VG	OK	?	x

Notes:

Task 5. Interpreting simulated dialogue	VG	OK	?	x

Notes:

Task 6.   **Interview**   VG   OK   ?   x

Notes:

Observations:
Language proficiency and verbal skills:
World knowledge and culture:
General qualities:

Overall readiness and suitability for
conference interpreter training: 6   5   4   3   2   1

(See holistic rubric; a plus sign + can be used to distinguish in-between levels.)

Appendix C

Holistic scale of overall readiness and suitability for conference interpreter training

6 – DISTINCTION	Superior candidate whose overall performance *exceeds* the required standard for admission. This candidate can be expected to complete training successfully and with high marks.
5 – GOOD	Solid candidate whose overall performance clearly *meets* the required standard for admission. This candidate can be expected to complete training successfully.
4 – FAIR (High borderline)	Close-to-acceptable candidate whose overall performance *approaches* but does not fully meet the required standard for admission. This candidate may be able to complete training successfully, but this cannot be predicted with full confidence.
3 – WEAK (Low Borderline)	Limited-ability candidate whose overall performance *falls short* of the required standard for admission. This candidate is very unlikely to be able to complete training successfully.
2 – POOR (Clear Fail)	Unacceptable candidate whose performance is *well below* the the required standard for admission. This candidate will clearly not be able to complete training successfully – and should not have been admitted to the oral examination.
1 – Incomplete	The candidate did not complete the test, or failed to comply with test instructions.

NB Raters may make use of *score augmentation* – adding pluses to the score – to distinguish more finely between levels if they wish. A score returned by a rater as 4+ would be recorded as 4.5, a score of 5+ as a 5.5, and so on, for the purpose of aggregating a panel score.

Initiation to interpreting

5.1   Introduction

The first requirement for any teacher is to understand her students and the challenges they will face in each phase of learning. If the admissions procedure we recommend has been followed, the instructor will find herself facing a small class of bright, linguistically gifted and highly motivated students whom she has interviewed with her colleagues and accepted for training as conference interpreters. They will have the natural empathy, curiosity and mental agility conducive to communication, good but uneven language proficiency and general knowledge, and typically some experience of written translation, and perhaps informal interpreting.

In Initiation, they will learn how to listen and speak like interpreters, and begin to understand what it is to mediate with a change of language: the basics of the interpreter's role.

Outside class, work on language and knowledge enhancement to prepare for the complexities of real-life conference interpreting will begin immediately. But in class, this initiation process should be exciting and fun, with the focus from the start on the live, immediate communicative challenge that is the essence of interpreting, with complications like note-taking, simultaneity, text read out, formality, technicality, obscurity, or expectations of high eloquence temporarily set aside. For now, fidelity, agility and naturalness are challenge enough.

Sequence and emphasis
Active Listening should be the initial and primary focus of Initiation into interpreting, to reconfigure the way we capture and process messages; but **Public Speaking**, its counterpart in training students to better communicate those messages, can also begin immediately in separate sessions, merging later in the first real consecutive performances (Table 5.1 below). After two or three weeks, students are ready to take on the language barrier in **Short Consecutive** (including lively dialogues) on a variety of stimulating topics, and first steps in **Sight Translation**, the latter not as a main focus at this stage but as an awareness-raiser.

In a two-year programme, Initiation would normally take up the first 4–5 weeks of the course, leading up to an Introduction to Note-taking for full Consecutive. Alternatively, this module and a first taste of note-taking (up to and including

Cue-words and links in CC-5.3) could be offered to promising final-year undergraduates who show an interest in pursuing postgraduate professional training in interpreting (TG-14.2.1).

5.2 Active Listening exercises

5.2.1 Idiomatic Gist

This exercise (CC-4.2.2.1), in which students listen to a message couched in complex, stylistically sophisticated language and retell its essence in simple, clear terms, appears counter-intuitive in a traditional 'easy-to-difficult' concept of progression. But it is in fact carefully designed to make the correct technique indispensable – listening for sense, not words – and to facilitate diagnosis of problems.

Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) show how subjects who successfully remember a story for retelling do so by retaining a few key propositions as the story unfolds, sometimes even merging information to create these guiding 'macro-propositions' as needed. As these authors show, this process occurs unconsciously and naturally. But interpreters must listen and recall more thoroughly and carefully. The initiation phase is intended to flesh out the natural process into more complete and accurate recall before going on to show how to support it with notes. For the time being, if we can't take notes but have to rely on memory, more and more detail has to be shed, or compacted/squeezed to its essence, as the story gets longer. With practice, students learn to judge memory load and how to retain 'productive' items – those that on retelling revive the associated details and point to the next step in the argument – forming a mental model of the discourse as they go along. Structuring the memory helps, as the tree metaphor aims to show.

For interpreters, the challenge of recall and retelling is complicated by the traps of language transfer. The instructor can make a note of any awkward, stilted expressions, and then repeat them back and ask the student how they sound. The student, and others in the class with the same A language, will often be surprised – perhaps amused – at how they seem to have forgotten how to speak their own mother tongue. With some prompting, though, the student should be able to come up with multiple idiomatic formulations. This is because the problem is not with their mother tongue, but their failure to deverbalize. To make this point clearly, this first exercise should therefore be done into the A language.

Idiomatic Gist is the best introduction to the basic skills of active listening that we have yet found. The instructor's role in making it work to the best possible effect consists firstly in finding appropriate materials, and secondly in helping the student by asking leading questions. With the skilful use of leading questions (and

in some cases, just a puzzled facial expression), the instructor can gently provide cues for recall when necessary, challenge incorrect content and unclear expression, and draw attention to awkward, unnatural formulations due to linguistic interference. The Grandmother Test can be used to bring the whole class into the feedback process. In each case, the student should be able to recognize the problem, self-correct, and carry on, with good solutions being rewarded with positive feedback.

After a good version has been delivered, the instructor can read the passage again, word for word, without deviation. This will let the class experience its texture once again and reflect on how the sense is conveyed by the words. The floor can then be opened for a discussion which can be open-ended, but should be centred on the techniques of active listening and how to apply them to the passage at hand. The instructor can ask questions of the class as a whole, to encourage students to analyse and discuss

- *the structure and organization* of the passage, how the ideas are connected, and how the listener can relate the content to her own experience of the world. (But if the discussion degenerates into a substantive lecture on the topic, background and terminology of the text, that means that the subject matter was too specialized or inaccessible, and hence inappropriate for this exercise.);
- *the speaker's (or writer's) position, point of view*, ideology or bias, apparent communicative intent and implicit messages;
- *memory techniques* for retaining the passage: how segments can be visualized, verbally tagged, emotionally experienced, linked to existing knowledge schemas, etc. (see 'Rich encoding for memory' in CC-4.2.1.1). Different students can explain what worked for them, and where they had problems (for example, on abstract concepts, unfamiliar logic or analogies, or unspecific or elusive links, transitions and topic shifts).

For this exercise the *choice of materials* is critical. On the one hand, the input discourse must be linguistically creative and stylistically interesting, such that it defies literal translation. On the other hand, the subject matter must be readily accessible to students in terms of the background knowledge required to grasp the sense. In other words, for this exercise we do not use the authentic materials conference interpreters work with on a daily basis, such as statements from international meetings, policy texts or leaders' speeches; but nor do we use artificially slow, paused or well-structured 'trainer speeches'.[1] An example of a suitable text is given in CC-4.2.2.1. Compare that passage with this one, which would be totally inappropriate, not just for this exercise but for any exercise during the entire first year:

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1.   See TG-2 Appendix for definition.

Although not an extraordinarily large company by many metrics, Bear Stearns was deeply involved in a number of critical markets, including markets for short-term secured funding as well as those for over-the-counter (OTC) derivatives. One of our concerns was that the infrastructures of those markets and the risk- and liquidity-management practices of market participants would not be adequate to deal in an orderly way with the collapse of a major counterparty. With financial conditions already quite fragile, the sudden, unanticipated failure of Bear Stearns would have led to a sharp unwinding of positions in those markets that could have severely shaken the confidence of market participants.

(from speech by US Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke, August 22, 2008)

Language issues

In these classes, students may often ask two types of language-related questions. The first aims to fill gaps in their knowledge of the source language: "What was that word or phrase? I didn't understand it. Could you repeat it/explain it/teach it to us?" The second is related to transfer difficulties, or translation problems: "I understood this expression, but can't think of a good equivalent in the other language. Can you please give us a few?" These questions are legitimate, but may also reflect a naïve code-based view of interpreting: the belief that all problems can be solved if only we have standard, all-context TL equivalents for all the words and expressions that might come up. In line with this belief, incoming students often assume that language will be the main focus of instruction on the interpreter training course. Accordingly, they may expect to be taught a lot of words and expressions on a variety of topics, together with 'ready version' equivalents in the other language.

The vexed issue of **words** (and word-fixation) should be addressed with a two-pronged strategy. Interpreters certainly do need to minimize the chances of meeting a word they don't recognize, and must therefore aim to fill *all* lexical gaps for SL *comprehension* by looking up in their own time the meaning of any unfamiliar word and phrase they encounter. But we must stress the difference between learning words for comprehension (aiming for wide coverage), and choosing expressions for adoption in the *active* B-language vocabulary, picking only a useful, reliable subset (CC-7.5). The instructor can help by pointing out words for priority attention.

To this end, when 'difficult-to-translate' expressions are encountered, the instructor should make a point of going round the room asking the class to produce as many viable versions as possible in context. To avoid confusion, at this stage instructors should not use the kind of text (legal, diplomatic, crafted political speeches, specialized technical material) in which the exact words *are* really important (see e.g. Orlando 2010).

5.2.2 Listening Cloze

Cloze tests are widely used in language proficiency testing (see TG-4.3.2.2 (ii)), and trainers have recommended using listening cloze in interpreter training (e.g. Kalina 1998; Gillies 2013). In Initiation, this exercise shows how certain words in a text can be redundant to the comprehension process, whereas others contain new and important information and are therefore critical to fully capturing the meaning of a text (and should therefore not be deleted in this exercise). By boosting these natural inferential processes, active listening can also help when an important word is not clearly heard or understood. For example, a student may not know the word 'apposite' in the following statement and think she heard 'opposite':

> *Speaker*: Given that it's been exactly a year since we rolled out the XYZ initiative, I thought that now seems an apposite time to take stock…

Rather than using a TL word meaning 'opposite', which wouldn't make sense, the student should treat it as a blank to be filled in based on the context, for example 'now is a GOOD time to take stock'.

5.2.3 Discourse Modelling and Outlining

Discourse Analysis is often recommended for both translator and interpreter training, and we can draw usefully on this tradition for a theoretical tool (the Discourse Model) and the second main exercise in Initiation, **Discourse Outlining**.

There is a rich literature on discourse analysis, text coherence[2] and discourse relations (see Further reading). Instructors can present a list of coherence relations in text (e.g. from Pinker 2014 [CC-4.2.3]) and common connectives that express them in the languages relevant to the class, and return to them in the introduction to note-taking (CC-5/TG-6). Some theoretical background on discourse models and recall for text and speech is given in CC-4 and in the box below, and can be discussed in the theory class (TG-12.3.1), but in the skills class one should avoid getting sidetracked into too much meta-terminology and theoretical detail, at the risk of losing focus and momentum.

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2. See Further reading. Peng (2011), for example, has successfully applied Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) to measure coherence relations and 'depth' in trainees' and professionals' consecutive interpretations.

What is a discourse model?

In their theory of text comprehension, van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) hypothesized that readers form two levels of representation, to varying degrees: a surface component, the 'textbase', which encodes words and phrases, linguistic relationships between them, and frequently, the text's semantic and rhetorical structure; and at a deeper level of understanding, a 'situation model' in which the information provided by the text is elaborated from prior knowledge and is integrated with it. "Text representations are always a mixture of textbase and situation model, but one or the other component may predominate […] Textbase dominance typically occurs when a reader lacks the background knowledge necessary for a full understanding of the text […;] at the other extreme, a person with rich background knowledge forms a very different […] memory" (Kintsch 1998: 232–23).

Roughly it may seem that without notes, students retain both a situation model (improving and becoming more complete with practice) and parts of a textbase. However, interpreters clearly need a robust textbase representation at the level of (micro-)propositions (Albl-Mikasa 2008) to avoid over-interpreting, excessive elaboration, taking liberties, etc. We can see notes as the 'insurance' to cover the otherwise fragmentary textbase. In the next chapter (on consecutive interpreting) we cite some research on the main differences found between recall with and without notes (Taylor 1989).

The richness of a discourse (or situation) model is almost certainly positively correlated with recall performance – in other words, the deeper the analysis during listening, the better the text is recalled. The beneficial effects of structure, but also imagery, in boosting memory have been known for centuries (Yates 1966; Spence 1984; see CC-4.2.1.4). We also perceive and interpret human verbal communication with our emotions, using experience as well as learned rules of language. We may therefore suppose that a rich discourse model for interpreting is not just an arrangement of concepts and logical connections, but that these are tagged with memories of the emphasis, tone, mood, register and so on that we detected or experienced in the speaker's delivery, or through a writer's choice of word.

Discourse Outlining

The easiest way to introduce students to analyzing the structure and workings of discourse is to invoke the idea of an outline. The discourse outline (and later the notes) is the artefact that complements the discourse model for the purposes of interpreting, in particular by fixing the structural scaffold that an untrained memory may not naturally retain.

In the **Discourse Outlining** exercise (CC-4.2.3) students listen (actively) to a passage of highly structured discourse, chosen and delivered by the instructor, and make a point-form outline that reflects its organization and argument structure. Appropriate topics are, as before, subjects of general interest or current affairs that students can easily follow.

The passage is interpreted and brief feedback is given, but in this exercise the focus is on the discourse outline that is then written up on the whiteboard in discussion with the whole class. To elicit content, the instructor asks questions like "What was the first main idea?", "What point did the speaker make at the

beginning of that idea?", and "What came after that?" The instructor facilitates analysis of the relative weight of each point, and the logical and cohesive thread of the speech, by explicitly asking how each segment is related to the segment before it, and asking questions like "Are you sure that's a main idea? Or was it a secondary point, or perhaps an example under a secondary point?" and "How were those two ideas linked? Was B an example of A, or its cause?" As each question is answered, the instructor adds a keyword or link to the discourse outline on the whiteboard, indented to the appropriate depth.

The instructor can write the items up at first using complete words and statements (though these could mix SL and TL); then gradually, after a couple of weeks, the write-up can start to incorporate elements of consecutive note-taking until it converges on the Standard Method (TG-6.3), using hierarchical indentation, but also abbreviations, some familiar symbols, arrows and simple diagrams, foreshadowing consecutive note-taking (see CC-5.4.2, Slow Notes).

The discourse outline should still present the content of the message quite fully. Links in particular should all be explicitly shown, even if they were only implicit in the original. Of course that will never be 'the whole speech'. The thread that gives 'soul' to some speeches may derive from more elusive poetic features like word connotations, images and melody that will not appear in the point-form discourse outline, but will be retained to the extent that the speech has left a trace in the affective-aesthetic dimension of memory. Nor will this idealized written discourse outline ever be identical to the naturally-formed discourse models of theory (such as the situation model described above), which will typically represent both more and less than the outline: more affective and intuitive features, perhaps subconsciously anchored in half-remembered personal experience; but less information, biased by what seems most personally relevant or interesting; and fewer explicit structural links. But for our purposes, the result of Active Listening should be a much more robust, structured, and detailed mental model.

Progression in Initiation exercises

The listening-based exercises in the Initiation phase – Idiomatic Gist, Discourse Outlining, and later, Consecutive without Notes – differ in terms of input: in Idiomatic Gist, students 'deverbalize' from stylized written texts, and in Discourse Outlining, they learn to impose structure on (instructor-generated) oral speech. All, however, focus on active listening and analysis, as prerequisites for success, and form a progression in terms of difficulty, passage length and performance requirements.

    Idiomatic Gist begins with stylized input in passages of 30–45s, to be analysed and retold at leisure, with the pedagogical focus on deverbalization. Passages are then gradually extended to 1–2m for **Discourse Outlining**, with the pedagogical focus now on analyzing structure, but still not requiring a fluent interpretation performance.

Short Consecutive without notes (including dialogues) builds on these abilities, but the focus here is on the interpreter's role, agility, awareness, and some dos and don'ts of interpreting. In this way students should also begin to see how the same basic techniques for capturing meaning are adapted to a wide range of input, from chatty to formal, in real life.

Only later, towards the end of the Initiation module, after working on delivery and presentation separately, do students apply these sharpened skills on longer passages that challenge memory and with the added requirement of fluent presentation from the podium – applying the basic dos and don'ts of interpreting – in consecutive without notes of 2–3 minute passages, a task similar to 'retelling' at the Admissions Test but now with higher expectations on performance.

Occasionally, after a retelling, an outline of the passage can be written up on the whiteboard as before in Discourse Outlining, with the instructor progressively incorporating the layout and devices of the Standard Note-Taking Method, leading smoothly into the next stages (CC-5/TG-6). Thus, each exercise builds on the one that precedes it, in a careful progression that leads students from a basic active listening exercise on short passages through structural analysis of longer passages into fluent retelling, then note-taking practice for true consecutive interpretation.

These two types of exercise foreshadow the two-pronged approach to SI (TG-8.2.1). Short Consecutive without notes is a live, dynamic performance, fast-paced, fun, and individual, like Strand A (Easy SI) in the introduction to SI, while Discourse Outlining, Idiomatic Gist, and later, **Slow Notes** (CC-5.4.2) are slower, analytical, and group-oriented, like Strand B (**Controlled Input**, CC-8.2.3).

5.3   Concision and compression

One operation in discourse processing that interpreters must become comfortable with is streamlining to achieve greater concision, compress the text, or even summarize or extract gist. It is very important to clearly distinguish these concepts and agree on terms in class before doing exercises, and to avoid the misunderstandings that are common on this point in our experience (CC-4.2.4).

Pedagogically, compression, summarizing and more radical gisting all provide useful training in analysis and synthesis during the Initiation stage. Idiomatic Gist also tests the ability to extract the substance from convoluted or stylistically sophisticated material that is delivered orally. But even then, on short passages, we must check that the student's omissions and simplifications are deliberate, and can be justified, rather than just memory lapses. Hence the recommendation to use a written text for this purpose, for better control.

5.4   Deverbalization and interference-busting

The concept of deverbalization has had a controversial history, with scepticism expressed by several authors at the idea that one could store meaning independently of its verbal clothing. Daniel Gile, an influential T&I scholar, has nevertheless acknowledged the value of this concept for training:

> Seleskovitch's idea (1975) that a 'deverbalization' stage occurs somewhere between the perception of the original speech and the reformulation of its 'message' into the target language by the interpreter (a stage at which only the 'meaning' remains in the interpreter's mind without any trace of its linguistic vehicle) is far from proven; however, it does lead teachers to instruct students to move away from the linguistic structure of the source language speech and reformulate the ideas it contains in their own words, thus forcing them to analyse the speech and making them adapt their own speech to their listeners. This is good intellectual exercise and generates source language speeches which are easier to comprehend than the ones based on transcoding. Had the interpreting community waited for research to establish scientifically that there is indeed a 'deverbalization' stage before defining training policies and methods, chances are little headway would have been made to date (Gile 1990: 33); […] the 'theory of sense' is only challenged by its critics as a descriptive theory in the usual scientific sense of the word, but […] it is widely supported as a prescriptive paradigm, that is, a desirable approach to translation.
>
> (Gile 2003: 62)

Deverbalized, interpretive processes (from meaning rather than form) must remain dominant in good interpreting, and should be the focus of teaching at this stage. However, the Interpretive Theory of Translation (ITT or *théorie du sens*) paints a somewhat over-polarized picture of deverbalized interpreting vs. transcoding that may underestimate the portion of the task that can be more or less automated, especially on some material that is common in everyday practice. We discuss this further in 5.10.4 below.

At this point we propose introducing **Sight Translation** (see CC-6, TG-3.3.5.2) for its value as an 'interference-busting' exercise. Most students will have done some translation, but this may be their first experience of translating live under some time pressure, and in oral form. At first we propose an additional preparatory step: paraphrasing the text first into the same language (but only A to A) before generating TL versions. This helps to ensure that the translation will be meaning-based.

5.5   First steps in real interpreting

5.5.1   Short Consecutive without notes

After a week or two of Active Listening practice and some initial training in delivery skills (below), students can be given a first dose of **Short Consecutive without notes**, including monologue segments and some lively **dialogues**. Segments can range from very short (<10s) to medium (30–45s) and occasionally to long (1.5–2m), using material that is ostensibly 'easy', in a standard to colloquial style and free of technical terminology. Materials can be speeches (monologues) delivered in short segments by the instructor or a visiting speaker, followed by Q&A (perhaps with questions planted among the audience in advance). For variety, alternatives include videos of easy TV talk shows (not easy to find), provided the stop and start buttons are easy to use; any transcript of a non-technical, standard-language interview *provided that* it is 'acted', not read; or a debate on a lively topic prepared in advance for impromptu acting by two students, ideally assuming roles, personalities and views that are not necessarily theirs or those of other students in the class, and simulating a realistic everyday exchange, for example in a community or public-service context (healthcare, interview with police or welfare authorities, dispute between neighbours, etc.).

   With this first taste of interpreting fast, realistic input, a key part of Initiation comes into focus: the interpreter's ability to play a role, following some agreed conventions.

5.5.2   Role and mediation: impartiality and fidelity

As students start interpreting simple but realistic and lively speeches and exchanges, there will be many opportunities to highlight and discuss such basic features of the interpreter's role as impartiality and fidelity. More complex situations will be discussed through case studies in the last semester under the heading of Professionalism (CC/TG-10), but the ground rules should be clearly set out now: do your best to reflect the speaker's intended meaning as faithfully as possible, and do not let your own beliefs or sympathies show in your interpretation.

   In the months to come, students will encounter the many obstacles to providing optimal fidelity – obscure language, 'untranslatable' humour or culture-specific allusions, poor working conditions, uncooperative speakers and so on. They should be clear from this early stage on the *baseline or minimal fidelity* that must always be respected, even when style, nuance or parts of the information content fall by the wayside: i.e. fidelity to each speaker's basic communicative intent, or main point, without unwarranted distortion or misrepresentation. For example, when the interpreter is asked or deems it necessary to filter or tone

down an angry or abusive speaker, s/he must still convey the sense that the speaker is angry.

This notion of a basic or 'ethical minimum' of fidelity will become relevant later in the course. In subsequent chapters we will converge on a more complete understanding of fidelity from various angles: what default to aim for, and therefore how to prioritize, when faced with very severe conditions (CC/TG-9); with reference to 'optimizing' interpreting; formulated as a set of explicit criteria for giving feedback (CC-5, Appendix A); or for assessment in exams (TG-4, TG-12); and in more theoretical terms, contrasting linguistic (e.g. semantic) and pragmatic fidelity, drawing on Relevance Theory (TG-12.2.2-3).

At this stage, the most obvious manifestations of 'infidelity' are **over- and under-translation**, which must be nipped in the bud. Students must develop a perfectionist approach to meaning, being aware of any vagueness or ambiguity and, when it cannot be clarified (for example by asking the speaker), aiming to calibrate their rendition to exactly the same degree of (im)precision.

This exercise will offer 'teachable moments' and opportunities for discussion. One can ask students how and where they seek fidelity: at the literal level of word equivalents? Or of general impression and tone? Or terminology? Each or all may be most appropriate in different situations, and when prioritizing under stress or when in doubt.

Discussions about exact translation equivalents should not hold up the class. The instructor should insist that genuine 'untranslatability' is rare; there is always a paraphrase or explanation, even if imperfect. But blatant cases of over-translation or unnecessary commentary should be picked up on, since if unchecked they may sow the seed of dangerous habits.

The need to judge when it is appropriate or necessary to *optimize* interpretation, when to be more cautious and literal, and when to fall back on 'basic' fidelity, will be addressed more closely when students are doing full consecutive, and illustrated later, with real-life examples, as part of Professionalism (CC-10.4). But this kind of judgment is so central to the interpreter's role as a professional communicator that instructors must seize any opportunities to develop it when they do incidentally arise.

5.6   Public Speaking and Delivery Skills

Training in Public Speaking should begin as soon as possible, not only because this is a key competence for interpreters, but also so that students can make good speeches for practice. Experience shows that without training in speech-making, the quality of student speeches will vary too widely to be optimal as source material. Group practice, in particular, will be ineffective, and can even be demoralising or damaging, if students give each other 'speeches' that are inappropriate, badly presented or simply read out from newspaper articles.

Until students are relatively proficient in public speaking, they should not make presentations in class to be analysed, retold or interpreted, or critique each other's interpretations in terms of public speaking skills (with the exception of *second versions* as discussed below). The relative amount of time and coaching needed to reach the required standard of public speaking, or in certain kinds of discourse analysis, may vary with students' background culture and education.[3]

Public Speaking can be taught by a qualified non-interpreter, but – as for all such add-on modules – in a way that is adapted to the needs of interpreting, in close coordination with the main instructors. It is best taught in a *separate* first-semester class, as it is much easier for students to practise delivery skills on a standalone basis, focusing on preparing and delivering a presentation without having to worry about active listening, analysis, memory/note-taking, unfamiliar content, etc., all at once.

Student performances should be video-recorded throughout this module, for feedback, as in the performing arts. The first four weeks of Public Speaking training can be a 'crash course' focusing on the ability to prepare and deliver clear, coherent, structured and contextualized presentations on appropriate topics, from outline notes. Independent group practice can safely begin as soon as this is achieved (CC-5, Appendix).

Towards the end of the Initiation phase, students can already begin to integrate these improved delivery skills into their work in Consecutive without Notes, in two ways:

a. when analyzing source speeches, especially recordings of actual speeches, the instructor can call attention to aspects of the speaker's performance and to various devices employed by the speaker, and guide the class in evaluating the speaker's delivery;

b. during interpreting exercises, after a first version has been elicited and discussed with a focus on content, the instructor can call upon a student to deliver a fluent second version with a focus on using good delivery skills.

Table 5.1 shows how Public Speaking should accompany then merge with interpreting skills classes. By the end of the Initiation stage, students should be able to make semi-prepared presentations that are good enough to use as primary input speeches for interpreting class sessions, and for group practice outside class (with occasional checks and supervision at first).

When Consecutive with Notes begins, there will be an inevitable dip in students' delivery as students struggle with reading their notes. At that stage,

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3.   For example, the UK and US have stronger traditions of public speaking than Japan or the Scandinavian countries; and discourse analysis (*explication de texte*) has always been a staple of secondary and higher education in France, perhaps less so in, say, China or Australia.

public speaking skills are not the major priority in the consecutive interpreting class, but they should be worked on in ongoing Public Speaking classes, and in consecutive classes by occasionally asking for second versions, perhaps without referring to notes.

Public Speaking merges fully with Consecutive in the Consolidation and especially Polishing stages (CC-5.7–5.8; TG-6.6–6.7), i.e. when pedagogical attention turns specifically to delivery skills in the *interpreted presentation*. At that stage students are recorded on video and interpretations are analysed as public speaking performances.

Table 5.1 Public Speaking in the curriculum
(Y1,Y2: first, second year; S1, S2: first, second semester)

Stage	Timeline (Table 3.1 option A)	*Main interpreting class*	*Public Speaking*
Initiation to Interpreting	Y1S1, first 4–5 weeks	Input: instructor speeches + recordings Some student input for short consecutive and dialogue interpreting	Standalone instruction, with focus on basic delivery skills ('*ethos*') + Some discussion/ redelivery of recorded performances from interpreting class (first and second passes)
Introduction to Note-Taking	Y1S1, weeks 6–9	Input: paused instructor speech for note-taking; fluent trainer speeches for short consec	Standalone instruction, with increasing attention on '*logos*' while enforcing good '*ethos*' (and review of class recordings)
Consecutive: Coordination	Y1S1, weeks 10–13	Input: structured trainer speech, fluent but slow at first	Students make speeches in group practice and some in class
Consecutive: Experimentation	Y1S1 week 14 through to S2 week 6	Input: live speeches (semi-prepared) and selected recordings	Some student speeches in class; checks on delivery aspects of TL versions
Consecutive: Consolidation	From Y1S2 week 7 onwards (though main focus later moves to SI)	Input: student-made speeches + more difficult selected recordings	Evaluation of speaking skills in input speeches, and systematic assessment of delivery in students' interpretations
Consecutive: Polishing and Advanced Tasks	Y2, from mid-S3 onwards	Input: recordings of difficult and challenging speeches	Taught in consecutive class with evaluation of interpreter's performance, emphasis on style and rhetoric (*pathos*)

Finally, more attention to students' **speaking performance in B** will almost always be needed from the end of Y1S1, and this can be developed in Y1S2. Second-year students can also occasionally join the Y1S1 A-language public speaking class, but working in their B language.

Putting it all together: listening, capturing and speaking
By the end of S1 at the latest (in a two-year course), students should be ready to give a much-improved performance of the retelling exercise they were asked to do at the Admission test, on very similar input material, but with higher expectations in terms of precision, completeness, fidelity and presentation.

Occasionally, after interpretation the instructor can lead the class in writing up a discourse outline as before, and can progressively integrate layout and devices of the Standard Note-Taking Method, converging on the Slow Notes exercise (CC-5.4.2).

5.7   Initiation: pedagogical notes

Here are some suggestions for a constructive pedagogical stance in this module, and some common problems encountered at this stage.

i.   *Errors and corrections*: The instructor now comments only after the interpretation has been delivered (or for dialogue interpreting, after several exchanges back and forth, lasting a few minutes), and should try to be as encouraging as possible, focusing on what the students are doing right. The emphasis must be on clarity and coherence, not details, and digressions about linguistic equivalents must be resisted. Problems to be systematically picked up include major meaning errors, glaring omissions of primary information, logical inconsistencies, and unacceptable TL formulations due to unthinking transcoding or failure to deverbalize. Error correction is best accomplished through probing questioning; in most cases, students will be surprised at how much they can recall correctly or fix on their own, with just a little subtle reminding.

ii. *Discovering the user's perspective:* Students should occasionally experience what it is like to be a user of interpreting. If they all understand each other's languages, this can be done by having one or more students leave the room during the original speech, and then come back in to listen to the interpretation. This student can then comment on their ability to understand everything, to follow the thread, etc.

Students in the first stages of interpreter training encounter similar difficulties, regardless of culture and language, in adapting to what are essentially new ways

of listening, 'memorizing', and 'translating'. Here are a few typical problems and possible instructor's responses:

▶ *Lapses in concentration*, leading to missed information or links in the argument. These can usually be cured within a month or two, but if they persist throughout consecutive training, the student should probably be advised to consider pursuing a different career plan.

▶ *Working with surface forms, not meaning*: if trainees have trouble 'getting away' from the surface forms, or if they memorize words and then 'translate' what they have remembered, doing same-language paraphrase before interpreting can be an effective remedy.

▶ Failure to *analyse plausibly the speaker's intended meaning*. Apparent failure to interpret the speaker's intended meaning in the most basic sense may have multiple causes: language deficiency, gaps in background knowledge, a failure to put oneself into the situation of communication or in the speaker's shoes, the lack of a relevant schema from experience, 'schema substitution' or even some form of prejudice against the speaker's argument. Trainees are often surprised at their inability to understand speech, even in their own language. Unless there is a serious problem with the chosen materials, this usually means they are still underestimating the extra effort needed to hear as an interpreter (as opposed to the 'bystander' they used to be, who could tune out a speaker who was difficult or boring); or that they are still listening to words, instead of deploying their full 'mindreading' abilities (TG-12.2.2.2).

▶ Last but not least, *what to do when you don't know*? This is one of the beginner's worst fears, and a question often asked of interpreters. Novices (and even experts going into high-exposure assignments) often imagine disaster in the form of an unknown or untranslatable word or phrase. Comprehension or translation problems should certainly diminish with experience and knowledge, but they will never disappear entirely. It is therefore important to set out to students at an early stage those options that are a part of *basic interpreting technique* (described with 'basic dos and don'ts' in CC-4.4.2). By contrast, emergency tactics (suboptimal and expedient fall-back solutions) should not be discussed until much later, when students understand all the hazards and constraints of real-life interpreting (CC/TG-9).[4]

Unlike the next phases, which will focus on specific techniques, Initiation is a general introduction which, while installing vital pre-skills – a new way of listening and speaking – brings students into first contact with issues and challenges that

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4. Both kinds are listed by Gile (2009: 191–218) as 'coping tactics', but we prefer to differentiate.

will pervade all interpreting. While using the 'novelty dividend', the instructor must make sure the class moves ahead with these basic skills while being attentive to their more general questions. Here are some tips:

i.   **Teachable moments**: A key attribute of a good teacher is the ability to recognize and exploit 'teachable moments' to make points that tie theory in with practice and guide students toward solid technique. For example, when a student gets stuck on something tricky, the instructor should prompt her – and invite other students to help – to find a more general formulation, explanation, or paraphrase, before offering a solution that expresses the idea more directly and precisely in the target language.

   However, even when a student does find a good way to express something tricky, other classmates might not have, and the problem may offer a teachable moment to rehearse tactics for getting out of tight spots. After praising the student for knowing a good TL version, the instructor should ask the class what they would do if they DIDN'T know how to say it in the TL. This can lead into a discussion of various workarounds involving saying something more general (perhaps with modifiers to pin it down more precisely), paraphrasing, explaining, etc.

ii. **Efficient time management** is also important to keep classes both focused and motivating, making sure that everyone gets at least one turn. One must guard against the temptation to digress, which can be all too easy when working with a wide range of different and (sometimes) interesting speeches touching on a world of knowledge and experience that may be new to most students. The instructor must resist using precious class time to explain why fossil fuels are so called, the origins of the current financial crisis, or the difference between an isthmus and a peninsula. Also, though some students may seem to be progressing by leaps and bounds, one should avoid wasting time discussing (too much) things that are for a different stage of the course.

iii. **Looking ahead**: It does no harm to approach realistic conditions even at this early stage by telling students in advance what the topic will be for the next class, when it is fairly specific and known in advance, even if not 'technical' – for example, 'briefing customer service reps on how to handle complaints' – and encouraging them to read around the topic in both languages before the class. This forms good habits, and students will soon realize what a difference preparation makes, especially when it includes collecting basic but useful expressions and patterns for working more idiomatically into B.

5.8   The learning curve: a novelty bonus

Initiation to interpreting should be stimulating and enjoyable. The class are getting to know each other and there is scope for a wide variety of exercises and activities as both speakers and listeners. The cognitive challenges are not too severe, just stimulating enough to add to the excitement of acquiring the key basic competencies of interpreting and putting them together in some simple but realistic interpreting.

In the first few weeks, students practice on stories, simple descriptions or plans for action – in other words, the basic forms of information exchange, built of everyday scenes and sequences. These are the kinds of exchange in which our linguistic faculties originally evolved and are most at home. Throughout history, intelligent bilinguals with these qualities have interpreted such communications well, even brilliantly, without special training, and our students are no exception: instinct as well as ancient, universal human schemas suggest what is important or secondary, and social empathy naturally generates rhythm and emphasis.

In these classes, then, a group of smart young people are interacting on tasks which should be just hard enough – with traps that no-one is immune to, like *faux amis* and being tricked by the translation process into talking nonsense, checked by the Grandmother test – to ensure that no-one can get too cocksure and everyone will have something to learn. The instructor, who should have taken part in selection and thus have confidence in the new entrants, makes sure the harder parts of exercises are shared equally, and brings out each student's strong points so that no-one is left behind or loses the respect of their classmates.

5.9   Initiation: structure and objectives

The goals of Initiation are reflected in our first model of the interpreting process (presented in CC-4.8), illustrating its three basic steps, each of which we begin to address with specific pedagogy:

1. **Understanding**, to be reinforced by attention, association and analysis;
2. **Speaking**, where we start working on packaging and presentation;

and 'between' these, specifically for interpreting,

3. **Mediating**, where we identify three barriers to be negotiated:
   a. *Linguistic*: using the concepts of deverbalization and transcoding, we begin to explore and negotiate the traps of language transfer, and especially, interference;

b. *Cognitive*: with the help of some discussion in the first theory classes, students should begin to understand why language alone does not do the job, and the need to project the cognitive environment of the parties to the exchange; in class, opportunities will naturally present themselves to draw attention to cognitive gaps between communicators that call for judgment in dealing with 'untranslatables', the possible need for optimization and its risks and rewards;

c. *Role (interpersonal):* provisionally expressed in the 'dos and don'ts of interpreting, in which we instil the ethos of impartiality, and practise temporarily stepping into the shoes of the speaker.

Interpreting: negotiating the three barriers

Interpreting always evokes the language barrier, but communicators are always separated by not one but three barriers to be bridged: they may speak different languages, but they will also have different knowledge, assumptions and beliefs; and they will have different interests, goals and purposes. It is simplistic to believe that the interpreter can ignore all but the first of these barriers and 'just translate'. Unfortunately, that is not possible. An act of speech also embodies and makes manifest to different degrees the speaker's cognitive make-up (knowledge, beliefs, convictions) and what s/he wants or intend. These are indeed the eternal potential barriers between us, whether we are speaking the same language or not (see discussion in TG-12.2). Interpreters cannot avoid the difficult task of negotiating their role at every turn, sorting out the three barriers, deciding what to make manifest, and what to bridge, and how, without influencing or distorting.

Some students find this easier than others; and some are more aware than others of how the fidelity of their interpretation may be affected in more or less subtle ways – by misunderstanding, lack of empathy, or a misplaced attempt to tone down, selectively omit or edit, or by their own conditioned biases.

The most effective pedagogy is demonstrative rather than theoretical: the instructor should point out and challenge such distortions, prompt students to self-correct, and create simulations that test this ability and develop the faculty of metarepresentation (TG-12.2.2.2 (iv)) that is necessary for lucid and effective mediation.

5.10   Some basic theory for instructors (and students)

5.10.1 A general theory of communication

Theory from various sources can be helpful for instructors, and even for students if administered in small doses, properly packaged and timed at 'teachable moments' or in class discussion. The most relevant theories for interpreting (for an overview, see TG-12), are accounts of how language and communication work 'above the sentence level' (discourse analysis, functional linguistics, pragmatics) and of how our minds perceive, process and retain discourse (the psycholinguistics of attention and memory for words and meaning), plus some home-grown insights and models from translation and interpretation theory and training (TG-12).

In their Initiation to interpreting, students learn through practical exercises how to listen and use context to understand and capture sense, structure and information for later recall, and how to deverbalize to avoid the pitfalls of language transfer and linguistic interference and speak naturally and idiomatically. For some students, all this may go against the grain of their past conceptions of language. To help make the transition in attitude from language learner to interpreter and communicator, students may benefit from a new perspective on how communication works, captured in a general theory of human verbal communication. Our own chosen framework is Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995), summarized in TG-12.2. To accompany the Initiation stage, the first Theory classes can introduce the basic concepts most applicable to interpreting such as the underdeterminacy of language, the consequent need in verbal communication to rely on inference as well as linguistic decoding, the meaning of context and cognitive environment, and the proposition that quality in interpreting can be understood as the simultaneous pursuit of two goals: fidelity to the speaker and optimal relevance for listeners, achieved by giving them access to the speaker's meaning at minimum effort for maximum effect.

5.10.2 Language, context and communicative intent

In the first few classes of Initiation, students may reveal attitudes to language and speech, originating in formal language training or popular belief, that must be overcome to release the flexibility needed for interpreting. Certainly, undergraduate language teaching now includes a more significant oral component than in the past, with practice in speech comprehension and speaking; but literalist or positivist conceptions of language-as-perfect-code may linger. One common hang-up is an attachment to dictionary equivalents, underestimating the role of context in choosing the words that will express the same message.

Another potential obstacle is the widespread but misleading belief that the primary function of language is to convey information. This is to misunderstand the situation of oral communication. Information as such is optimally communicated not via an ephemeral medium like speech, but in a form that is efficient and economical (i.e. as densely packed as possible), consultable according to the recipient's chosen pace and sequence, and therefore also storable. Certainly the format of live sequential speech for immediate reception is sometimes (mis)used to convey information that would be much easier to assimilate at the recipients' leisure as a written text, and must also be handled by interpreters ('a message in the wrong medium': TG-9.6.2.5). But the primary function of (semi-)spontaneous speech, the canonical format suited to interpreting, is clearly 'persuasive' in the broad sense, with information in a supporting role.

5.10.3 What makes a speech a speech? Function, rhetoric and genre

A speech is an important unit in interpretation, since it has a unity and usually a clear function that must guide the interpreter. We can define a speech as an extended utterance in which a speaker uses linguistic and other devices with intent to communicate meaning explicitly and implicitly to listeners in a particular situation, with a view to influencing them in some way (by giving them access to cognitive and/or affective effects: see TG-12.2.4.1). For now, a simplified typology based on 'functionalist' approaches to language (notably Jakobsen 1960; see TG-12.2.4) will serve to illustrate the dimensions of a speech as distinct from a linguistic object.

1. *Persuasive* (subsuming 'conative', appellative…): most salient in advertising, politics, argument or debate, litigation.
2. *Informative* (cf. Jakobsen's 'referential' function), most salient in the reporting of scientific research, or plans for implementation of an agreed policy or programme, etc.; and for 'housekeeping' announcements.
3. *Social/ritual*: salient in ceremonies, commemorations, encounters, entertainment etc.
4. *Phatic* utterances may have no content (a grunt or interjection, a voiced pause) but serve 'to establish, prolong or discontinue communication' (or confirm whether the contact is still there), and as such naturally pervade all interaction, though more salient at certain times.

Most real-life discourse exhibits multiple and mixed functions in varying proportions. A speech may start with a formal introduction, words of thanks or welcome, and compliments to the audience or guests (*ritual and social*). But the persuasive

function appears almost immediately in the moderator's recital of an invited speaker's CV (evidence for his authority, part of 'ethos') alongside the ritual-social and informative; and the main motivation for the speech that follows will be to influence the hearts and/or minds of the audience in some way.

This is the main point to get across to interpreter trainees: that speech, or public utterances (including even relatively formalized and sophisticated spoken international discourse – the canonical medium for which interpreters are trained, despite the varying influence and admixture of written text) are primarily 'persuasive', aiming to change the way listeners see things (and induce behaviours, decisions, actions), even though abundantly *subserved* by information (in the form of facts, figures, examples and other evidence to support proposals, objections and various points of view), and dressed up and accompanied with the necessary social and ritual lubrication.

This is why the interpreter training literature commonly recommends a primary focus on 'argumentative' (or 'discursive') speeches, with primarily informative, descriptive or narrative material used only at certain times, for practice in noting facts and figures, or in interpreting formal reports or scientific presentations, and/or when text is involved, as in sight translation or SI-text.

'Social/ritual' features also pervade all international discourse, and may indeed become dominant in formal and ceremonial material – the second most important genre for interpreting, but introduced only later in the course because of its special challenges. Last but not least, the 'phatic' dimension, if stretched, might cover all the features that structure discourse, as well as opening or maintaining communication: cohesive ties, links, structuring devices and so on.

Focusing too much on information may lead novice interpreters to distort and disfigure speeches by giving all the content the same emphasis, missing the phatic and persuasive (pragmatic) threads that signal its relative importance and the argument it is there to support, and thus also missing links that the speaker has not made explicit; or taking for granted (and forgetting to render) important 'social/ritual' strands of a communication.

At the same time, the lexical habits inherited from language learning and text translation may lead students to get stuck looking for the perfect content words, while neglecting and underusing the function words, and in general, the parts of language that make a speech into a performative communication. If some theoretical explanation is needed, the notion of functions of language can be helpful (TG-12.2.4).

Another favourite theme of the Functionalist school of linguistics that has been taken up in translation theory (and interpretation; see Chernov 2004) is its analysis of *information flow in discourse*, which is especially important for helping

to coordinate attention. Space does not allow for a full exposition, but this concise summary from Georgia Green (2012: 133–4) can serve as a starting point for further reading:

> Language scholars have recognized for some time that there are correlations between the order of syntactic constituents in a sentence and the discourse role of the information which a particular constituent represents (Mathesius 1928; Firbas 1964;[5] Halliday 1967; Kuno 1972). In general, and all other things being equal, the first phrase in a sentence tends to be intended to denote familiar (or TOPICAL, or GIVEN, or OLD, or presupposed, or predictable, or THEMATIC) material, while phrases toward the end of the sentence tend to denote NEW (or asserted, or RHEMATIC) material. Other things are not always equal, however. Sentence stress or intonational accent (higher pitch which falls off rapidly and is perceived as louder) also correlates with information being treated as new (Schmerling 1976), and new information may be expressed in phrases that occur toward or at the beginning of a sentence if they bear the main sentence stress…

Awareness of these patterns greatly helps both for processing input – to attune our attention economically to the salient 'peaks' of new information – and for output, as a reminder of how structure (and in SI especially, prosody) can be used to present information more communicatively.

5.10.4 Meaning vs. form-based translation and the *Théorie du sens* (ITT)

As we saw when discussing the perils of the language barrier (CC-4.3), trying to interpret by focusing only on language will result in a literal and awkward rendition, that is at best difficult to follow, and at worst meaningless or even inaccurate.

The founders of one of the first professional T&I schools, the ESIT in Paris, developed this observation into the *théorie du sens* or Interpretive Theory of Translation (ITT), an account of the process behind good translation as a practical, message-oriented operation, done for a purpose and in a specific context, that could not be achieved by a process of semantic conversion from one language to another. These trainers urged students to 'step back' from the linguistic form, capture the message conceptually, and reformulate naturally and idiomatically. Translators and interpreters should process speech as people normally do, i.e. by deriving a meaning in context and forgetting most of the words (a hypothesis supported by some psycholinguistic experiments, e.g. Sachs 1967) and then reformulating from this 'deverbalized' understanding. This was illustrated in the famous 'Paris Triangle' (CC-4.3.1).

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5. For more recent work, see Firbas (1992).

Without explicitly recognizing it (or perhaps even being aware of it), the Paris school was applying to translation a pragmatic theory of language communication – described in TG-12.2 – that had already begun to supersede the long-standing code-based, semantic model (see Setton 2002c). Instead of stopping at the semantic meanings of utterances and using bilingual linguistic knowledge to convert them into the TL, the Translator should let context determine the most plausible intended meaning, then formulate TL language that will best convey it to the listener.

Based also on Lederer's (1981) analysis of SI, the ITT authors suggested that deverbalizing and transcoding reflect two different kinds of memory at work in interpreting (see also CC-5.8.2): a conceptual memory, which processes ideas and arguments and makes sense of the input in context, against a background of existing knowledge; and a short, echoic ('immediate') memory, in which items like names, numbers or unfamiliar technical terms, which cannot be integrated as concepts, survive as sounds for only a few seconds before fading – and therefore have to be quickly noted (or in SI, spoken). The bulk of the discourse, in contrast, should be conceptually understood and reformulated to produce a more meaningful, idiomatic speech free of the awkward and often confusing wording that often results from linguistic interference when words are directly translated. (This observation inspired a now-famous metaphor for interpreting: '*la brioche aux raisins*' or 'currant-bun' (Seleskovitch 1975: 30 ff.), in which the input speech is seen as a lump of dough with raisins ready for the oven. After baking, only the or raisins – terms with fixed equivalents needing no conceptual processing – are recognizable as one-to-one transcodings of original forms, while the rest, deverbalized and reformulated, has become a new speech conveying all the sense of the original but in a form natural to the target language).

'Interpretive' translation, then, succeeds in producing a target text which conveys the same message as the source text, but whose individual elements may not necessarily be matched one-to-one to source text elements, either syntactically and/or as recognized dictionary equivalents, because they have been chosen to express a message to a specific audience, in a unique context, and to be internally consistent within that target(ed) text and with the expressive conventions of TL. Any such dictionary-equivalent pairs found when comparing the SL and TL would either be 'transcodables' (proper names and technical terms with stable meanings and labels across languages) or, if produced in 'interpretive' translation, coincidental.

This view of Translation[6] has important consequences for the Translator's role, contrasting a context-blind, mechanical, semantically-programmable process with the live, human, thinking and communicative activity that justifies a specialized training programme for translators and interpreters.

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6. We use the convention of a capitalised initial T to embrace all kinds of translation and interpreting in any mode, including oral, written signed, sub-titling, etc.

In practice, as we saw in CC-4.3, the architects of ITT recognized that there is something of both interpretation and transcoding in the making of an optimally faithful (accurate and communicative) translation. ITT seeks to contrast these processes more explicitly, and stresses that the interpretive process must be dominant, guiding and commanding occasional transcoding (the choice and reassembly of words and linguistic structures), its complement and servant. In this perspective, a Translator who lets transcoding gain the upper hand is either unaware of the (possible) context(s) of the communication, or of how human communication works, or is lazy, or, like a machine, is unable to metarepresent the intentions and likely responses of human communicators (TG-12.2.2).

Depolarizing ITT: opportunities for automating

Even if we accept that some texts or passages may lend themselves to semantic, context-free transcoding – weather reports have been adequately machine-translated since the 1970s, for example – this is unlikely to work in (oral) interpreting, where speakers have in principle chosen to interact face to face and live, rather than send each other semantically dense texts. Even if they do try to communicate in this way and read such texts out, interpretive processing will be needed for gisting, since exact semantic conversion at that speed will be impossible.

The notion of deverbalization has been acknowledged by us and by others as a valuable heuristic for encouraging students to analyse, break away from form and interpret idiomatically. However, a large body of research in cognitive science suggests that the mind is more flexible than is suggested by this polarized distinction between ('intelligent') purely interpretive, 'deverbalized' processing and ('dumb, automatic') transcoding. The range of items for which fairly reliable ready bilingual equivalents could be learned, allowing for automation of significant parts of the process, would certainly extend well beyond the transcodable 'currants' described by ITT (mainly numbers, names and technical terms), potentially encompassing also recurring set phrases, jargon terms, frozen collocations, and even some template structures for beginning, framing, and continuing sentences. Use of any of these fixed learned equivalents in interpreting would of course remain subject to varying degrees of vigilance and (self-)monitoring for their appropriateness in the context, but at a level of attention requiring much less processing capacity than completely 'fresh' deverbalizing and original reformulation. Alternatively, then, we might model the interpreter's resources as a three-point continuum in which the intermediate category would be items collected in a mental phrasebook of one-to-*several* correspondences, still allowing for fast look-up and intelligent selection of good equivalents in context.

This more flexible and gradualist conception of what can be more or less automated is also compatible with advances in our understanding of memory since ITT was formulated in the 1970s, such as the recognition of a more adjustable

relationship between working and long-term memory (Cowan 1999; Ericsson and Kintsch 1995) and the possibilities of fast and massive retrieval with the help of ready-made schemas.

The degree of automaticity required for or appropriate to interpreting different presentations will vary, notably between the two polarized genres described by Shermet (2012) – the boilerplate, cliché recitals which require 'oral translation' vs. more impromptu, original exchanges which call for real interpreting. Real interpreting will involve both these processes. In principle, pure deverbalization (with no set 'phrasebook' resources to rely on) should be much more effortful than phrasebook-assisted production. We have little choice in our professional assignments, of course, but clearly the second kind of interpreting is more intellectually rewarding, and therefore not necessarily always more tiring: in more routine, boilerplate work the effort saved through automaticity may often be offset by challenges like speed, density and monotonous delivery.

The need for deverbalization to resist linguistic interference remains important, however, as soon as we move from Initiation to the various modes of real interpreting, all of which involve exposure to two languages at the same time, whether in two streams of speech, or in text and speech (ST, SI-text) – including consecutive, in which the notes are also a kind of text (Albl-Mikasa 2008). In SI, deverbalized processing will usually mean a longer lag, which must be kept under control by techniques like segmentation and anticipation.

We return to ITT and its implications for consecutive and SI technique in TG-6 and TG-8 respectively. At this stage, the focus is on showing students how an effort of detachment and analysis is needed to interpret both accurately and naturally. This takes a special effort to overcome the (otherwise natural[7]) 'contamination' of the output language, known as linguistic interference (CC-4.8.3).

5.11 Summary

'Initiation' is a necessary preliminary stage that serves to boost some of the natural abilities we deploy in everyday communication – listening, understanding ('interpreting'), remembering, speaking – into professional tools for interpreting; and to discover the novelty, and the challenges, of those aspects in which interpreting differs from everyday communication – setting aside your own interests and shifting between two cultural 'skins' to convey the same message as faithfully, precisely,

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7. Code-switching and -mixing is natural and widespread in mixed-language communities, contributing to the formation of pidgins, then creoles and eventually fully-recognized new languages (Holm 2000).

convincingly and idiomatically as possible in another language. From now on, training will mostly be learning how to do this even better with the help of some technical tools.

Further reading

(see References in both volumes for full publication details)
See also Further reading in CC-4.

Discourse comprehension and mental modelling
Fauconnier 1985: Mental Spaces
Fillmore 1985: Frames and the semantics of understanding
Gernsbacher 1990: Language comprehension as structure-building
Green 1989/2012: Pragmatics and Natural Language Understanding
Johnson-Laird & Garnham 1980: Descriptions and Discourse Models
Kintsch 1998: Comprehension: A paradigm for cognition
van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: Strategies of Discourse Comprehension

Knowledge schemas (or schemata), frames, scripts etc.
Mandler 1984: Stories, scripts, and scenes: Aspects of schema theory
Rumelhart 1980: Schemata: the building blocks of cognition
Schank & Abelson 1977: Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding

Memory, language and thought
Baddeley 2004: Your Memory: a User's Guide
Bartlett 1932: Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology
Piaget 1926: The language and thought of the child

Multilingualism, linguistic interference
Paradis 2004: A Neurolinguistic Theory of Bilingualism

Teaching consecutive interpreting

6.1   Introduction: teaching full consecutive

6.1.1   Note-taking: doctrine and pedagogy

How should we best teach consecutive with notes? Doctrine has varied between maximalist and minimalist positions, with some groups recommending more complete or codified systems while others prefer to teach students only basic principles of layout and tips for symbols or abbreviations. Schools have often leaned toward the latter approach in a bid to discourage students from relying too much on notes and writing mechanically at the expense of listening, analysis and memory.

However, this may end up being counterproductive if it degenerates into giving students little or no actual note-taking technique while constantly urging them to take fewer notes, especially when they are still unsure of their memories and have patchy general knowledge. On speeches full of facts and figures, they may omit important content, and where they *choose* to note key words or phrases – even after analysis – they will fall behind without a reliable abbreviating technique. Advice like 'write less' or 'note as little as possible' is, as Liu (1994: 107) observes, "too vague to be of practical use in a Consecutive class […] because students do not really know how to economize on their notes if they are not properly guided".

In short, while excessive note-taking must usually be curbed in the first few weeks of practice on speeches, students should be shown *how* to note (after analysing) judiciously, succinctly and reliably, with devices to lay out and condense what they *do* have to (or choose to) note: key ideas and points, the best cues to structure, content, and items that won't stick in memory (numbers, names, etc.).

Our approach is therefore first to demonstrate and explain the full toolkit of note-taking principles and techniques, then let students try them out, integrating them progressively, in sequence – first on controlled, then progressively more natural and representative discourse.

We see no reason to assume that students cannot distinguish the tools from the method. In short, all students should LEARN how to take detailed, economical notes even if they might not always *do* so, especially on easier, more familiar and less information-packed speeches, for which just cue-words and links might well be enough. A basic standard method – later to be customized and extended by

each student – can be taught incrementally over 3–4 weeks, at a rate of one or two features per class, starting with layout, then abbreviation and symbols, then additional structuring, emphasis, and mood markers like arrows, smileys and sketches. In each session, the instructor first describes and demonstrates the new features, then leads the class in any specific supporting drills (like simplifying or abbreviating) before moving on to a gentle exercise on an appropriate speech (Slow Notes).

The real significance and necessity of 'noting the ideas not the words' will become clear soon enough when students experience the constraints of **coordination** in real time and the consequences of noting unthinkingly, excessively, unclearly or too slowly: missing content, or getting bogged down or incoherent. With the help of the instructor and well-designed feedback through a phase of **experimentation** and constant practice, they should soon learn to make better choices, adjust their listening-to-noting ratio, and/or rely more on their memory. Once a viable, all-weather technique has begun to crystallize, it must be **consolidated** with more practice, and finally honed into a polished professional performance.

6.1.2 Progression in consecutive

These stages are set out in the table below. Timing is indicative, and must remain somewhat flexible and sensitive to to class progress. Exercises from previous stages (public speaking, summary, paraphrase, discourse analysis, short consecutive without notes etc.) can continue alongside the core exercises of each stage, as well as some sight translation (CC-6), for pedagogical purposes (clarification, etc.) and variety. The skill is first taught into the A language. (The table assumes a two-year course in four 16-week semesters (S1–S4), which we consider a minimum to ensure sufficient contact and practice hours: see 13.2.4.2).

Table 6.1 Steps to expertise in consecutive with indicative calendar (see Table 3.1a)

Stage	Materials	Skills acquisition (Process)	Intermediate objectives (Product)
Initiation [CC-4] *Y1 S1, weeks 1–5*	see CC-4/TG-5	*Listening, analysis, memory technique, speaking*	Make sense, capture main points and links
Introduction to Note-Taking (I, II, III) *Y1 S1, weeks 6–9*	'Trainer speeches'[1] slow, paused or in short segments etc., as appropriate to exercise	*Noting:* Learn the 'Standard Method' of note-taking in steps (A/B/C>A)	Establish a basic note-taking toolkit (layout plus condensing devices)

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1. See TG-2 Appendix for definition.

Stage	Materials	Skills acquisition (Process)	Intermediate objectives (Product)
Coordination *Y1 S1 weeks 10–13*	Trainer speeches up to normal speed (no artificial pausing), 1–2 min. segments	Practise real-time note-taking, improve and adapt technique (A/B/C > A then, when confident, A > B)	*Completeness* of information content, facts and logic
Experimentation *S1 week 14 – S2 week 6*	Authentic speeches of varying texture and genre (student speeches and some recordings), 2–3 min. segments	*Experiment*, customize and stabilize technique, adapting what, how and when to note. Step up practice into B	*Coherence*: Guided by clear layout and pointers in notes, use connectives and prosody to make product more structured, meaningful and communicative
Consolidation *S2 week 7 – S3 week 6*	Wide range of authentic speech types commonly encountered in target domain (recordings, visiting speakers); 3–5 mins.	*Consolidate* technique through extensive deliberate practice; improve precision, coherence and concision	*All-round competence, flow:* On standard authentic input, a precise, well-expressed, quasi-professional rendition, with time control and eye contact to engage the audience. On more difficult material, a clear and reliable rendition that makes sense
Polishing *Year 2 (S3 and 4)*	Standard authentic speeches, as in Consolidation	Polish performance on standard input	*Eloquence*: polish style, rhythm, tone and quality of expression
Advanced Tasks [Ch. 9] *Year 2, S4*	Fast, dense and/ or confused speech, multimedia inputs (with text, .ppt etc.)	Learn to cope and manage on complex and difficult input	*Adequacy/Survival*: optimize by prioritizing and editing where necessary

Instructors should make the objective of each stage clear, from completeness and accuracy through increasing clarity and coherence to fluency and eloquence.

This progression can be seen as three macro-phases – first, teaching note-taking method and testing it on artificial trainer speeches and deliberately slow input (Introduction to Note-Taking and Coordination); then experimenting with and consolidating technique on authentic input, at increasing speed and difficulty (Experimentation and Consolidation); then polishing the performance to professional quality on doable tasks, while learning to survive and provide at least an *adequate* service in sub-optimal conditions as addressed in CC/TG-9 (Advanced Tasks).

Students will progress at different speeds, and with dips and plateaux in the learning curve (and student morale): there may be examples of polished, stylish performances at an early stage, or the occasional persistence of 'basic' problems even in Consolidation. Do not hesitate to go back to seemingly 'elementary' exercises and variations to address specific problems. Corrective therapy can consist of

i.   interpreting without taking notes,
ii. going back to simpler notes ('cue-words and links'),
iii. taking notes, then interpreting without looking at the notes taken,
iv. slowing down the speech, introducing pauses and redundancy;
v.   reviewing and improving notes;
vi. varying the type of speech: this almost infallibly reveals any unsustainable or inflexible habits (noting too much or too little, etc.) and prepares students for real life.

Students should be closely supervised until they have a realistic understanding of the challenges and expectations of full consecutive interpreting (usually around the mid-Coordination phase) and should then begin regular and frequent group practice outside class.

6.2   Orientation: Introduction to Note-Taking (S1 weeks 6–9)

6.2.1 Student morale and the learning curve

After the lively realism and variety of Initiation, the feeling of novelty continues with the discovery of this first tangible professional tool: the interpreter's individual note-taking method. The Standard Method of Note-Taking for Consecutive is in many ways a unique intellectual and cultural phenomenon. The fun of learning, inventing and using symbols and pictures and layout to help capture and faithfully render a speaker's message should be irresistible to most bright, thinking people with a linguistic turn of mind.

As students practice on longer and meatier passages – though still paused, and at artificially slow speeds of delivery – the main cognitive challenge is essentially just an extension of active listening and discourse modelling: how to **capture** the information used by the speaker in the service of his communicative intention, and how to **use notes** to enrich a presentation. This is another small but significant step in learning to integrate elements which are not normally combined when we speak in everyday life: *someone else's* communicative intention, and the information they have chosen to convey it, with our own knowledge of the world and the situation, while being careful to express the former, not the latter.

Once all the tools of the method have been explained and drilled on comfortably short, paused speech passages, the next few weeks – leading into Coordination – will impose a shift in attention from the quaintness and fun of the system itself to the challenge of using it efficiently in the face of steadily more relentless continuous speech, delivered in context and with a communicative intent.

Precisely because note-taking is fun, it is important not to rush into this first module, however keen students are to begin it. Instead, a gradual progression is needed, alternating between exercises with and without notes so that students never forget the priority to be given to active listening and analysis while learning to handle faster and more realistic speech, in parallel with more deliberate drills (e.g. 'Slow Notes') to acquire technique.

6.2.2 Demonstration: notes as a help and a hindrance

> To make students use their own methods of note-taking before [consecutive] note-taking skills are introduced is a critical step in teaching […] note-taking. Students have to fully realize the inefficiency and inadequacy of their own methods in order to appreciate the usefulness of the system to which they are going to be introduced.
>
> (Liu 1994: 107)

A useful way to introduce note-taking is with a **comparative demonstration** of student performance with and without (proper) notes.

i.   The instructor announces that s/he is going to give a rather detailed presentation to be interpreted. (The experiment will work best if the speech is given at speed, i.e. around 130–140 wpm, in the student interpreters' B or C language, and contains some unusual arguments and/or is in a style that requires careful listening. Passages for interpretation can start at around 3 minutes, optionally experimenting with longer passages to see how performances vary accordingly.)

ii.   The class is split into two groups: one group is to take full, complete, detailed notes, trying to write down as much of the speech as possible; the other group will take no notes, but just listen attentively and analytically, mentally outlining the speech for recall as they have learned to do in Initiation.

      Any students who may have previously studied or practised note-taking for consecutive should initially go into the 'no notes' group. Students in the note-taking group should be asked (for this exercise) to try to write down as much as possible so as to give back a complete rendition.

iii. Students from both groups (in alternation) interpret each passage, and their performances are compared and discussed by the class. This can continue for a few rounds, until the patterns have become clear.

After several rounds, it will generally be seen that the performance of the two groups is different. The 'no notes' group will probably tend to have a better overall grasp of the speech's thrust and logical thread, and their interpretations will likely be more fluent and audience-friendly. The 'maximum notes' group will tend to have captured more local detail and be more 'complete' in places, but perhaps at the expense of the big picture, and their delivery may tend to be more halting and fragmented. The 'maximum notes' group may even exhibit some surprising misunderstandings and distortions, or on occasion experience a complete breakdown in delivery when they can't read their notes. If forced to choose between these two styles, most communicators will generally prefer the more comfortable, to-the-point (if incomplete) summaries of the 'no notes' group to the more painstaking, atomistic (perhaps even confused) performances of the 'maximum notes' group. Of course, what a professional consecutive performance must achieve is a harmonious marriage of the virtues of both.

The point of this demonstration is to show that note-taking can be a *distraction* from active listening and analysis and as such may be dangerous.[2] (It should also show that note-taking habits from school are not optimal for consecutive, and a new technique is required.)

But notes clearly can help in terms of completeness and detail. Most students will already be aware of the limits on our short-term *memory*, but may not fully realized how some actions – in this case, understanding speech, thinking about what to note, and wondering how to translate a word – will compete for limited *attention* and must therefore be carefully coordinated.

Following this sensitization exercise, the instructor can demonstrate and explain the nature and role of consecutive notes, stressing that students will have to share their attention in the 'capture' phase between listening and note-taking, but *always giving priority to listening and understanding.*

6.2.3 The place of theory

When teaching skills and techniques the focus should be on hands-on practice, with clarification and demonstration as needed, with theory used sparingly (the model in CC-5.1 for example). Evidence from psycholinguistic studies for the

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2. Note to instructors: There is always a small risk that the note-taking group copes better than expected, even on fast and challenging B/C language input. If that is the case, it is probably because they have had effective prior training, These students may then indeed only need a shorter upgrade in full consecutive skills – say, 2 or 3 weeks – before moving on to the rest of the programme with sight translation then SI and so on. Training should after all be needs-based and customized.

mechanisms behind discourse comprehension, memory for gist, and so on (briefly reviewed at the end of this chapter) should be kept for the Theory class (12.3), ideally in the same weeks as the students are learning the new skill.

Neither theory nor even direct proof will change habits overnight. Even when the *principles* are accepted, they must be 'taken on board' and built into a procedure that is adaptable to each new and different speech (2.5.3; 3.2.4.2). Soon students will realize that most of the mental work in consecutive must be done in the 'capture' phase, leaving the interpreter with a clear and full memory (supported by notes) of the speech, so that all attention can then be shifted, in the delivery phase, to fluent and polished production.

6.3 Note-Taking: the 'Standard Method'

6.3.1 Note-Taking I: Cue-words and links

In this exercise (CC-5.3), after brainstorming and topic activation the instructor makes light, fairly redundant speeches, but with structure and some substantive content, and students jot down just a few cue-words and links, like a bare-bones discourse outline (CC-4), followed by interpretation then feedback strictly within the focus of this exercise. (For an optional more 'static' exercise in choosing cue-words, see CC-5.3.4.) Two specific questions may come up at this point:

i. *Which language should be used for the cue-words?* Traditionally, the literature has marginally favoured recommending using the TL as much as possible,[3] but there are arguments on both sides, which can be briefly explained (see CC-5.3.2–3). Students should experiment and settle on what works best for them.
ii. *Using the whole page:* Some students may want to divide the page into two columns (possibly on grounds of economy). Certainly a vertical line may be conducive to noting vertically – but ideally, it should be drawn off-centre, to form a narrow margin on the left in which to note link words, rather than making two full columns, which often results in small, cramped and less legible notes.

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3. Albl-Mikasa (2008) found that the language used in notes did affect the choice of TL expression, seeming to support earlier findings suggesting that ST structures in the notes "tend to hamper or at least *influence the search for target language* means of expression". She lists authors on either side of the controversy as follows: recommendations for the language of the notes include source language (Ilg 1988: 11; Gile 1991: 22); target language (e.g. Herbert 1952: 36; Rozan 1956: 15; Déjean le Féal 1981: 83; Laplace 1990: 374); and a mix of the two (e.g. Seleskovitch 1975: 158, 161; van Hoof 1962: 71; Kirchhoff 1979: 123; Thiéry 1981: 110); or one's mother tongue (e.g. Matyssek 1989: 138).

6.3.2 Note-taking II: layout and information capture

The main features of the 'standard' note-taking method (Rozan 1956) can now be shown to students. The best way to show how good note-taking works is by instructor demonstration. During class, interpret a few passages yourself instead of calling upon a student. The demo should include at least one passage of 5–7 minutes; the others can be 3 minutes or so. The impact of this demonstration will be greatest if performed on fresh speech material generated by an outside speaker such as a second-year student, not on material you have brought in. Project your notes onto a screen so as to be able to point at them while interpreting, or copy or write them directly onto a whiteboard. Students can then follow along with your notes as you deliver back the content of the speech.

After fluently interpreting each complete passage, go back and walk the class through your notes, giving a 'blow-by-blow' explanation of each sign and device. You can now explain that over the next few weeks, the standard note-taking method will be taught in steps, starting with the 'syntax' of note-taking (layout, subordination, cross-reference) before moving on to various devices for capturing content in abbreviations and symbols (the method's 'lexicon', so to speak).

Our experience in teaching the transition to full note-taking confirms the effectiveness of the approach recommended by Myers (1976: 135, and *passim*): it is best to have students incorporate techniques into their note-taking gradually, ensuring that the class is consistently applying one before introducing the next. It generally takes around 20–25 contact hours over a period of 3–4 weeks to teach and drill the full standard method sufficiently for students to begin intensive and extended practice in the Experimentation phase.

During this transitional period, each class session can target one or two new aspects of note-taking technique. These can be demonstrated with examples, targeted in special drills, then tried out in 'Slow Notes' (CC-5.4.2), and finally applied to note-taking on more extended passages. At this stage, you should carefully check and correct each student's notes in each class, and give regular demonstrations throughout this module.

We recommend starting with layout (CC-5.4.2). Both structure and abbreviation are important, but it is probably better to break students in first to the principles of layout, which are specific to consecutive interpreting and likely to come less naturally than abbreviation, which they will have used for undergraduate lectures. In this first phase, the items of content that they will be taught to indent, stack, box or verticalize can at first be entered as full words, since input speed will be kept slow (though students may begin spontaneously abbreviating).

After practice in verticalizing, indentation, stacking and boxing – still using mostly whole cue-words – you can move to the second half of the method:

information capture, with the basic devices for capturing content succinctly: simplification (short synonyms, etc.), abbreviation and symbolization (CC-5.4.3).

Abbreviation practice/drill

In experimenting with and adopting these devices, students must focus on clarity and reliabiity in using each symbol or abbreviation. *Ad hoc* abbreviation in particular, though indispensable, carries a high risk of subsequent non-recognition or ambiguity of a squiggle or acronym that was made up in the heat of the action. Regular principles for avoiding this can also be practised in targeted drills, with the instructor reading out a list of (non-exotic) multisyllabic words in succession, with pauses in between, for students to capture on paper quickly and reliably. As students get better at non-ambiguous abbreviation, the instructor can shorten the pauses, and might even read the words in bursts of 3–4 at a time.

This is obviously an entirely artificial exercise that has nothing to do with interpreting, but is purely designed to demonstrate the benefits of precision, stability and reliability in some components of note-taking – such as abbreviating long words – and the risks of ambiguity that may come with sloppiness. For this purpose, one or two rounds of this drill will suffice. Like all the other techniques, abbreviation must be practised in the context of real speeches to be truly integrated into personal practice.

Here is an example of a word list of the type that could be used for this kind of targeted 'rapid abbreviation' exercise. Try abbreviating the following words:

President, Administrative, Macroeconomic, Independent, Budgetary, Restrictions, Industry, Documents, Presidential, Prosecutor, Budget, Industrialization, Sovereignty, Prosecution, Administration, Bankruptcy, Employable, Subcommittee, Unemployment, Californians, Manufacturer, Enthusiast, Conservationist, Application, Conservative, Indian, Legislature, Air-conditioned, Entrepreneur, Investment, Reduction, Entrepreneurship, Announcer, Analytical, Possibility, Reductionism, President-Elect, Analysis, Global, Industrious, Announcement, Talibanization, Globalization, Responsibility, Inflation, Circumstance, Generation X, Performance, Consumer, Achievements, Transplantation, Inflationary, Parliamentarian, Consumption, Community, Opportunity, Recognition, Transparent, Conserve, Opportunistic, Transparency, Manipulation, Dysfunctional, Conservation, Coordination, Innovation, Necessity, Catastrophe, Democratic, Sympathetic, Competition, Industrialist, Dictionary, Multinationals, Relationship, Information, Pharmaceutical, Availability, Informative, Acquisition, Inhabitant, Consolidation, Repercussions, Preservation, Liquidity, Aggressive, Politician, Compensation, Consideration, Considerably, Aggression, Disappointment, Preference, Micro-manage, Momentum, Disappointing, Extension, Minimum, Maximum, September, Destiny, Authorities, Authoritative, October, Singaporean, Institutional investors, Pessimistic, Eliminatory, Experiments, Assumption, Policy-maker, University, Variation, Publication, Acoustics, Commercialize, Hierarchy, Consultation, Immunological, Photographer, Destination, Consecutive, Simultaneous.

Scattered throughout the word list are sequences such as 'independent', 'industry', 'industrialization', 'Indian', 'industrious', 'industrialist' etc. These are randomly sown in, never juxtaposed, so as to avoid arousing attention. When students read back the full words from their abbreviations, whether or not they can distinguish between these variants (and pseudo-variants) will be a key test of how well they have mastered this particular technique. Over time, they will identify common words (including variants within the same family of words) for which they wish to have one fixed abbreviation – for example, Q for *quality, qualitative; γ* [gamma] for *government* – and add these to their own repertoire of fixed personal abbreviations.

6.3.3 Note-Taking III: completing the toolkit

The information-capture dimension of the method can be completed in another two or three sessions with demonstrations and practice using

- structuring devices like brackets, arrows and recall lines;
- extended devices for abbreviation, like code-mixing;
- underscoring for emphasis;
- sketches, smileys, punctuation etc., for visual passages, mood or emotive touches (see CC-5.4.4).

Students must be shown the recursive possibilities and flexibilities of the method using conceptual extension – but it is even more crucial when inventing or using new or complex signs to be absolutely sure that the new sign is solidly established in the repertoire through practice, and will always be recognized. Each new set of devices must be tried out on appropriate (expressive or subtly nuanced) speeches. To ensure students stay aware of what kinds and amounts of notes will be viable in practice, they can occasionally try speeding up a bit. Ultimately – as proof of the pudding – teachers must be attentive to the results in terms of accuracy and *precision* of using any note-taking device or technique.

6.4   **Coordination** (mid-S1, weeks 10–13)

6.4.1 Focus and class procedure

The Coordination stage focuses on process – learning to share attention between Listening-and-Analysis and Note-Taking, hearing everything while taking reliable, meaningful and sufficient but not excessive notes. The focus is still on 'capture', on what to note but also increasingly, how, when and how much to note under

time pressure (CC-5.5.2). At this stage, the students' TL product serves mainly to show, over and over again, how much its quality depends on the balance found during capture.

Noting and rendering completely from B into A the content of a naturally-paced but substantive speech is challenge enough at this point – avoid any other difficulties and demands, like confused, fast or technical input, stylistic output, or production into B (students should work into A only for the first few weeks).

The primary goal in *product* terms at this stage is accuracy and completeness. Presentational aspects such as eye contact, stage presence and rhetorical elegance can be overlooked for the time being. Only when their note-taking technique has matured, and they have found the right balance between listening, thinking and noting, can students be expected to free up enough mental resources to work on word-choice and style and produce a fluent, accurate *and* professional-sounding rendition. Presentation skills will start to be addressed from the next stage – Experimentation – and gradually more so through Consolidation, becoming a main focus of the Polishing stage.

In the meantime, to make sure that students still get some practice in delivering a speech confidently (public speaking), they can occasionally be invited to do *second versions* of selected speech passages without looking at their notes. Feedback on the first version can focus on content and completeness; then a second student is invited to give an improved version (or a summary) aiming at fluent delivery with good public speaking skills.

The importance of this phase warrants making any necessary arrangements to have instructors or trained speakers available to produce controlled, 'trainer' speeches in the students' B (and occasionally C) language, either by assigning only bilingual or A-B instructors to these classes or by arranging for students to join in classes being taught in the other direction. A trusted invited speaker or an appropriate video recording may also be used. Failing all that, a clear structured speech in the instructor's B language is acceptable for this purpose – in any event the instructor must prepare his speech carefully, as any Speaker would.

For demonstration purposes and to eliminate all obstacles and focus on capturing information and structure, the first classes can begin with some A-into-A exercises. However, given the natural temptation to rely on an imagined 'magic code' function of note-taking, students should not be allowed to lose touch with reality for too long. Most exercises should be from B or C into A, and instructors should soon bring the rate of delivery up to normal speed.

6.4.2 The learning curve: getting on the bicycle

The move to *real-time* coordination of all these activities – attention, listening-with-understanding and memory with spare, effective and judicious note taking – marks the beginning of the first steep cognitive gradient. The first disruptive shock of this new task is the encounter – or clash – between listening/analysis and taking notes. Integrating the new skill component will take some reconfiguring, and there may be steps backward as well as forward, with periods of puzzlement and confusion in which students seem to experience temporary losses of other faculties like fluency, spontaneity and even common sense.

As the speeches get meatier and the subject matter and arguments perhaps less familiar to most students, instinct and experience are no longer enough. The conscientious beginner must assume that everything is equally important, and so may fall back on linguistic competence, trying to make sure that everything is correctly translated. The result may be ponderous, even with the most precise and accurate notes, giving the first inkling, that will only grow as the course proceeds, of the overriding importance of familiarity with the 'terrain'- in other words, of background knowledge and understanding.

6.4.3 Coordination: pedagogy and feedback

The transition from memory exercises to real-time note-taking for interpretation has been called the trickiest phase in teaching full consecutive, requiring 'years of experience' in the instructor (Weber 1989: 165 cited in Liu 1994: 105).

In our experience, the most challenging period for teachers continues throughout the Coordination and early Experimentation stages, where there is the highest risk of some students getting bogged down.[4] Under the pressure of speech at near-normal speed, the ideal note-taking principles will break down at first. Trainees may be tempted to fall back on the lexical virtuosity that won points in a previous literature-oriented education and lapse into transcoding (CC-4.3), under the illusion that the meaning is all contained in the words, and that all will be well if they can only record all the words and recode them into the right equivalents in the other language.

At worst, the student takes exhaustive, literal and unusable notes, forgetting that listeners have inferential abilities, rather as a novice driver forgets that other

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4. Moser-Mercer et al. (2000) cite McLaughlin (1995), who attributes dips or plateaux in expertise learning to changes in [mental] organizational structures: "performance declines as more complex internal representations replace less complex ones, and increases again as skill becomes expertise", which "may explain the U-shaped learning curve in language learning" (2000: 111).

motorists on the road have gears, brakes and mirrors. All attention is on the technicalities of encoding and decoding, and the faculties of empathy and attributing intentions to others are switched off.

This task – to record in notes *all the meaning* of orally delivered discourse – is obviously impossible: even trained court reporters can capture only the words. In attempting it, students completely overload some of the faculties needed for normal communication, while neglecting others: sentence processing and lexical retrieval claim all available resources, while pragmatics are left idle, and even perception is impaired, with students unaccountably not hearing key words. This overload becomes like a heavy backpack weighing the interpreter down with words and notes until she cannot see the wood for the trees.

Exhortation, as used in more martial didactic contexts, is a poor teacher: impassioned speeches about 'using the context' make little impression on students who are down in the dumps and wondering why they can no longer speak their own, let alone any foreign language. They do not understand why precious time should be wasted looking at the speaker or audience, or thinking about anything not encoded in the text.

A better medicine is *variety* – occasionally taking a break from consecutive with notes to do some lively dialogue interpreting, or some consecutive without notes (students will be seen itching to pick up their pens), or taking notes then being told to render without looking at their notes (again, suppressing the itch); or *sight translation,* some of which should be done in each class as a matter of course; or 'relay consecutive' (see below) – any activity, in short, that will force a retreat from the words back to the message and the *point* of the speech, always with 'grandmothers' heckling gently but firmly (CC-4.2.2.1).

This section lists some problems commonly reported by instructors, with suggestions for feedback and remedies. We have tried to distinguish the more basic teething troubles listed here from problems that may persist in the more mature phases of Experimentation (6.5) and Consolidation (6.6). The transitions are not clear-cut, of course: structuring, cohesion and precision will need attention throughout, even after the basic toolkit has stabilized. But instructors should make every effort to address and eliminate basic problems in the two steps covered so far – note-taking per se (precision, concision and clarity of the notes), and noting-listening coordination, before students are exposed to faster, longer and more realistic passages.

After each passage, the instructor reviews note-taking technique with students: What needed to be noted? How could it best be noted? Did they get all the important cues <u>and </u>links? In their notes, what did they write that they didn't need to write? What was illegible? What could have been ambiguous or confusing? Any good symbols? etc.

A handy proof-of-the-pudding technique to use in class is '**relay consecutive**' or back-translation (already used for 'grandmothers' in Initiation). One or two students leave the room during the source speech, then come back, take notes from the interpretation and render it back into the original language. In multilingual classes, relay by a student who does not understand the first SL can be equally edifying.

Basic problems
When a student who has previously shown (in Initiation) that s/he can accurately retell a medium-difficult passage *without* notes now has trouble doing so on an easy passage *with* notes, it is usually for one or more of the following reasons, or a mixture that the instructor must try to unravel. A student may:

a. *forget to listen actively,* writing down words or phrases (in SL or TL) mechanically, skipping understanding and analysis, as if this were a safer way of getting everything than trusting to memory (forgetting that active listening helps memory);

b. *choose the wrong things to note*: having understood that s/he must 'note less', s/he tries to note selectively, but (and perhaps while worrying over this) misses bits of the input that cannot then be reconstructed;

c. try to take full notes, but *can't abbreviate, simplify or use symbols*, so must write out whole words and phrases, and eventually falls behind, missing content and links;

d. try hard to abbreviate, but *experiments with new devices and symbols* while noting, and then can't read them or remember what they mean;

e. scribble too fast and/or abbreviate too randomly, and *can't read what s/he's written*. Bowen and Bowen (1984) propose exercises in legible handwriting in the very first stages of training: see Sassoon and Briem (2014).

At first, these problems come together: whatever problem the students are having with note-taking distracts them from listening, leaving them with both inadequate notes and incomplete memory when it comes to delivery. The priority is now on the new challenge of Coordination, but this and note-taking technique per se are obviously interdependent: you have to pare down, select and compress what you *write*, and do much of this more automatically, to 'make room' in your brain for *listening*. If you're still wondering which levers work the indicator light, the headlights or the windscreen wipers, you won't have time to also check the rear-view mirror and change gears to turn smoothly out of traffic onto a side street. This can be brought home by creating and varying different experiences:

▶ alternating exercises with and without notes (and repeating the class demonstration made during orientation [6.2.2]);

- ▶ occasionally giving speeches that are so slow and redundant that students see the absurdity of writing everything down and still missing the point;
- ▶ occasionally asking students to interpret without using their notes;
- ▶ asking students to take notes but telling them in advance that they will not be using them for delivery, to make sure they also listen actively (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989: 36).

Déjean le Féal (2009) proposes a note-stripping exercise in which you go through your notes asking yourself for each sign or item, "Will it hamper my interpreting if I take this word or symbol out?", until every unnecessary note is stripped out except what is indispensable to reconstruct the speech. This can be done before and/or after rendering the speech.

Close supervision, playback in class and constant reminders may eventually tell, but are less effective than demonstration by relay consecutive, or occasionally, by asking a student to give the interpretation first WITHOUT looking at the notes; then ask for a second version from another student, who can use her notes to bring out more detail.

What and how to note

The problem of choosing *what* and *how much* to note is obviously connected to how much you know about what is being talked about – i.e. background and general knowledge, or familiarity with the subject matter – rather than noting skill *per se*. To take an image from gestalt theory, one must know the '*ground*' ('old' information, which should be known) to pick out the '*figure*' (new, important information, the point or contribution of the speech). If everything is unfamiliar, with no anchoring schemas available in memory, more will have to be noted, and the figure will disappear into the ground.

Similarly, knowing *how* people talk about things – familiarity with typical patterns of discourse structure – helps in deciding *how* to note. Both these facets of familiarity are part of the general culture and knowledge of the world that supports anticipation, an ability that is at the core of interpreting. Its foundations should have been laid in a good university education, but can now be enhanced by wide reading, and by targeted discourse analysis of conference speeches.

A separate issue concerns how the student approaches **delivery** from an inadequate basis of understanding, memory and/or notes. She may

a.   try to fall back on memory, but miss some passages and details, and try to make sense; or say 'I didn't get that bit'; or get stuck; or press on, glossing over the parts of the message s/he is unsure of. The gaps can then be addressed by asking another student to fill in, or prompt with a cue-word, or finish the segment.

b.   produce meaningless or illogical speech (gibberish). This should be nipped in the bud immediately, by questioning to expose the incoherence or illogicality (or by doing 'relay' consecutive, then tracing problems back to the first version). Students who persist in this, however, are obviously not going to become interpreters.

Show, don't tell

Correcting problems always carries more conviction when they can be *shown* to be a direct cause of confusion, hesitation or errors by a live demonstration (see TG-2.5.3, 2.5.11).

Instructors can address technical problems of **note-taking *per se*** by having students take notes on the whiteboard, checking their notepads, and circulating examples of better notes. In addition to the typically coordination-related problems listed above, here are some additional problems of technique in capturing either structure (through layout) or information content:

1.   *Layout*
►   Chunking ideas wrongly (and without indenting).
►   Only partial indentation (e.g. only for the first subordination in the series).
►   Chunking ideas correctly, but failing to indent (every line begins on the far left). This may not be too serious, if the segment does not have a clear hierarchy.
►   Indenting mechanically, without reflecting logical structure such as subordination, or worse, obscuring or confusing it.

Verticalization, indentation, bracketing and segmentation help to space out notes on the page but add more value when used meaningfully to reflect logical structure.

2.   *Abbreviation:* Abbreviation technique usually remains in flux for several weeks, but instructors should look out for some problem patterns: students abbreviate either
a.   *not enough* (wasting time and missing input);
b.   *too much* (and can't recognize the word on re-reading);
c.   *ambiguously* ('con', for example, might be 'condition', 'conclusion' or a host of other words).

A student who **writes many common words out in full** probably has an inadequate stock of symbols and abbreviations. One should offer ideas and general principles, but remember that some may not be as universal as they seem. Myers (1976: 77–8) observes, for example, that non-English (or non-European-language) native speakers may have trouble recognizing English words with vowels omitted. Ambiguous symbols and abbreviations should be eliminated immediately, followed by discussion until an alternative is found and adopted.

3.   *Symbols*: Once taught useful symbols, students may tend to overuse or use them imprecisely or inconsistently. Arrows, for example, should only be used for physical or abstract movement, not for any use of the word 'to', else a note like 'resp → change' might be read as 'our response is change' instead of the original meaning 'responded to change'. Myers (1976: 91–2) also mentions loose use of the 'from' ← and 'return' → arrows, and suggests practising on texts in which they can be used appropriately.

4.   *Simplification and synthesis*: if students are intimidated by long or complex sentences (Liu 1994), they may need more practice in

i.   deverbalization, to see through the grammar of the SL to the logical relations and dependencies. A few rounds of sight translation on specially chosen texts should help instill the habit of agile mental chunking and paraphrasing;
ii.   the use of graphic segmenting and subordinating devices like backslashes, brackets and indentation.

5.   *Numbers.* For precision in noting numbers, in the early stages, Seleskovitch and Lederer (2002: 29–30) recommend using texts with numbers cited only in the context of a clear argument, and asking only for orders of magnitude (26% > about a quarter; 58% > more than half, etc.). Soon, however, number-noting drills will be needed to practice getting the many less predictable figures that commonly occur in real life.

6.   *Cohesive structure and* links: All authors with teaching experience report that beginning students neglect links, relationships between ideas, or topic shifts, reciting successive ideas or information chunks one after the other without meaningful pauses or even logical structure, connected only by a series of 'and's, and sometimes an illogical or incorrect link that had to be guessed for lack of a note. Strikingly, students often ignore even clearly flagged and helpful signposts to structure (when the speaker explicitly says 'firstly, secondly, thirdly', for example).

It should be made clear that structure in the notes is not just a matter of fidelity – to record accurately the logic of the speech – but that it also has the important function of imprinting the development of the speech in the interpreter's memory (CC-5, Table 5.1). For this reason, the interpreter, *for her own purposes,* must go further than the speaker in recognizing *and imposing* structure. This point must be driven home while students are still doing structured training speeches, since on many 'natural' real-life speeches structure is less apparent, and it becomes harder to persuade sceptical students that ***extra*** structuring is needed when we process speech for interpretation, both as an aid to analysis and memory, and for more communicative delivery.

Students must never lose touch with the macrostructure or general thrust and intent of the speech (the ovals in our diagram in CC-5.1.3), maintaining an unfolding mental model of it while taking notes. This should be checked by regularly and explicitly questioning them – how many points did the speaker make? how many sections was the passage divided into? – and having them summarize the main point of each in just a few words, then spell out the logical links between them. Even after note-taking, students should be able to distinguish between main points, elaboration, examples, repetition, 'waffle', restatements and new points, asides….

In addition to clear logical links like 'but', 'because', 'therefore', 'although', speech is structured by more subtle markers ('Well…'., 'Now…', 'Anyway…', 'Of course…') or implicit changes of topic and emphasis that may not be signalled by any specific word in the original. To ensure coherent and rhetorically effective presentation, it is good practice to cue *all* such links and shifts with a note – usually a horizontal line followed by a clear link-word – *whether or not they were explicitly labelled in the original speech,* so that at delivery, they can marked at least by intonation, a pause or a change of pace.

In summary, pedagogy and feedback in the Coordination phase should focus mainly on *process*, using

i. **variations on the basic exercise** of note-taking from clear, structured medium-speed trainer speeches, and
ii. **instructor demonstration** (perhaps with stop-start and live commentary) to stress the primacy of active listening and mental structuring as a *prerequisite* for effective note-taking.

Remedial work on note-taking technique itself will be needed in parallel until students have distilled a set of techniques and devices that are a viable complement to active listening (the *process* objective for the end of Coordination) in cuing a complete and coherent version (the *product* objective). In product terms, feedback should focus on whether the output makes sense, and on its completeness and coherence, provisionally setting aside other characteristics, such as its linguistic or rhetorical quality.

6.4.4 The method and the individual

In teaching the Standard Method of note-taking we should clearly distinguish the basic principles strongly recommended for all – layout, economy, clarity, structure – and latitude for individual choices and preferences to be explored and experimented with. Apprenticeship as we understand it is a balance between passing

on know-how and letting each individual choose and adapt. Instructors can share tips and techniques developed over the years while respecting students' individual choices and where necessary, invoking the 'proof of the pudding'.

Principles of abbreviation should be presented, and suggestions can be made (sparingly) for abbreviations and symbols for common words and concepts, and sources of other possible symbols, making sure to explain the principle of *conceptual extension* – that words can be used to evoke whole semantic fields and associations – and the need to pin down the relevant meaning in context before making a note.

Also, encourage thinking in terms of synonyms, antonyms, conceptual associations, collocations, and lateral and outside-the-box thinking to help find expressive conceptual-level, deverbalized notes where necessary. Show how this helps defuse interference and clumsy literal translation, and encourage the use of sketches and pictures.

Students should now – and only now, when they are well into the Coordination phase – be encouraged to read a few good books on note-taking technique, from which they can cull additional useful tidbits, devices and symbols to integrate into their own practice. (See Further reading in CC-5.)

Finally, students can now start practising outside class in groups, after one or two supervised sessions to establish strict guidelines on choice and delivery of speeches, procedure and feedback (for detailed group practice guidelines, see CC-5 Appendix C.)

6.5　Experimentation through practice (late S1, early S2)

6.5.1　Focus: adaptation and flexibility

Speeches should now get longer, more varied and authentic, and on new, unfamiliar topics, and should regularly include some given not by familiar classmates, but by the instructor speaking at normal speed, or even by complete strangers with unpredictable speech patterns, live or on video. The emphasis now moves to **adaptation** of the standard note-taking principles to the student's own memory and thought processes, and to each new speech type, speaker and style. With experience of the variety of live discourse, the trainee realizes that the balance needs to be reset for each new speaker and speech. As of the Experimentation phase, classes can be organized as 'real' consecutive sessions.

6.5.2   The learning curve: student and class morale

The critical phase in mastering viable consecutive with notes continues and probably peaks as we move from artificial 'trainer' input to authentic speeches. Students may struggle and even flounder in this difficult period (which may last around two months), but a turning point should eventually come under converging pressure from three sides:

i.   *A clearly-stated intermediate objective*: Teachers must explicitly set **completeness** as an intermediate goal, with firm instructions to forget about style and elegance.
ii.   *Detailed and constructive feedback*: performances are recorded and played back, and students can see where notes got in the way, or some thought was needed.
iii. *Intensive practice* (in and out of class) *and variety*. Every new speech is different – students must eventually find the mix of listening, thinking and jotting down which captures most of the information without losing touch with the speaker's message.

Class morale is important. This may depend to some extent on the group dynamics and atmosphere within the class and the cohort. Teaching assistants, if available, can help by checking that group practice is going well and in a collegial and sharing atmosphere. Many students will now need intensive practice and feedback **working into B**, and everyone will need to find appropriate work partners. While avoiding too much micromanagement, those few students with highly sought-after combinations (e.g. English As) should be encouraged to spread themselves fairly and work with different groups and partners. Make sure also that students do regular targeted practice on speeches with *numbers*.

During this period, occasional **Sight Translation** introduces some variety without adding any challenge that is significantly new or different from consecutive, and the differences between the two modes can be instructive (see CC-6.3.3 and TG-3.3.5.2), but should not take up significant time before mid S2 (or whenever students have begun to master full-consecutive skills), when it should be resumed as a regular feature with increasing demands, both as a task in its own right (Sight Translation 'proper') and as preparation for SI, as explained in CC-6. For students who are at home with written text, Sight Translation can even be a morale-booster. But for interpreting, it only has value as practice for the real-life task if done with momentum, never sloppily or lapsing into slow and hesitant transposition. It is therefore best practised only under supervision in class, on appropriate materials (accessible content and standard written language as in 'airport nonfiction') until instructors are confident that this key characteristic of the

task – momentum – has been fully understood. Students can then practice it occasionally in their groups with a timer.

6.5.3 Pedagogical focus and class organization

The pedagogical focus in Experimentation is on putting together what has been taught so far and testing it on realistic material. Now more than ever, instruction must be process- rather than product-oriented (Gile 2009: 14–15). Trainees will need and expect more than mere comments on what was 'right' and what was 'wrong', or on their particular word choices or linguistic structures (Seleskovitch & Lederer 2002: 77). This is a major pedagogical challenge for the instructor, who will need some internalized model of the cognitive challenges involved, as well substantial experience and discernment, to be able to diagnose and remedy the problems experienced by the different individuals in the class (TG-2.5.8 ff. and TG-2.7).

Students will have different strengths and weaknesses and uneven mastery of different skills. The instructor's primary concern, then, when a trainee experiences an interpreting problem, is *why* the problem occurred and what fundamental *principles and processes* are involved. In the course of this module, the instructor should give each trainee very targeted, individualized diagnostic advice about what aspects need work and *how* exactly to work on them. In other words, do not stop at observation and correction, but move to **diagnosis** and **recommendations for treatment** ('3D feedback': TG-2.5.8).

From this point, most classes will be organized as sessions of 'real' consecutive (see next section). A complete 'script' for these sessions, which now begin to approximate real-life consecutive interpreting, is laid out in CC-5.6.4. After brainstorming, discussion of topic activation strategies, delivery and interpretation, feedback can be provided in several steps (specific points to look out for and provide feedback on at this stage are listed in the next section):

1. *Holistic self-evaluation:* The instructor asks the student who interpreted how he/she felt about their interpretation in general, and then probes for any specific areas in which the student is aware that there may have been a problem.

2. *Feedback by the instructor* (now after the student has completed the interpretation of the 2–5 minute speech or segment). The instructor offers overall comments, focusing on macrostructure and coherence, and specifically reinforces any particularly good aspects of the performance. Comments on *delivery* can be confined at this stage to the basics such as avoiding mumbling and backtracking, finishing sentences and making at least occasional eye contact with the audience.

3.   *Comparing notes – moderated error analysis*: The instructor leads the class in a moderated discussion of content errors in the interpretation. This discussion must be *structured* and *controlled*, both to keep control of class time and to make sure that students are prioritizing important problems over trivial ones. This can be done in one of two ways: the instructor can

i.   deliver the speech in her own words 'box by box' from her own notes, pausing just before or after each segment to make or invite necessary comments, or ask how the student (and classmates) noted tricky points; or

ii.   address the following categories of problem *in order*, inviting students to identify points in the interpretation that need improvement, based on the notes they took in a different colour pen:
   ✓   Meaning errors (major, then minor) that contradict the speaker's intended meaning, or logic, or common sense
   ✓   Significant omissions
   ✓   Missing or faulty links, logic, transitions, organization (discourse markers)
   ✓   Bizarre, awkward, clumsy, unacceptable TL (especially if working into A)
   ✓   Vagueness, wordiness, dilution, loss of precision
   ✓   Failure to mediate cross-cultural communication appropriately
   ✓   Anything else (e.g. technical terms, minor details, etc.). Do not spend too much time discussing these, but do check notes to see if note-taking was the source of the problem, and correct notes accordingly.

Proactive student participation in feedback is important, but can be balanced with more or less instructor focus and direction as necessary. For each error that is pointed out, the instructor should probe into the **underlying cause** of the error, in keeping with the principles of *process-oriented pedagogy* (Gile 1995/2009).

▶   *Listening & Analysis*: Check the interpreter's comprehension and analysis of the input speech by asking probing questions. If this was the source of the problem, explore further why the student failed to understand correctly: language deficiency, lack of background knowledge, slip of attention, failure to analyze… Probe as to whether the incorrect segment could have been reconstructed by thinking contextually and inferring plausible speaker meaning, or the problem avoided (for example by saying something more conservative, or more general, that would still be faithful to the speaker's position); or if the problem arose in production, simply through sloppy self-monitoring.

▶   *Note-taking*: Could the error be traced to a note-taking problem? (choice of *what* to note, *how* to note it, legibility, layout).

► *TL Production.* Check the interpreter's expressive resources, asking for different formulations and paraphrases of the segment in both SL and TL.
► Nerves? Distraction? Broken concentration? Misapportionment of attention (processing capacity?) etc.

4. *Feedback from/to the speaker.* Now (but not before, to avoid students sitting passively through the above feedback), the speaker (if s/he understands the TL) is asked to make any necessary, additional content corrections to the interpretation.

5. *Instructor sums up and gives strategic advice:* First, give an overall assessment to wrap up the feedback, being sure once again to *focus on what was positive*, so as to reinforce good habits and technique and mitigate the frustration level associated with error correction. Second, address strategic issues, drawing on examples from the interpretation to make *larger* points related, for example, to

• time management: too much time spent on minor details, too little on major ideas and logic?
• wordiness
• strategies for dealing with specific translation problems, like rhetorically important collocations, embedded cultural referents, irony, puns, etc.

The instructor can 'go around the room' to get more versions of tricky things.

Optional extras:

6. *Language enhancement:* Systematic language problems (fossilized L2 flaws) that did not affect the TL audience's ability to understand the interpretation clearly are not directly discussed in the analysis of the interpretation proper.

If the interpretation was into B, after the analysis of the interpretation some time can be spent on faulty L2. Have a native speaker point out specific language problems, with direct quotes from the interpretation, and have the interpreter self-correct if possible. The class can also offer other alternatives, to be checked by the native speaker. The native speaker can offer improved versions and explain why the original was not acceptable. But keep an eye on the clock – this is not the main focus and should not be allowed to take up too much time.

Similarly, questions of *translation* and *style* (choice of words) should not be a focus of feedback until the final phases of training – Consolidation and Polish – when enough technical control has been gained over the speed, topic, main message and general tone.

Expression and vocabulary stretching. Pick a few key statements or tricky things from the speech and take turns (go round the table) paraphrasing them exhaustively in TL.

7.   *Notes review and correction:* look at students' or instructor's notes on the projector and pick out good solutions and interesting tidbits, devices, symbols.

8.   *Second (improved) interpretation* (recommended occasionally, if necessary): Re-play the recording: – giving students an opportunity to hear it again and follow against their notes, to see what they didn't note as effectively as they could have; or if they wish, to take notes afresh – followed by either

   a.   *Complete interpretation,* by the original interpreter or a different student. This should now be shorter and faster (not more than 70% of time taken by original), with good delivery and less reliance on notes – all problems should now be fixed; or

   b.   *Summary interpretation* by the original interpreter or a different trainee, focusing on primary messages (see CC-4.2.4.1). How good are the trainees at identifying the headlines and conclusions? This should not take more than a third of the time taken by the original, but should cover all main points and logic of the argument clearly and succinctly – i.e. content focused AND expression concise.

Each student should get a recording of the original speech to listen to and check their own notes and recorded performances again after class.

Table 6.2 Time management in the consecutive class

The overall length of the speech and the length of each chunk for interpreting should be planned so as to allow each trainee to be the lead interpreter once per practice session, assuming interpretation by chunks of 3–3.5m. In practice, each round will take approximately 15–20 minutes, so that in a 2–2.5 hour class, each student in a class of six could act as both 'first interpreter' and 'second interpreter' at least once:

Speech/passage	3–3.5 minutes
Interpretation	3–5 minutes
Discussion	5 minutes

Plus (menu of options – *pick,* depending inter alia on available time):

Re-interpretation, relay interpretation, or instructor demo:	3–5 minutes
Listen to original passage again, from recording:	3–3.5 minutes
Notes review and correction [or appreciation]:	5 minutes
Language enhancement comments/drills:	5 minutes

For classes of 8 students, sessions may have to be extended to 2–3 hours if everybody is to have a turn. It is very difficult to maintain the level of concentration and energy required for 3 hours. For this reason, we do not recommend class sizes any larger than 8 students. In smaller classes of 3–6, students will benefit from more in-depth discussion and analysis of performances and more opportunities for practice and feedback; this is therefore probably the optimal class size for this kind of instruction. Otherwise, classes can be split or entrusted to TAs (those who are in teacher training especially, see 2.2.6 and 13.2.3) for certain exercises.

Note-taking technique: remedial and strategic feedback

In Experimentation students begin to extend their range while customizing, stabilizing and 'flexing' their note-taking method. As students customize the method, instructors need no longer 'correct' any note – a symbol, for example – that works consistently and reliably for a particular trainee, even if it has a different or opposite meaning for other interpreters, attending only to what *doesn't* seem to work. However, instructors will usually find that some principles and resources of the method are still under-exploited or mis-applied, or need more work:

i.   **Making sense**: In Experimentation, any residual gibberish, nonsensical statements, mouthing of words without understanding, or blind repetition must be proscribed and rejected once and for all.

ii. **Excessive note-taking** may still be a problem. Remedies include
     a. *Alternating exercises with and without notes*;
     b. *Prolonged sessions of note-taking* (2–3 hrs, for example in a mock conference[5]). Students will find that they note less, partly due to fatigue, yet no less efficiently since context builds up, enriching the mental model, which gradually substitutes for notes;
     c. *Emergency hands-on surgery*: replay the input passage sentence-by-sentence, and discuss with the student what needs to be noted down and how.

iii. **Structuring** – especially **links** and segmentation – for a more cohesive presentation that is more comfortable to follow.[6] Show students that all the work that goes into an accurate, complete capture of the information will be wasted rhetorically if the successive points are simply parroted out linked by 'and… and…and'….

iv. **Forward planning**: Students can now turn their thoughts to production where possible. For example, since linguistic structures vary between languages (and even between speakers), the order of input may not yield the most effective arrangement of notes for production of a natural TL version. Placing items in the box to anticipate more natural TL presentation may make for more comfortable, at-a-glance delivery, often for negligible effort (see e.g. Ilg 1982; Gillies 2005).

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5.   See 9.4.1.

6.   Peng (2009) found that trainees' consecutive renditions showed significantly less global coherence (as opposed to mere local links) than professionals' due to flattening of argument structure. Some authors (e.g. Jones 1998) propose a linguistic or discourse-analytic teaching approach to improve students' cohesion by making them aware of certain key links and relationships (cause and effect, temporal sequence etc.). Peng reports more progress in 'texturing' speeches among students who had been made aware of the coherence relations and received explicit guidance using a 'peer feedback tool' (Hartley, Peng, Mason and Perez 2004).

An example from German shows various strategies for capturing the successive phrases of input then restoring them in a different (English) order, either by noting in the same order but restoring on delivery (Strategy 1), or by going back to put a note in the right place for English order (Step 3 in Strategy 2), or by using a recall line (Strategy 3):

Table 6.3 Reordering for delivery in consecutive

Input:	Strategy 1	Strategy 2	Strategy 3
Gerne eröffnen wir heute mit Ihnen zusammen ('*Gladly we open/launch today with you together*')	[wait]	☺ tday //	☺
nach der ersten Runde der EPR 1993 ('*after the first round of the EPR in 1993*')	1st EPR 1993	☺ tday // 1st EPR 1993	☺ 1st EPR 1993
nun auch den dritten Zyklus ('*now also the third cycle*')	1st EPR 1993 ☺ tday // launch 3rd	☺ tday // launch 3rd EPR (1st EPR 1993)	☺ (1st EPR 1993) tday // launch 3rd
dieses wertvollen Instruments des policy learning ('*of this valuable instrument of…*')	1st EPR 1993 ⊦ ☺ tday // launch 3rd ✓ Pol learn tool	☺ tday // launch 3rd EPR (1st EPR 1993) ✓ Pol learn tool	☺ (1st EPR 1993) tday // launch 3rd ✓ Pol learn tool

Explanation of notes: // 'together' ; ☺ 'glad'; ⊦ 'since, after'.

Students will also increasingly see the benefits of noting in TL where possible (but see box in CC-5.3) and 'noting what you're going to say'.

v.   **Presentation** and **delivery** are not the main focus of the Experimentation stage – which is still a kind of workshop or laboratory – but they should not be allowed to slip too far below the standard achieved in Public Speaking, especially on easier speeches.

Good delivery obviously depends on the clarity of the notes, but also on how to use them. Students should start learning how to see whole boxes (idea sequences) at a time, look ahead and find links at a glance, and manage page-turning smoothly, for a more fluent and concise presentation, and begin to make eye contact.

Instructors can now steadily increase the **variety** of speeches and conditions (speed, coherence, length etc.), their realism, and their length (to 5–7 minutes). By the Consolidation phase, input material should have switched over completely to real speech recordings.

As of the last weeks of the Consecutive Experimentation module, **frequent tests with feedback** are strongly recommended. Detailed comments – if possible in writing – should be given to each student covering all aspects of their performance, including note-taking and delivery.

6.6   Consolidation (from early/mid S2 through S3)

6.6.1 The learning curve: resurfacing

If all goes well, by the end of Experimentation the students' note-taking technique will have crystallized and stabilized, quite suddenly freeing up enough working memory to recover their lost fluency, and even 'look up' and make eye contact without missing anything, to see the wood of the speaker's point beyond the individual trees, and now over a *wider range* of different types of speech and subject-matter, including some formal registers.

At this point it should become clear that, even when technique is mastered, real control and confidence in interpreting can only come with an understanding of the *subject matter, event and situation*. The additional knowledge that will be acquired in the coming year, with private study and intensive practice on realistic material in the target market domain(s), will help students to raise their consecutive performance to a professional level in the final semester.

Expertise is achieved through the progressive mastery – with availability and increasingly effortless mobilization – of **knowledge schemas** on the one hand, and **procedures** on the other (see 6.8.3.2). This frees up resources so that more attention can be paid to all processes, from analysis to production. With this increased control, the interpreter can offer better quality and comfort on routine speeches, but also handle more difficult material in different genres, ranging from fast and dense presentations of hard information, through more formalized language, including structured, legalistic argument, to literary, flowery or oratorical speech, and finally, to speeches which mix and alternate between these genres.

6.6.2 Consolidation: pedagogy and feedback

In Consolidation, attention must increasingly turn to the product. Students must now close the last gaps between their own work and a professional performance. In terms of skills, this means more control over the whole performance on each segment, reflecting the relative emphasis and priority given to different points, managing time and rhythm, and paying special attention to beginnings and endings. In terms of language, now that note-taking technique is in place students can

cash in the dividend of their rediscovered linguistic flair and fluency. But they must now devote extra efforts to *precision*, and aim to give a more faithful reflection of the exact implicit/explicit profile of the speech.

Skills: global control and coherence
First, coordination and control of the basic 'efforts' in the capture phase should be flexible enough by the end of the first year to free up time to occasionally jot down ideas for good turns of phrase in the output language (newly-acquired SI reflexes will help).

Second, full control over capture and noting should free the interpreter to recover the speaker's **style**: the higher, rhetorical dimension of speech that we are all sensitive to, but might have got lost in the technicalities and worries of learning to note the details of content and structure. Local effects of emphasis and contrast and affect – dashes of humour, gravity, irony, and other stylistic and oratorical devices – can be tagged in notes using smileys (emoji), expressive punctuation (?!), etc., and restored in TT, using whatever devices are spontaneous and natural to the target language, culture and participants' receptivity – for example, though regained control of pausing, rhythm and other prosodic effects, allusions and the throwaway line.

One possible advanced test of this mastery of the capture phase is the *resequencing exercise* (CC-4.2.4.2) – but this time, to be done with notes: presenting the message in a different order, not just within a 'box', at sentence level, which is routine, but at the level of whole ideas or paragraphs. The text must obviously be carefully chosen (and in practice, this technique must be used judiciously).

Precise language for fidelity
Pedagogy in the Consolidation stage must aim at tracking down and eliminating all the more-or-less-subtle slippages and distortions of meaning, dilution, vagueness or woolliness, mis-attributions, or collapsing of ideas that should be separate – which students may all too often try to gloss over or fudge. The same uncompromising attitude to unwarranted vagueness, obscurity, ambivalence, approximation and general fuzziness should be encouraged in practice groups.

Many simple – and quite innocent – problems arise at word level: for example, 'growth' is not always a synonym for 'development' (e.g. output growth may or may not be accompanied by human development); but students may only have one symbol (perhaps an up arrow) for these similar concepts, and not enough experience of international discourse to appreciate the difference.

Also, look out for the influence of **prejudice**, **bias**, ignorance,[7] '**schema override**' or 'too much knowledge and deduction', when the interpreter substitutes

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7.   General knowledge expansion should be proceeding apace in parallel, but some students will need more than others (world politics, geography, history, institutions…).

a preconceived idea for what the speaker really said (Taylor 1989; Chernov 1979/2002). Make sure the interpreter is adopting the speaker's position and tone towards the issues discussed without showing her own beliefs or judgment, consciously or unconsciously.

A related type of distortion is emotional **flattening** or **'sterilization'** of the speaker's tone and intention (a form of under-translation: CC-4.4.3.1). Students should be reminded of the value of using marks of mood, emphasis, contrast on and around items in their notes.

Tightening up precision in the Consolidation stage therefore means aiming to steer an exact course between under and over-translation, between excessive caution leading to vagueness, 'hazification' or dilution, and unwarranted over-emphasis or explicitation. Any hedging and deliberate vagueness by the speaker must be replicated exactly; but where the speaker is crystal-clear, or categorical, the interpreter must *not* introduce any hedging whatsoever. Slips in modality (e.g. 'might' vs. 'should' vs. 'must'), in particular, are a very common problem among students at this stage. In general theoretical terms, a good default rule of fidelity is to convey explicit and implicit meanings at the same strength of explicature or implicature (TG-12.2.2.5).

The more subtle shifts and distortions, or dilutions of meaning, as well as the value of clear structure, will need more than just reminders or exhortation by instructors: they must be revealed by playback and close scrutiny by the class – with the 'performers' going back to find the cause in their notes – and by methods such as **relay consecutive** (6.4.3). The relay interpreters then comment on the clarity of the first interpretation, which will usually show how more links, and more precision, could have increased both accuracy and presentation at each step.

Sharing and comparing notes
In general, it is very useful to have examples of good notes to share. If you use a pre-recorded speech, you can have multiple good note-takers (e.g. other instructors, advanced students, visiting professionals – even from previous years) take notes that you can share with the class.

As we near the end of the Consolidation phase – typically, in Semester 3 – the students' performance should be approaching professional levels, with the focus of feedback increasingly on the product, in terms of accuracy and completeness, but now also packaging and eventually, style. Students should now begin to have a fuller and more realistic understanding of what is meant by a 'quality' interpretation, what constitutes adequate performance in difficult conditions, and – as they will now be working intensively into B – the different stylistic expectations that we may reasonably have of work in each direction.

Residual errors or omissions due to a failure of comprehension, of concentration (attention management), or of note-taking technique, will usually be obvious to the student even without intervention by the instructor or her classmates, when she gets stuck or admits to a 'gap' or unclear segment in her notes. Often, however, we find serious distortions of the message that are much harder to pin down to a single cause, but result from cumulative minor flaws like imprecision, vagueness, logical short cuts or 'collapsing', simplifications and dilutions, or a poor choice of words, rhythm or tone.

6.6.3 'At the table': adapting to setting and environment

Consecutive, short or long, may be required in all kinds of situations, more or less convenient, and participants may be more or less disciplined, cooperative or accustomed to working with interpreters. Simply describing the main characteristics of different settings (public-service, legal, community, etc.) will not be enough to prepare trainees for this diversity, but simulations can be devised to explore and discuss some common issues, such as positioning, turn-taking and interrupting, summarizing when asked, being criticized or challenged, etc. On-site visits, though more difficult to organize for events in consecutive, will be very valuable, and students may also be entrusted with appropriate pro bono assignments (CC-11.3.5), preferably in tandem with a supervisor, where available.

6.6.4 Consecutive and new technology

New technologies occasionally emerge with potential for training and/or enhancing real-world performance. Orlando (2011)[8] describes the possibilities for interpreting of the 'Smartpen', a digital pen (originally invented by a US firm for use by secretaries) that can record a note-taking process synchronized with a film and soundtrack of the speaker. Playback can be paused, slowed and accelerated, and shows features of note-taking that cannot be seen in the product alone – for example, how interpreters often use a pause of a few seconds in the speech to go back and add to or adjust earlier notes. The notes are taken on 'micro-chipped' paper, so that tapping on a note can replay the corresponding segment of the source speech. This system could certainly be a very valuable aid to training in consecutive with notes (in well-endowed schools, see Chapter 13).

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8. See also http://aiic.net/page/6484/interpreting-training-and-digital-pen-technology/lang/1 (Accessed November 15, 2015).

For real-world professional use, in 1999 EU staff interpreter Michele Ferrari pioneered a new hybrid mode known as 'Simultaneous Consecutive', in which the interpreter takes notes while the speech is also recorded, then played through headphones, so that she can use *both* her notes and the replayed original speech simultaneously to interpret. Although this mode has not yet caught on widely in professional practice, one experimental study has suggested that it can improve performance, "as reflected in more fluent delivery, closer source–target correspondence, and fewer prosodic deviations" (Hamidi & Pöchhacker 2007:276). Orlando (2011) claims that the system offers potentially greater comfort, with more time for listening and anticipation and less stress in taking notes, and improved accuracy, as confirmed in a pilot study in young graduates – but at the price of poorer audience contact – though this could be remedied with training. This could potentially be a useful exercise in the SI–Coordination phase alongside our own training adaptation (see CC-8.3.3). A related system is currently being actively promoted as Sim-Consec™ (see e.g. Navarro-Hall 2012), but at the time of writing has not yet been widely tested in pedagogical applications (see Orlando 2014 for an overview).

6.7 **Polishing and advanced consecutive** (Year 2, S3-S4)

Last-mile consecutive training in the final semester should prepare students for professional practice in three ways (CC-5.8):

1. Raise awareness of **audience reception and user expectations** in the consecutive environment, focusing feedback on presentation, eye-contact and momentum (which should now benefit from the faster reactions – priorities, word-choice, etc. – developed for SI);
2. Initiate students to the **real-life conditions** of work 'at the table' but also in less comfortable positions (standing up, etc.), and to the role-management and other challenges of working in small groups, in close proximity to users and in a variety of settings, and generally coping with pressures typical of the consecutive environment;
3. Introduce and practise more advanced or complex 'mixed-mode' tasks, such as speeches for consecutive using media like PowerPoint, or mixed with sight translation;
4. Explore the possibilities and limits of **optimizing communication** in the consecutive setting (overcoming cultural gaps, correcting misunderstandings, etc.), and the interpreter's freedoms, constraints and responsibilities in this regard.

Mediation, optimization and the interpreter's role

The nature of fidelity (minimal or optimal) and the interpreter's freedom or initiative in pursuing it – when to explain or tone down, or correct a speaker's mistake, and so on – will come up naturally as of the first live exchanges in Initiation. The need to judge the appropriate degree of mediation and the risks and benefits of optimizing communication is in many ways more acute in the face-to-face settings of consecutive than in SI, as are the options for doing so (consulting the speaker, for example).

From our very first attempts at interpreting (or translating orally in a live situation) in Initiation, cognitive (i.e. including cultural) gaps will appear, which the most motivated novices may spontaneously try to bridge in various ways. A first overview of the issues is therefore provided in CC-5.8.

However, the ability consciously to adjust parameters, and make strategic choices among degrees of mediation as appropriate to setting-specific norms and situations, will be beyond the novice's reach before s/he has acquired and integrated the basic skills and achieved some control over process – and some 'optimizing' strategies require an expert command of language, knowledge and intercultural competence. Students must be made aware that the gaps of understanding between communicators are never just linguistic, and of the diversity of situations they may meet in reality; but they must also have a clear understanding of the interpreter's *default* role and its legitimate and possible variations and flexibilities. Role-related issues will come up from the very outset and throughout the course, becoming more subtle with increasingly realistic materials and simulations of authentic encounters. Pedagogically it will be less useful to try and distinguish 'linguistic', 'cognitive', 'cultural' or 'social' mediation than to find and simulate situations where the interpreter might have to be more cautious or more enterprising, with the benefits and risks involved. In the final polishing stages of the course, as the basic technical challenges are gradually being mastered, awareness of the more subtle mediation issues and the options for dealing with them can be developed through simulations and discussion of case studies. This part of training is described under Professionalism (CC/TG-10), since guidance on role and mediation will involve showing how the key ethical principles of fidelity, impartiality (or neutrality), and transparency (including equal confidentiality), essential to the trust interpreters must enjoy to do their job, can be upheld in different real-life situations.

6.8   Research and modelling

In the absence of a body of research findings that could tell us how to train inter-preters in consecutive, our own proposals reflect our understanding of the process from three combined sources:

i.   observational studies of professional consecutive with notes, from which we can try to 'reverse-engineer' the process;
ii.   cognitive models of human memory and the management of attentional capac-ity in coordinated tasks; and, last but not least,
iii. the recommendations of experienced trainers and practitioners.

In CC-5.1.3 we presented a simple model of consecutive interpreting in two phases, capture (listening, analysis, memory/noting) and delivery (speaking while glancing at notes). This simple heuristic for expository purposes should not be particularly controversial. For a deeper understanding, a snapshot of contributions from these different sources is provided below.

6.8.1 Observational research: the role of notes

Empirical studies of consecutive based on comparisons of recordings and notes, followed by theoretical extrapolation, are few and far between. Two of the most salient studies, nearly forty years apart and reflecting different schools and doc-trines of note-taking, are reported here. Seleskovitch (1975) studied 12 professional consecutive interpretations of the same two speeches. Instead of a more or less uniform system, she found wide variations, as if meaning had taken different routes through the minds and notes of each interpreter. Some patterns were common: notes consisted mostly of short or abbreviated words (80%), in either or both lan-guages, with some symbols, arrows and simple pictures. Abbreviations were used mostly for high-frequency items (*must, want, be able,* or the repeated topic of the speech), symbols for common items like *programme, meeting, solution.* Arrows were used flexibly, by all interpreters, for reference or repetition, for example. Some used onomatopeia ('bzz' for a fly), or simple pictures (1975: 147–155). Some classes of items, however – mainly proper nouns, numbers, and technical terms – were always noted. This suggested that:

a.   Notes are not an exhaustive encoding of the input, but are selective; renditions show that much of the message is not noted but remembered.
b.   Apart from some common principles – arrows, pictures (though Seleskovitch hardly mentions layout) – the choice of words, language, abbreviations and symbols is largely individual.

c.　Background knowledge and familiarity with the topic play a key role; notes become sparser as the speech or meeting unfolds.

d.　Note-taking varies with the 'texture' of the speech: 'nuggets' like names, numbers and technical terms must be noted; abstract, discursive passages need more logical analysis; while descriptive passages can be remembered with imagination and the odd sketch.

e.　Notes are not just a script to be read off. The act of note-taking seemed to enhance memory: some interpreters hardly looked at their notes at all during production.

As Seleskovitch says, these first observations of the relationship between source text, notes and rendition in actual practice were in many ways unexpected and counter-intuitive. This was a foundational contribution, simply by virtue of showing that consecutive with notes was not word-for-word shorthand, rather as Chernov's (1979) simple dual-track recordings of SI in Moscow showed that simultaneous interpreters do not have to fit their rendition into the speaker's pauses.

However, as various authors have pointed out (e.g. Gile 1990; Albl-Mikasa 2008) the cognitive explanation that Seleskovitch extrapolated from the data was rather speculative, serving mainly to reinforce her own intuitions:

> J'ai donc cherché à vérifier le thème central de mes réflexions et de mon enseignement, à savoir que l'interprétation ne procède pas par transcodage mais impose au passage d'une langue à une autre une étape intermédiaire pendant laquelle le signifiant disparaît alors qu'interviennent des mécanismes cérébraux non linguistiques.[9]　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Seleskovitch 1975: 7)

For most of the history of interpreter training, this theoretical position, associated with the Paris school (ITT) has contrasted with calls for a note-taking method that stays closer to the forms and structures of the original, represented chiefly by the 'Heidelberg system' (Matyssek 1989), and today the pendulum may be swinging back to this approach.

Note-taking practice and user expectations have probably evolved over the years. Ilg recalls that the 'old guard' often performed consecutive as a "brilliant summary or mere paraphrase based on minimal notes", but that Rozan himself took full notes, though he rarely looked at them, relying mostly on memory (Ilg and Lambert 1996: 71). Ilg also observes that trainers' attitudes to teaching note-taking have ranged from 'sceptical' (Thiéry 1981) through 'neutral and sketchy'

9.　"I have therefore sought to substantiate the central theme of my reflections and my teaching, i.e. that interpretation does not take place through transcoding, but that the shift from one language to another necessarily requires an intermediary stage, during which the signifier disappears, while non-linguistic brain mechanisms take place" (tr. Albl-Mikasa 2008).

(Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989) to 'fundamental', for Matyssek (1989), who proposed an extensive system using multiple combinatorial symbols.

Authors from Heidelberg have recently pointed out that the Rozan (1956) and Matyssek (1989) approaches are not that different, stressing rather the way the notes are used. According to Ahrens (2005), the two systems share multiple common points, including: the rejection of shorthand; the principle that a note-taking system must be language-independent (adaptable to any language pair), individual (adapted from a recommended system), simple, economical, clear, unambiguous and quick to read; and important features such as vertical structure and indenting, signs for emphasis and negation, flexible use of arrows, horizontal lines between ideas, and the use of well-known abbreviations and symbols. Rozan attaches more importance to indenting, while Matyssek proposes a wider use of symbols to represent both actual words and concepts (word families), and a margin on the left side of the page for "links and the agent of each meaning unit".

The main difference lies in Matyssek's greater preference for symbols, including complex combinations, which authors like Ilg and Seleskovitch fear may lead students "to perceive [it] as an interpreter's shorthand, and give up listening to the message" (Ilg and Lambert 1996: 72), although Matyssek expressly stresses the importance of relying on memory, and even presents examples of practitioners' notepads showing only 20–40% of content encoded on the page in the form of notes (Ahrens 2005: 60).

Albl-Mikasa (2008), also of the Heidelberg school, studied consecutive performances by five students trained in the Matyssek system (Seleskovitch's subjects were professionals, but were also trained at her own institution, ESIT). Albl-Mikasa challenges Seleskovitch's assumption that focusing on the content (or the ideas) rather than the words requires complete abstraction from the linguistic forms, or 'deverbalization', and joins Kirchoff in observing that this does not require "a degree of abstraction equivalent to a universal language", merely "a *common* reference system for *two* different natural languages." (1979: 125, cited in Albl-Mikasa 2008).

Albl-Mikasa focuses on the interpreter's notes as an intermediate text which, albeit fragmentary (elliptical), remains quasi-linguistic and follows micro-propositional lines, essentially encoding 'explicatures' as defined in Relevance Theory (see 12.2.2), i.e. explicit propositions that, according to Albl-Mikasa, are then enriched and disambiguated by the interpreter using her memory of the speech. The notes are thus close to van Dijk and Kintsch's (1983) 'textbase', to be fleshed out for production based on the remembered 'situation model'. Research on text recall suggests that representations at these two levels are built up interactively and in parallel, and that listeners will attend more to one or the other level depending on task goals and conditions (Graesser et al. 1994: 376–7). But for interpreting, unlike general comprehension, the task is not so much to build a global representation – which may

mean subsuming a lot of detail into macropropositions (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983; Mackintosh 1985), but to fix and render the entire detailed content of the speech, which require using textbase and situation model together.

In Albl-Mikasa's view, then, the interpreter's best strategy is to capture the content at a propositional level (also because this takes less processing effort) and flesh it out (enrich, disambiguate) for production using the memorized mental representation built up during the speech (situation model), while *also* falling back on the notes as a complementary memory support. In her corpus, she finds that the notes are in the same propositional form as the target text utterances, though less explicit, and that their expansion for delivery seems to mirror two kinds of reduction for noting: *ellipsis* (omitting source text units and transferring selected, often central content words from the source text to the notation text), and to a lesser extent, *restructuring*, which "substitutes non-source text structures for source text structures, [….] mostly within phrase or clause boundaries and […] in connection with routine communicative formulas, since the target language has a typical way of expressing such standardized phrases" (216–7). Thus according to Albl-Mikasa, the renditions that Seleskovitch (1975) describes as 'completely deverbalized' are simply enrichments to the explicit content: "…many cases of alleged meaning-based, i.e. non-form-based interpretation, are simply a matter of idiomatically rendering the *same* underlying proposition into the source, notation and target texts. This is true even for cases where there are additions, omissions, simplifications or compensatory and repair elements. It seems that to 'note the idea rather than the words' does not mean that one has to give up the propositional form and move to a (deverbalized) level distant from the text" (2008:24).

Albl-Mikasa lists the advantages of a note-taking strategy that stays close to the micro-propositional structure of the source text as follows: less processing cost; less risk of losing source text input (Gile 2009); and keeping better track of certain linguistic structures and expressions, which is 'important in translation' (see Ilg 1980:118, 124). Retrieval was also found to be better when there was a propositional and surface structure match between retrieval cues and memorized chunks or units (2008:225).

These recommendations from proponents of the Heidelberg system for a more 'linguistic', structural method of note-taking have been echoed elsewhere in recent training literature. Gillies, for example, suggests that "for the purposes of note-taking" an "idea" be defined as "a Subject-Verb-Object group" (Gillies 2005:37).

Ilg and Lambert (1996) also observe that the appropriate quantity and type of notes will vary widely for *different settings,* lying somewhere between these extremes, with a few more symbols than Rozan's recommended 20, but 'within reasonable limits', as proposed by such authors as Gran (1982/5) or Becker (1972).[10]

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10. See Ilg and Lambert (1996) for references.

This advice seems sensible in view of the variety of speech types, occasions and expectations in real life, and the widely-perceived risk of students getting caught up in a coding system instead of actively listening and building up a memory of the message.

Reading Albl-Mikasa (2008) alongside Seleskovitch (1975), we may indeed be seeing a change in fashion that reflects a real shift in the nature of discourse and/or user expectations, as Ilg and Lambert (1996) suggest. The more recent study stresses "the requirement for a complete, detailed rendering […;] in interpreting we often find not so much a cultural transfer from one culture into another, but experts discussing matters against a *shared social and technical background,* [so…] the target text is not an independent product but generally closely related to the source text" (2008: 225).

As we have seen, however, proponents of both methods agree that whatever the system used, it should not prevent the interpreter from focusing on and processing ideas rather than words. This discussion therefore confirms our view that students can and should be taught the main features and use of a method of note-taking that is powerful enough to record reliably the propositional structure and content (explicatures) of a speech, including details, nuances, emphasis as and when necessary, that is capable of being customized to their needs and used flexibly according to the occasion and 'specifications' for the consecutive service – all this **provided that** they understand that active listening must never slacken during the capture phase, in order to build up the mental model that will be needed on delivery to flesh out this elliptical body of notes into a full, faithful and convincing rendering of the speech.

The only possibility to evaluate the dynamics of the note-taking process itself is to find a way to capture notes and speech simultaneously, as some instructors have now done using overhead projectors, transparent paper and digital pens (see 6.6.4), or by video-recording the interpreter at work and comparing the recording with the speech from which notes were taken. In a painstaking empirical study, Dörte Andres (2002) video-recorded 14 students and 14 professionals taking notes from a speech, noted the exact second when each element was spoken in the original, appeared in the notepad, and was spoken by the interpreter, then put together scripts of the original speech and the interpretation on the same sheet of paper, with the notes in between, making it possible to visualize and study the links and evaluation the qualities and defects of the performance.[11]

Andres' conclusions confirm previous work on points such as the time-saving value of fixed rules for abbreviation and a core set of symbols, the importance of noting links for cohesion, the fact that structuring, prioritization and layout of elements on the page helps both comprehension and delivery, and that noting

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11. http://aiic.net/page/6484/interpreting-training-and-digital-pen-technology/lang/1 (Accessed November 15, 2015).

stylistic or 'rhetorical effects' helps reproduce them. She adds that the lag (what we call 'Ear-Pen Span') can vary with the time taken for things to be understood, and with individual habit and preference, but with the risk of omissions when this lag is longer than about 7 seconds. Andres also observes how 'discontinuous noting' – i.e. noting elements in a different order to the order they are presented by the speaker, or in practice, going back and adding something to your notes from a previous section – can be helpful in structuring and completing the information for delivery. (See 'Forward planning' in 6.5.3 above.)

6.8.2 Consecutive and memory

Cognitive scientists have identified various different kinds of memory (see Table 6.4) that come into play in complex mental and linguistic activity (see also Further reading at the end of this chapter).

Table 6.4 Our multiple memories

Immediate (echoic) memory: retains sounds or images for a few seconds.
Working memory (WM): the central workshop for ongoing mental activity, where decoded current input is processed with material from long-term memory to generate interpretations, solutions and decisions for action. (Cowan has called this memory "the interface between everything we know and everything we can see or do" [1993: 66]). WM draws on all the other kinds of memory, but has limited processing capacity.
'Long-term' memory, from a few minutes (if we include medium-term) to decades, has been subdivided as follows:
• *Semantic (declarative, explicit):* 'knowing what' – explicit knowledge organized in schemas • *Procedural (implicit):* 'knowing how' – unconscious, usually sensori-motor action sequences or procedures, like riding a bicycle, or making grammatical sentences in one's native language • *Episodic:* memory for life experiences, events and situations, including anything striking that has 'left a memory' (French *souvenirs*). Thus the *experience* of having processed speech and derived a message that has changed your perception, albeit slightly and as recently as a few minutes ago, may be considered an effect of episodic memory.

The term 'working memory' (WM) describes the active core of our mental activity, a busy workshop of flexible but limited capacity in which we process what we are currently seeing, hearing, and experiencing against our existing knowledge, assumptions and past experiences. Whether casually thinking or focusing on a specific mental task, our minds follow various learned or habitual procedures, generating representations, interpretations, solutions, decisions, blueprints for producing utterances, and all the other preludes to action.

To process speech, we decode the linguistic input and interpret it with reference to what we see, hear and remember, drawing (mostly in a fast unconscious process) on various other parts of memory, with shorter or longer spans, where information is thought to form associated structures for easy retrieval. This information will include

i.   the relatively recent record of meanings, sensations, images or words from a speech we have been attending to, known as a 'discourse model';
ii. longer-established knowledge, more or less organized in structures known as schemas (semantic memory); and
iii. personal memories (episodic memory) – all of which are constantly scanned and drawn upon by our Working Memory to make sense of input in each new situation.

When interpreting, we draw on the recent *episodic* memory of *understanding* what was said, while it is still fresh in our minds. But this partly affective memory of the understanding experience, while essential, is notoriously unreliable for structure, detail and unfamiliar content. To recover what we need for a full professional rendition, it must be supplemented by some additional 'prosthesis' such as external memory in the form of notes.

Talking about 'verbal memory' can cause confusion, because in the context of interpreting, our natural memory for the *words* we hear often has to be suppressed, to let us think about how to express their meaning in another language. Some meaningful *representation*[12] of what we have heard, at least, such as van Dijk and Kintsch's (1983) textbase and/or situation model (5.2.3), must remain long enough to be processed, and to be checked against monitored output. But this is different and separate from the acoustic and formal properties (sound, spelling) of the words and sentence structures themselves. Neuro-imaging studies have shown that an entirely different part of the brain lights up when a subject is asked to think about the shape and sound of a word, or its semantic representations (Carter 1998: 149[13]).

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12. Space precludes detailed discussion here, but such representations must be at least semantic, probably pragmatic; with 'tags' indexing each proposition for evidentiality, strength, mood, as the speaker's own or an attributed belief, etc. (see e.g. Setton 1999, 2003b).

13. "When you see a word you may see it as a word – that is, as a component of language – or it may act as a trigger for the concepts it represents. In each case a different part of the brain comes into play." Brain scans show completely different regions being lit up as subjects simply hear a word, or consider what other words it relates to; or between thinking about how many syllables a word has and thinking about what it means (Carter 1998: 149).

Even if we can't forget all the actual words and structures of speech we are processing for meaning, as interpreters we must clearly not let that memory interfere with thinking of the most natural and idiomatic way of expressing the same ideas in the target language. Researchers studying the bilingual brain, the verbal dimension of working memory and the effects of auditory feedback on interpreting have generally agreed that some selective suppression must be developed for successful interpreting (Paradis 2004; Williams 1995; Gernsbacher and Shlesinger 1997).

Our working memory can rapidly and easily *access* 'emotional' memories of a strong or recent experience, and also, it seems, huge amounts of semantic and declarative information (such as language resources), provided they are appropriately structured. However, it has strictly limited capacity for the input it can *process* together at any one time (to deal with immediate problems). This constraint has been the focus of another line of research on interpreting.

6.8.3 Attention and processing capacity

To appreciate the challenges novices face, it helps to understand how effort is distributed through the task and where attention to different parts of it – listening, noting, analysing – might conflict, especially while the skill is being learned. Consecutive comprises two phases, which we have called **capture**, as the interpreter listens and takes notes, and **delivery**, which should be fluent, accurate, complete and communicative, addressing and engaging the audience as if the interpreter were the original speaker.

6.8.3.1 *The Effort Model of Consecutive Interpreting*
Drawing on cognitive psychology in the information-processing tradition (e.g. Shannon and Weaver 1949; Kahneman 1973), Gile (1995/2009) has modelled interpreting as a balancing of several types of effort: listening/analysis, memory (with note-taking, in consecutive), production and coordination. In consecutive, four efforts are competing in the first phase, three in the second – approximately as shown in this diagram (adapted from Gile 2009: 175–179).

Phase 1 (capture)		
Speaker-paced	1. Listening/analysis 2. Short-term memory 3. Note-taking	4. Coordination
Phase 2 (delivery)		
Interpreter-paced		1. Remembering (LTM) 2. Note-reading 3. TL Production Rendition

The capture phase appears to be more demanding: the speech is being heard and understood for the first time, at a speed for capture that is imposed by the speaker, therefore with a greater risk of capacity overload, and a high risk of failure if a clear and concise note – a symbol, say – is not ready to hand (1995: 178–183). The key to the task is *coordination*, clearly facilitated by prompt access to a toolkit of notes. The delivery phase appears much easier: there is self-generated pressure for momentum, but no external pacing, and the tasks to be coordinated are already partly rehearsed (input processed on first pass, TL formulation on which a start has been made), although performance obviously depends heavily on what can be recovered.

However, as Gile has gone some way to acknowledging in his revised account (Gile 2009), this competition between efforts is not as rigid as might be assumed from the model taken at face value. And indeed, several sources in cognitive psychology seem to concur that cognitive load can be reduced more generally in various ways.

6.8.3.2 *Reducing cognitive load: knowledge and procedural skills*

Cognitive load is not a fixed cost indexed to the length of SL input chunks (words or sentence length); and it can be significantly reduced. Early memory research suggested that only 7 (plus or minus 2) 'items' could be held in memory, but the author famous for this finding (Miller 1956) recognized that the amount of information contained in an 'item' is quite elastic, and expertise research appears to confirm this:

> Acquired knowledge and skill in a specific domain can dramatically change the normal limits of cognitive processing [...] Working memory can be extended beyond STM with acquired skilled memory, anticipatory processing can circumvent limits set by simple reaction time, and recognition processes can identify relevant information and patterns during brief exposures. (Ericsson and Simon 1993: lii)

> [The size of chunks in Working Memory] is a function of prior knowledge [...]; because of their schemas in long-term memory, experts can process more efficiently by bringing larger information chunks into working memory.   (Clark 2008: 82)

In short, two mechanisms can circumvent limits on working memory (see also TG-2.6.1):

i. **Schema** acquisition, which allows us to chunk information into meaningful units;
ii. Automation of **procedures** – in this case, speech analysis, note-taking, and language transfer skills.

Schemas are cognitive structures that make up our knowledge base in long-term memory, and permit us to treat multiple elements as a single element. They are

acquired over a lifetime of learning, and may have other schemas contained within themselves, in a kind of 'Russian doll' structure. "As familiarity with a domain is gained, the need to devote attention to the required processes is reduced. Gradually, they become more automated, freeing cognitive resources for other activities. This process of automation is the second major learning mechanism after schema acquisition and affects everything learned, including schemas themselves […] Without automation, performance is slow, clumsy and prone to error" (Sweller 1994: 298).

Performance in an expert task that relies heavily on working memory – like interpreting – depends both on how rich, organized and available the most relevant schemas are, and on the quality and speed of retrieval, comparison and analysis ('procedures'). Expertise in a particular task comes from optimizing the schemas and procedures that it requires – organizing relevant and useful schemas, and installing procedures, i.e. habits of analysis of incoming speech, mental paraphrasing to stimulate retrieval of equivalent expressions in another language, or quasi-reflex placement of notes on a page – until they are internalized and partly automatic, that is, ingrained in procedural memory (TG-2.5.3 and 3.2.4.2)

In addition to analysis and deverbalization, then, schema construction and procedure automation emerge as two major goals of interpreter training, allowing the trained, expert interpreter to 'bypass' the bottleneck of working memory.

6.8.3.3 *Distributing effort between capture and delivery*
The quality of a consecutive interpretation – in particular its fluency and clarity – depends largely on the work that has been done in the capture phase. The more thoroughly the speech has been captured, the better the support for delivery, and the more attention is left free to devote to communicative and stylistic aspects of production.

However, the optimal distribution of certain tasks between phases might vary for other reasons, such as language direction (C/B into A, or A into B), or the type of speech:

i.   *Directionality:* In consecutive from A to B, effort saved in the capture due to the comprehension bonus (native-language input) should be used to start thinking of and noting words and phrases in TL, to make up some of the production deficit (in the acquired language) in delivery.[14]

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14. Albl-Mikasa (2008: 226, note 2) lists the main authors who recommend that students note more in the source language (SL), the target language (TL), or one's mother tongue, as follows: more in SL: Ilg (1988: 11); Gile (1991: 22); more in TL: Herbert (1952: 36); Rozan (1956: 15); Déjean le Féal (1981: 83); Laplace (1990: 374); […] a mix of the two: Seleskovitch (1975: 158, 161); van Hoof (1962: 71); Kirchhoff (1979: 123); Thiéry (1981: 110); mother tongue: Matyssek (1989: 138).

ii.   *Speech texture or genre:* Most conference discourse is a mixture of discursive argument and information, with some stylistic and rhetorical effects. The quantity and type of notes will vary with the speech texture (as well as subjective interpreter-specific factors). Symbols will be vital to capture a fast economic report, but less useful for a eulogy or an obituary. In some speeches or segments, when the reasoning is particularly original or unexpected, listening and analysis will be everything, while note-taking will be negligible – a sketch or word to mark an entire passage that has been experienced affectively or pictorially – while a colourful verbal style might justify jotting down complete words to prepare an equivalent performance in TL. But when the input is informationally dense, or highly original (requiring thought and analysis), finding a concise and reliable note will represent a sudden large local load, and planning future formulation in the capture phase may be an unaffordable luxury.

Such variations, often within the same speech segment, will call for nimble shifts in the distribution of efforts between listening/analysis, note-taking and production planning.

The strategic balance of efforts in consecutive may also be re-adjusted with practice and experience as the load from some components lightens with improved language proficiency and knowledge. Regular practice in SI will make anticipating TL production in consecutive second nature, resulting in more relaxed and polished delivery.

6.8.4 Technique, process and product in consecutive

To complete this short theoretical section, let us summarize what we have learned from observation of professional consecutive with notes, and what we can infer with the help of cognitive science, about the abilities required for good consecutive, the mental processes and efforts involved, and the nature and function of consecutive notes.

Good consecutive requires

► a combination of language competencies (passive and active), knowledge (general and local) and skills (listening/analysis, note-taking and public speaking);
► appropriate working conditions (preparation, presence, visibility);
► the ability to coordinate listening/analysis and note-taking, then speaking and referring to notes, reliably and flexibly, as adapted to one's own favoured technique and variations in the style of speakers and meetings, subject matters and user preferences.

In terms of mental processes and loads:

1. In the capture phase, the global cognitive load to be managed can be markedly relieved, and efficiency increased, in proportion to the schemas available and the automaticity of some of the procedures for noting and language transfer. 'Schemas' correspond roughly to our knowledge – 'context' in the widest psychological sense, including awareness of the situation – and 'procedures' correspond to acquired and internalized skills.

2. The efficiency or success of the delivery phase – the product that reaches the user – depends on the work done in the capture phase (memory and supporting notes), and critically, on active language resources and speaking skills (tips for enhancement are given in the next chapter).

3. Coordination between listening, note-taking and forward planning must be very flexible to adapt to the variations of speech genre, density and style found in real-life discourse. More planning of production in the capture phase may be advisable when working into B.

In this way, language, knowledge and skills all contribute to maintaining an optimal balance between efforts.

6.9 Summary

This chapter has offered suggestions for teaching and feedback at each stage of training in professional consecutive interpreting as described in our Complete Course (CC-5), with some theoretical background, and the fruit of our own experience on the ups and downs of student morale, to help instructors understand the cognitive challenges facing students at each turn.

However, to suggest that each stage corresponds to a specific challenge or problem would clearly be too schematic and unrealistic: students progress at different speeds and the rate of progress, type of attention and choice of materials must always be adapted to perceived needs.

Instructors may teach in institutions with different traditional attitudes toward teaching note-taking, in particular. Our choice is to teach a full system for capturing the structure, tone, style, rhetorical impact and communicative intent of a speech, as well as every detail of its informational content, with the overriding caveat (and constant reminders) that the secret of good consecutive lies first and foremost in active, analytic listening as a prerequisite to forming the memory, and taking the judicious and effective notes, that together will support a fluent and accurate rendition. This approach must be cultivated and consolidated by returning where necessary to exercises without notes, refreshing the habit of analysing

and imposing structure on the discourse, and varying speech types and genres for variety, while following a steady progression in terms of demands on the product.

In addition to practising more publicly at mock conferences, during the last semester students should where possible be exposed to the reality of consecutive on the market, by observing real meetings where professionals are interpreting consecutively, or doing selected pro bono assignments, under supervision and with full briefing and debriefing, and by mounting simulations and role-play in class.

Training in consecutive is excellent preparation for SI, but *linguistic readiness*, both passive and active, will be much more severely tested in the booth, especially into B. We therefore recommend that students qualify for access to SI training either in a rigorous Midpoint Exam (3.4) or on the basis of continuous assessment. The theoretical and actual potential for B-language enhancement is addressed in the next chapter.

See also Further reading in CC-5.

Language, knowledge and working into B

7.1 Introduction and overview

7.1.1 Language and knowledge in interpreter training

In founding the new profession, the first trainers had to demarcate conference interpreting from teaching languages (or substantive, subject matter knowledge): learning to interpret should start where language learning and a university degree left off, and students should work on their languages and general knowledge in their own time. Today, special classes on subjects like law or economics are routinely offered, and the need for some supervised, directed language enhancement in the course has been widely acknowledged. This chapter explains (in 7.2 and 7.4 respectively) how explicit language and knowledge enhancement (LKE) can and should be woven into conference interpreter training.

Helping students with language does *not* justify lowering standards at admission, since skills training cannot even begin without solid language proficiency, and there is a limit to the amount of improvement that can be expected in the one or two years available. But in our experience, virtually all student interpreters worldwide will need or benefit from significant language enhancement. Expression can always be enriched, even in an A language; in C languages, the range and depth of comprehension usually need to be consolidated and expanded, and for interpreters working mainly or only into A (as in the EU), there is increasing pressure to offer multiple C languages.[1] But most of all, students need help in raising the expressive quality, reliability and flexibility of their B, for consecutive but especially for SI into B ('Bsim'), which is now increasingly in demand.

Language enhancement needs will vary between individuals, but also between regions, markets and language combinations, because of different local student profiles and demands for SI into B. In Europe, there has traditionally been a larger pool of well-read and well-travelled candidates with multilingual exposure from childhood, but some emerging markets, like China, have until recently been relatively closed. Students in (or from) these countries may have hardly or never left their home country but will have to work bi-actively, which means intensive

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1. See also TG-14.3.2 on further training to add or upgrade languages.

in-course B-language enhancement both for production and for comprehension, because of limited cultural contact. A strong L2 acquired mainly in school and through personal study is always impressive, but still prone to splinter under the stress of interpretation.

Students' LE needs will also vary depending on their experience of working and socialising in a second-language environment. Many keen and gifted students have become competent interpreters without the advantage of a multilingual childhood, and any programme worth its salt should be able to train all candidates with potential, not just the 'naturals'. The hands-off stance of early training models towards language will not suffice: in addition to regular into-B interpreting classes, they will often need many weekly hours of tailored LE classes and deliberate practice (TG-2.6.2). CC-7 sets out the specificity and goals of LKE for interpreting students and describes a wide range of exercises and practice methods for language and knowledge enhancement both in and out of class, and for work individually, with a coach, in pairs or in groups.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a huge market, but the literature does not provide much help at these high levels of proficiency (Brecht 2002: xii), and the kind of language skills needed for interpreting are quite specific (CC-7.2.1). As in other areas of interpreter training, we must devise our own pedagogy, drawing on but not limited by relevant experience elsewhere.

As the course progresses and students apply their language skills to authentic interpreting tasks, language and knowledge increasingly interact.[2] It therefore seems more apt to speak of Language and Knowledge Enhancement (LKE) to describe the process in which students prepare for every class or mock conference by finding and studying background on the speaker, topic or event in their languages, actively anticipating the content, making a glossary of terms and expressions, and priming them for interpreting. Domains that are part of general knowledge for interpreters, and if necessary, more specialized areas targeting a large local market sector, should be offered separately in dedicated modules (7.4).

7.1.2   The directionality debate: ideals and reality

In Section 7.3 we discuss the prerequisites for successful into-B interpreting, and some pedagogical specificities of training interpreters to work into the B language.

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2.   "[P]roficiency at the level of educated native speaker in a professional context can be demonstrated only when the user has the relevant professional knowledge [...] a speaker at a high level of proficiency must have a professional background or profession about which to conduct discourse at this level; [...] in other words, language alone is not sufficient to achieve a high level of proficiency" (Malone et al. 2004: 4).

The debate on directionality – especially, the question of whether interpreters should work (or work better) from or into their native language – is as old as SI, but has been influenced by politics and economics as much as by scientific arguments.[3] Diplomatic interpreters often work mainly into the foreign interlocutor's language (their own B), a practice that was elevated to a principle in the Soviet Union (Denissenko 1989); and for other employers, interpreters working bi-actively or even from C into B may make for smaller, locally-available and therefore cheaper teams.

Schools must train interpreters in some combinations to work into B in all modes, for the simple reason that too few non-natives who understand these languages are available to meet market needs.[4] Opponents of SI-into-B see this as a temporary historical necessity, and argue for SI only into A wherever possible because of the superior linguistic quality of the output. But this is somewhat simplistic. As discussed in 7.3.1 below, there are situations – perhaps more than in the past, with changing user expectations and other factors – where the A-into-B interpreter's 'comprehension bonus' may result in better fidelity on condition of making up the 'production deficit' to provide perfectly acceptable output.

Also, language education policy in many countries has responded quickly to geopolitical change, with many more children learning a second language (usually English) earlier and better; and schools are now seeing applicants presenting excellent B languages and going on to become excellent bi-active interpreters through motivation, hard work and targeted training.[5] Many meeting participants who make their own presentations in a second language will be more tolerant of non-native language (especially in English, the global lingua franca) in the business-oriented, technical and jargon-based discourse that is dominant on the conference scene, provided it is of high quality, clear, coherent and accurate (Donovan 2002),

Bi-active SI is therefore in high demand.[6] Schools have a responsibility to train interpreters who are *both* excellent *and* adapted to market requirements. This

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3.   See Godijns and Hinderdael (2005) for recent discussion and Bartłomiejczyk (2006) for an overview.

4.   From the already well-established Chinese, Arabic, Japanese and Korean to more recent arrivals on the conference scene like Hungarian, Slovenian, Thai, Bahasa, Estonian…. Some such languages may also carry vast cultural hinterlands that will be accessible to no more than a few non-natives for at least another generation.

5.   This has been the experience of the authors in China, and Minns (2002) reports determined and regular language enhancement being rewarded with 'spectacular' results into English B among Korean and Vietnamese interpreters.

6.   In AIIC's 2009 survey of members (Neff 2011), a majority (64.3%) of respondents indicated that they work actively into two languages (although unfortunately, 'Bcons' and 'Bsim' are not differentiated).

means providing optimal training in SI into B, both in those language combinations where it is indispensable, *and* – though for *qualified candidates only* (see TG-3.4 on in-course assessment) – in other combinations. With this proviso, training more interpreters in ABsim does not have to mean accepting looser standards, but can only be beneficial.

But how good can a B language be? Opponents of SI into B invoke the inherent limits on quality and reaction speed in late learners of a second language (e.g. Déjean le Féal 2005). In Section 7.5 we review psycholinguistic and neuroscience research on this and other aspects of bi/multilingualism, such as the organization of multiple languages in the brain and how linguistic resources might be selectively activated and suppressed. This helps to understand the limits and potential of proficiency in native and acquired languages, the problem of interference, and the principle of *linguistic readiness* – the ability for selective, ad hoc activation and reinforcement of specific, targeted language resources for a specific assignment.

7.2   Language enhancement in the curriculum

Even in a tight curriculum, a two-year full-time training course as described here provides multiple weekly opportunities for LKE. The entire LE pedagogical effort can be distributed over six kinds of activity:

i.   In **language enhancement classes**, with activities focusing on targeted active proficiency coaching in B (including in Deliberate Practice stop-start format: TG-2.6.2), but also discourse analysis, public speaking and cultural sensitization in the B and especially C cultures;

ii. In **language-pair interpreting classes**, through feedback on linguistic aspects of performance aimed especially at students working into B. Also, Bsim students should have extra into-B classes;

iii. In **tutorial** format with an expert native-speaker coach, for **intensive or remedial** language upgrading according to needs, using a range of specific off-line drills (CC-7.4.2.2) in deliberate practice mode (TG-2.6.2);

iv. In **practice out of class** with study partner(s) with 'mirror' language combinations, in pairs or groups (CC-5, Appendix);

v.   In **private study** (CC-7.2.3);

vi. In **knowledge modules** introducing key domains such as Economics and Finance, International Law, or Parliamentary Procedure, or a market targeted by the school (EU, electronics, marketing…), with their associated jargon and terminology. These will typically be taught in the school's language and/or in English, one of which many students will have as their active B.

A sample distribution and time allocation in hours per week between these strands in a two-year course is given in TG-13.2.4.2, Table 13.2.

Since individual needs will vary, some classes (intensive remedial language coaching, cultural/area studies, some knowledge modules) may be optional but prescribed by instructors for certain students. Good curriculum design should provide for a needs-based course of study for students who will benefit from different levels of support. A comprehensive assessment should be made at admission of each incoming student's linguistic strengths and weaknesses (TG-4.3.6) and periodically updated, notably in the approach to SI training. Only on the basis of such an assessment can an optimal, individualized plan be devised, with priorities for improvement and ongoing assessment of progress.

Language-pair interpreting classes must focus on interpreting skills; but with increasing demand for Bcons and Bsim, even these classes will necessarily involve significant B-language enhancement, to be complemented by dedicated LE classes and individualized coaching.

Instructors should explain and demonstrate appropriate LKE activities and exercises for students to do alone or in groups outside class, stressing the importance of doing them correctly and thoroughly even when unsupervised.

7.2.1   LE classes for interpreters

Dedicated Language Enhancement classes, ideally one for each B language for which there are enough students, will typically be

- ► *necessary* for all students working into a B language, especially in A-Bsim combinations. Those admitted with a B language solidly at the required level (ILR-4 or 4+, CEFR C2: see TG-4.2.1) will still benefit from one or two sessions a week, even with significant attention also given to linguistic expression in interpreting classes;
- ► *crucial* for A-B students admitted with B language proficiency still around ILR-3+ (CEFR C1's upper reaches) who need to upgrade to a solid ILR-4 or even 4+ (CEFR C2). For this group, the ideal dose of LE will be more like 5–8 hours a week, taught in small tutorials of 2–3 students;
- ► *possibly useful* even to A-language students, on an optional basis, if taught by a highly qualified native.

Both language and knowledge enhancement must be carefully designed to be effective, drawing on relevant expertise but tailored to the specific needs of interpreters. Simply handing students over to a language teacher (or an economics or law professor), or sending them to classes in the relevant faculty, is not enough. LE classes should be taught by a qualified teacher (not necessarily an interpreter),

coordinating closely with the director and/or instructors on the interpreting course, but may have to be team-taught if a single such person is hard to find (see Angelelli & Degueldre 2002: 82–3; see also TG-2.4.5 and TG-13.3.3).

Ideally, LE classes can include any or a good selection of the following (we find similar menus in short further training courses for professionals wanting to add or upgrade a language: see TG-14.3.2):

a. *How discourse works*: detailed analysis of samples of native speech, including current affairs talkshows, political debates through prepared speeches (oratory), as well as texts that are "culturally complex and idiosyncratically composed" (Angelelli & Degueldre 2002: 80), to study the main pragmatic and rhetorical devices, and expand and deepen familiarity with sophisticated vocabulary, idioms, etc.

b. *Cultural knowledge*: a programme of selected readings and viewings (movies, TV – documentary, historical) to build a solid knowledge of the common cultural store of speakers of the language: cultural references, allusions, traditions, beliefs, history, folklore, children's stories and games, etc.

c. *Politics and institutions*: readings and lectures in political history and the language that accompanies it.

d. *The implicit and the unsaid*: raise sensitivity to nuance, tone, subtle manifestations of underlying values; develop the ability to interpret culture-specific patterns and cues (politeness, face-giving, irony, sarcasm, concession, stonewalling, brush-offs, etc., including body language).

e. *Registers*: build an adequate knowledge of colloquialisms, regionalisms, slang, etc.

7.2.2 Feedback in interpreting skills classes

Instructors' feedback on students' technique cannot always be isolated from points of translation, knowledge or optimization, and may include suggestions for purely linguistic improvement (word choice, expressions), especially into B and increasingly also into A as training moves into the later, more product-oriented phases.

How much language enhancement takes place in actual interpreting classes will depend on directionality (more when working into B), but also on how uniform the class is in terms of language combination and level. In mixed classes with some students working into A and others into B, the instructor might choose to pick up only on points of language which are critical to the viability of the rendition, saving more detailed linguistic feedback for separate coaching sessions with those students working into B.

As a general guide, linguistic issues can be addressed in interpreting (skills) classes whenever there is

i.   a significant error, distortion or unnecessary fuzziness that seems to be *due to poor use or misuse of language* (rather than to misunderstanding, poor note-taking, mis-hearing etc.), be it grammar, pronunciation, word choice (connotations), prosody or the use of a link or discourse marker;
ii. difficulty with 'how to translate' something tricky: mention any handy phrases and collocations that will generally be useful to all students working into B.

By contrast, minor syntactic glitches or pronunciation problems that do not affect the understanding of the message, or problems that one particular into-B student is having with certain features of the language, should be noted down by the instructor and left to the end to give to that student bilaterally, or in remedial LE coaching.

7.2.3   Remedial coaching in tutorial format

Some students, who were promising in every way at admission but have had reduced day-to-day exposure to their B-language, will need tutorials with an expert native-speaker coach for intensive or remedial language upgrading according to needs, using a range of specific off-line drills in deliberate practice mode (TG-2.6.2). This can include all the following activities:

a.   *Correcting stubborn grammatical problems* in special targeted coaching, such as faulty tenses, articles, agreement etc., which may still afflict students in some combinations even when they have otherwise achieved a sophisticated use of the language. Formats may include a specially-designed online cloze[7] (CC-7.4.2.2).
b.   *Reviewing B language output from recordings of classroom performance.* Students listen to themselves passage by passage with a demanding coach, identify language problems, and improve performance. Selected segments can be done over repeatedly to work on correct expression.
c.   *Sight translation into B*, but focusing here on intelligent and correct language use, again with detailed, language-oriented coaching. The instructor cues on-line corrections of language errors, with repeat performances on the same passages until they are delivered error-free. The instructor can also elicit different

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7.   The student shadows the instructor or a work partner reading a text in the student's B language that has been stripped of the relevant features – articles or tenses, for example – and restores them in real-time: start with only one missing at a time, then progress to multiple features.

versions by imposing specific sentence beginnings and word choices, to train useful patterns and build flexibility. Register control, connotation, collocations, etc. are checked and corrected, and students can note and master useful new patterns.

d. Other exercises listed in CC-7, selected by the instructor based on student level and need, including both specific drills such as paraphrasing, abstracting, register-switching and cloze, and more holistic activities, like making formal presentations and responding to challenging questions.

e. Checking the students' *active vocabulary notebooks* (see CC-7.5.2) to ensure they are selecting the most useful and productive expressions to adopt in their B, and that the usage they have captured is correct and can be deployed fluently and appropriately.

If the language coach only knows the students' B language, but not their A, they can do the B-into-B exercises listed in CC-7, such as paraphrase, segmentation and cloze, as well as B-into-B consecutive and any others that may be devised.

The key to making progress against stubborn problems in this strand is to help the student recognize the error and self-correct, then for consolidation serve up some similar examples for students to render correctly. SLA (second-language acquisition) research has shown that offering 'recasts' (when the teacher repeats a student's incorrect utterance with the correct version) is not always the most effective method, and that students learn better when teachers help them recognize and correct their own error (Lyster 1998; Mackey et al. 2000; Russell 2009).

7.2.4 Independent study and practice

A third important component of LE is deliberate practice by students in their own time, alone, with partners or in groups. Most of the LKE exercises described in CC-7 should be explained and demonstrated by the instructors in class first.

In a course that offers 10 contact hours per week of interpretation skills instruction and 2–4 hours of theory and knowledge modules (TG-13, Table 13.2), we recommend that Bsim students devote a further 6–8 hours per week to LE and 8–10 hours per week to interpreting exercises in pairs and small groups.

7.3　Interpreting into B: needs, challenges and strategies

7.3.1　Parameters for successful interpreting into B

Satisfactory performance into B in any mode depends on several factors:

▶　the quality of the B language (under consecutive or SI stress-tested conditions)
▶　the type of speech and event (and user expectations[8]);
▶　practice and targeted training.

7.3.1.1　*Quality of the B language*

The A-B-C classification is more in the nature of service information, describing the language directions in which an interpreter undertakes to provide an acceptable professional performance, than a precise scientific description of the relative status of each language she knows in her brain. An interpreter's B is therefore not the generic 'L2' of language learning.

While there have been attempts to link the status of a language as A or B to some objective principles (age of acquisition, continuity of exposure, language of education, recognition by educated native-speakers, etc.; see e.g. Thiéry 1978), in practice the professional competence described as 'B', in particular, is fuzzy. Some interpreters declare a B but hardly or never use it actively (if they no longer do consecutive, or no longer work at meetings with that language, for example after moving to a different country); others work into B not only from A but also from C language(s) or from another B,[9] in consecutive, simultaneous, or both. In some cases, a declared B has clearly been learned in adulthood, while in others it sounds virtually indistinguishable from a native language, inside the booth or out, except to the interpreter herself and perhaps one or two close friends or colleagues.

7.3.1.2　*Speech and event type*

It is widely recognized that – given lexical availability – informative, technical and formulaic material, such as scientific reports or the routinized, 'boilerplate' language of some government or UN speeches, is much easier to do into B than crafted political discourse and oratory, or the humorous, solemn or flowery style

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8.　User expectations may vary by language (Gile 1985; Cheung 2003), and listeners may be more tolerant of accents and other slight flaws in 'lingua franca' languages, like English.

9.　Interpreting into B from C or from another B is not recommended, especially in SI, except in rare cases – occasionally identified by instructors in the course of training students with ABC(C…) combinations – where active and passive control of the B and C languages respectively are both exceptional (usually only achieved with lengthy residence in both cultures).

found in ceremonial speeches. (Terminology is a relatively trivial problem and can be learned ad hoc for each meeting.) Where interpreters are working in a team, they can sometimes allocate speeches optimally on this basis. However, the most elusive dimension of an acquired language is the expression of finer interactional and implicit meanings, such as irony, innuendo or scepticism, for example to "transmit emotion, express praise, or hint at a threat without being obvious" (Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002: 324, our tr.). Political and diplomatic interpreters must deal routinely with this more allusive and fine-tuned discourse, and indeed (in bilateral relations, especially) regularly into B.

7.3.1.3 *Finding the right balance*

The challenge of working into B can be understood in terms of effort allocation (Gile 1995/2009). Working *from a native language* (all other things being equal) takes less effort both for comprehension and memory[10] (the '**comprehension bonus**'), while *production of an acquired language* – constructing output and retrieving the right words – should claim more processing capacity (the '**production deficit**'). In principle, then, when interpreting from A to B, some attentional resources could be shifted from comprehension to production, but researchers seem to be divided on this and on the need for an into-B specific pedagogy.

In **consecutive** with note-taking into B, some have argued (see CC-5.3.3) that any actual words should be noted in the A language, to save 'language transfer' effort during capture; others, that they should be noted in the output (B) language, to save the same effort during delivery (see TG-6.8.3.3 (i)). But since retrieval of rarer or more sophisticated words – those often chosen by the speaker for effect – is likely to be slower in B, and the interference drag stronger, it may be especially beneficial to note any inspired ideas for renditions that may come to one at the capture stage (and might otherwise be forgotten 5–7 minutes later). Some syntactic forward planning may also help, arranging the notes in a way congenial to TL structure (Ilg 1980).

In **simultaneous**, this theoretical imbalance would suggest the need to rebalance attentional resources somewhat more towards output and self-monitoring; but again, the jury is out on whether any specific technique needs to be taught for SI into B.

What is probably less controversial is that, while more active language enhancement and maintenance are needed to make up the relative 'production deficit' inherent in a B language, mobilizing the other dimensions of interpreting competence can also help. General and meeting-specific *knowledge* (and of course,

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10. Short-term memory capacity for L2 input is smaller than for L1 input; in other words, L2 learners have a sort of "cognitive deficit", in the sense that their mental processes work less efficiently in the L2 than in the L1 (Ohata 2006: 21; Cook 1991: 71, cited in Ohata 2006).

terminology, grafted onto a rich 'bilingual phrasebook' for the more generic re-curring items), will make the interpreter sound more professional and increase self-confidence – which is communicated to listeners, making linguistic blemishes less noticeable. *Professionalism* entails not only the preparation that gives this con-fidence, but also a general awareness of the priority needs of the audience and the limits of the B language, informing the choice of appropriate interpreting strategies to maximize communication.

This theoretical discussion of the cognitive challenge of working into B (first in consecutive, then in SI) may help students to expect and allow for the 'com-prehension bonus' and 'production deficit' they will experience, and understand that for A-into-B, they may have to shift the balance of efforts accordingly, and perhaps experiment with different lag times. It is important to explain the critical issue of expressive ***availability*** in the B language ('linguistic readiness'), which is well described in Gile's Gravitational Model (Gile 2009: 222–243): in SI, even small delays in lexical retrieval for production may quickly accumulate and result in overload, omissions and/or irrecoverable delay. The inbuilt constraints on ac-tive lexical availability in a learned language are discussed in TG-7.5, and some strategies for managing them are offered in CC-7.5.

7.3.2   Timing and management of into-B training

Consecutive
Each new interpreting skill is first learned and practised into the native (A) lan-guage (A into A, or B/C into A). In consecutive, students with 'Bcons' will already have practised both ways without notes in the Initiation stage (short consecutive). Consecutive proper (with notes) is best learned first into A, but can begin into B on straightforward trainer speeches after a few weeks – i.e. typically, towards the end of the first semester (see course timeline options in TG-3, Tables 3.1a and b). Serious practice into B (devoting at least equal time to A-B as to B-A) can begin from the 2nd semester, or the middle of the Experimentation phase.

Simultaneous
With basic techniques in place from B to A toward the end of the Experimentation phase, students with Bsim combinations can begin SI into B around mid-S3 (or if SI training begins in S2, from early S3: TG-3, Table 3.1b).

In SI, despite the 'comprehension bonus' when working from the native lan-guage, the reduced availability and flexibility of the B, and the traps of interference and calque, make fast, idiomatic production much more challenging. It therefore makes sense to wait until students have acquired some confidence in basic SI tech-nique before beginning SI into B. The objection that this gives them too little time

to practice into B can be met by ensuring they work regularly and intensively into B throughout the course up to this point in consecutive and sight translation, and progressively in the various (mainly ST-based) drills preparing for SI. Initiation in SI into B can begin with 'training wheels' (CC-8.3.2), i.e. with trainer speeches they have previously done in consecutive into B.

Students training in Bsim should get additional class time in this combination (TG-13, Table 13.2), and should attend classes with instructors who are native speakers of both their A and B languages (either a single class taught by a practising bilingual (A-A), or two separate classes).

7.3.3 Common into-B problems and remedies

Difficulties with SI into B manifest themselves in different ways: one student (perhaps with a written translation or literary studies background) may spend too much time looking for better words, and fall behind; another may be lulled by the false comfort of working from A into 'fluently' producing a literal translation that is unclear to listeners. Both must be made aware of the adjustments needed – compromise, and self-monitoring – to use a B effectively in SI. The 'literary perfectionist's' knowledge of the B language, however encyclopaedic, must be *activated* to be usable. The 'fluent bilingual' must be exposed to a playback of the performance, and to feedback from 'pure' listeners who don't understand the source language, to realize that more attention is needed to the clarity of her own production – and typically, also closer analysis of the input.[11]

Here are some problems typical of SI into-B in our experience, with suggested remedies:

1. *Gaps in expressive coverage and/or speed of retrieval*
When first doing SI into-B, some students may tend to overestimate the comprehension bonus, and use time and attention needed for listening and analysis to search instead for expressions in B, leading to omissions and a disconnected and illogical product.

a. **Translation block and breakdown***: the student does not know how to say something, then either gets stuck, drops content, oversimplifies, or produces something vague or imprecise, resulting in patchy and/or incoherent interpretation.

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11. Chang and Schallert (2007) observe how professionals develop different strategies for B into A and A into B, and ascribe performance differences between experts and novices in part to different 'metacognitive' awareness of their limitations in SI into B.

▶ *Remedy*: Apart from B-language upgrading for better expressive coverage and availability, a regime of paraphrasing exercises (including A-into-A) will help this student to reformulate more flexibly and use simpler, more common (and clear) expressions to convey information that is unusual, complex or otherwise difficult to formulate in B, and compensate where necessary by expressive intonation.

b. **Trouble keeping pace** (SI) or momentum (consecutive, sight translation): the student cannot produce the B language fast enough and falls behind, dropping content (SI), or taking far too long to complete the interpretation (consecutive, ST).

▶ *Remedy*: Work on increasing language availability, and chunking technique (check closely), to relieve the pressure. On fast, dense speeches, compression and even gisting may be necessary: this is harder in B linguistically, but less so when the subject matter is familiar: thorough preparation is thus even more critical for SI into B.

c. **Cross-cultural transfer block**: the student lacks ready ways to render (in B) entities and concepts specific to the A-language culture, such as national institutions, current political language and national history, common sayings, current memes, etc. This will be a serious handicap especially (but not only) when interpreting between different and distant cultures.

▶ *Remedy*: Viable equivalents must be consciously collected when reading about each culture and country in the language of the other (CC-7.3.2).

2. *Resource management*

a. **Error phobia**: Repeated self-corrections break the flow, and the student falls behind.

▶ *Remedy*: deliberate practice at slower speed to begin with, ideally using text, with the focus on avoiding self-correction and maintaining flow, and then, when this is achieved, on sounding more confident.

b. **Sentence collapse**: The student forgets how s/he began the sentence, resulting in syntactic non-sequiturs, diluted or lost logical structures or connections, misuse of tenses, and general confusion (Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002: 331–2). This may be explained by shorter or more fragile working memory span in a learned language (Obata 2006).

▶ *Remedy:* off-line drills, such as scrolled ST (CC-6.2.1) on text with long and complex sentences, to improve segmentation technique, reformulating in short chunks and/or memory.

3. *Interference and calques*

a. **Interference block**: the student is unable to detach herself from the SL formulation, translates literally and ends up not making sense to native speaker listeners.

► *Remedy*: On playback, find out if the student is aware of the problem. If the student mistakenly thinks that what s/he is saying *is* idiomatic in TL – perhaps due to bad earlier language teaching – then urging 'deverbalization' is ineffective. Rather, this is a language (re)learning challenge (CC-7.5): any awkward TL expressions must be tracked down, 'uninstalled' from the student's B lexicon, and replaced with two or three viable (and even idiomatic) options, to memorize with awareness of their register, connotations, and patterns of use, then practise using appropriately. The instructor can confront the student with similar SL phrases in the next few speeches, to check that these better phrasings have been learned correctly and are being actively recycled.

If the student is aware that the formulation was awkward or made no sense, then practice in deverbalizing is necessary, for example in supervised/coached sight translation with a requirement for maximum reformulation (see CC-7.4.2.3).

iv. *(Mis)use of half-learned expressions*
Even when students have a generally adequate baseline in terms of active vocabulary and familiarity with the grammatical rules of their active foreign language(s), they often find it difficult at first to *use what they know correctly* under pressure, and thus misuse words, either conveying the wrong message – or making hearers struggle to guess what was meant and perhaps eventually tune out and stop listening. Knowledge of a word's basic meaning, but not its collocations or its connotations or *register* – formal, colloquial or even slang or offensive – is a common problem.

► *Remedy*: again, these misused expressions must be uninstalled from the B-language lexicon and replaced by robust patterns to be actively recycled (see CC-7.5.2, 'How to (Re)learn Words').

5. *Inadequate pragmatic toolkit*
   a. Student lacks connectors, qualifying and framing expressions, hedges;
   b. Student lacks basic devices of argumentation and persuasion;
   ► *Remedy*: targeted attention in the LE class, and for homework, instructions on how to inventory and study these devices in the B language (e.g. in good speeches or texts, or specialized LSP material if available), followed by hands-on, one-on-one coaching in the use of those devices selected for the student's personal active toolkit, in deliberate practice mode (TG-2.6.2).

6. *Dilution, fuzzy intentionality*
Output is vague or wishy-washy due to unconvincing delivery, lacking crisp prosody, or over-use of generic and diluted framing words like 'there is', 'we must', 'this is very important', 'we shall also mention…', 'this' is… (vague reference scope), 'we

see that…', 'we must stress', etc. (In some cases this may also be bluff, when only a few words were heard due to inattention.)

> ▶ *Remedy*: play back, identifying instances of the problem and eliciting self-correction (requiring more meaningful language).

7. *Grammatical control*

In some language combinations especially, even students with an otherwise rich B language and good interpreting technique may still have problems with correctly using tense, singular/plural agreement, articles and other grammatical features of their B. Too many flaws in grammar will distract or fatigue listeners, may well undermine confidence in the interpreter, and at worst, may actually change the meaning.

> ▶ *Remedy*: Remedial coaching (TG-7.2.3) can target these flaws one feature at a time (e.g. just getting tenses right; just getting all articles right…). Work first with text, then in consecutive, with quick coaching interruptions whenever a mistake is made on the feature of concern, so that the student can immediately correct and carry on. (It is useless to wait until the end of the 5-minute passage and then give generic comments like "Yes, I thought the tenses were a bit better, but still quite a few were wrong…"). See CC-7.4.2.2 (ii) for an online cloze/shadowing exercise to elicit self-correction of grammatical errors.

In the final semester, students must go further and try to make their product convincing, idiomatic, and pitched at an appropriate register. In an ordinary B, minor deviations of grammar (e.g. tense, agreement), accent or pronunciation will never disappear completely, even in the successful graduate and the working interpreter. Users do not expect *perfect* accent,[12] grammar or choice of words. But these blemishes must become relatively unobtrusive, falling well below the 'distraction' threshold. Successful Bsims make them less noticeable – rather like a magician's trick – by delivering a confident, convincing and accurate product that draws listeners' attention to the message and away from blemishes of form. (The corollary needed for this to work, of course, is good prosody and delivery, precision and word choice.)

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12. In the AIIC User Survey (Moser 1997), only 8% of all users (9–14% of English natives) found a foreign accent irritating. Such questionnaire surveys tend to frame questions in vague or general terms that may not capture interactions between perception of accent and perception of competence. Other evidence seems inconclusive. Flerov (forthcoming) suggests that some cultures (e.g. American) are more exposed to different accents and are more tolerant, while others (e.g. Russian) are more 'closed' linguistically and less tolerant of a foreign accent. A US study found that "natives are prone to perceive [foreign-accented] statements as less truthful […;][foreign] accent might reduce the credibility of non-native job seekers, court eyewitnesses, or college instructors for reasons that have nothing to do with xenophobia per se" (McGlone and Breckinridge 2010).

7.3.4   SI into B: feedback

In terms of *process*, it is worth making quite sure from the outset of into-B training that students are fully aware of its specificity in terms of resources – the relative vulnerability and artificiality of B as a production tool, the comprehension bonus and production deficit – whether or not it is deemed helpful to advise them on specific adaptations (shifting of attention or effort, for example).

Since the *product* of interpreting from A into B will usually contain significantly more flaws of linguistic form and presentation, it is even more important to start feedback by saying something positive, and then focus on and prioritize the most serious problems, to avoid demoralising students with an avalanche of criticism of every aspect of their performance. This will help them to accept the most important points, on which the instructor must be quite firm, picking up on examples and prompting to elicit improvement. Motivated students will expect and appreciate this.

To address some of the most stubborn flaws that it would be tedious for students to hear criticized over and over again, instructors can warn students *before* doing an exercise against the most common linguistic errors typical of their combination, offering better ways of saying things or re-activating those that they already know all too well but keep forgetting in the heat of the action: e.g. 'research', 'information', not 'researches', 'informations'; 'mention' not 'mention about'; 'experts' is more common than 'scholars'; avoid using 'we' generally and ambivalently; etc.

Make students aware of the highly *variable impact* of different kinds of linguistic problem on the message received by listeners. Students fresh out of school tend to see all linguistic flaws that may be pointed out to them in an undifferentiated way, without realising their different impact on their performance *as an interpretation*. Some linguistic errors, through grating to a native ear, do not seriously distort the meaning after a listener has made allowances (up to a point, of course, and the student will also have to work to reduce these formal flaws), while others seriously change or dilute the meaning, or leave listeners guessing. An effort must therefore be made to differentiate between errors with different *consequences*.

Among **omissions**, not all are equally significant: by the consolidation phase, instructors should focus on those that cannot be easily inferred and filled in by listeners (while ensuring that 'inferrables' have been heard and justifiably omitted to improve style and communication).

7.3.4.1   *Participation of 'pure users'*
Instructors who are natives of the B language are of course indispensable, but the presence of other users in the into-B classroom is also extremely valuable, especially **pure users**: i.e. a TL native who (unlike the instructor and students) does

not know the students' A language and is unfamiliar with its culture, and therefore cannot follow the SL presentation directly, but is entirely dependent on the interpreter for a clear, meaningful version that is as comfortable as possible to listen to. This user can advise both on intelligibility and clarity, and on linguistic issues.

The demanding pure user is an excellent indicator of the communicative quality of the B product,[13] in some ways better even than the instructor(s), whose familiarity with the student's native socio-cultural background may result in too many allowances. The pure user's reactions, questions and sometimes puzzlement will help trainees develop listener orientation and understand how to make material specific to their own culture clear to a foreign audience. In *all* modes, this may involve optimization (CC-5.8.4, CC/TG-10.4), making explicit some information that may be left unsaid in the original – culture-specific information, implicit logic, and sometimes simply dates, times or places – making it clear who is speaking, where and when etc. (deictic orientation); helping to fill gaps in the hearer's knowledge of local or culture-specific points (not all, but the most important); and sometimes, simplifying. However painful it may be to have to dilute the richness of expression of one's own native language (the SL), interpreters working from A to B must first be concerned to cover basic meaning, and take elegance as a luxury when it comes.

In terms of linguistic corrections, especially, it is not enough for the native listener to follow the interpretation, and then just give general comments and overall impressions, perhaps picking out one or two specific expressions that were lacking. What is needed is a detailed, blow-by-blow walkthrough of the recorded interpretation. Play the recording a sentence or two at a time, go over everything, offer detailed analysis of problems, then first elicit self-correction by the student, then go round the room for other ideas, and only then suggest corrections and improvements. Apart from addressing any basic problems of grammar and pronunciation, this should focus on improving the clarity and quality of expression in two ways:

a. suggesting simple ways of saying things that are already known to students, but overlooked;
b. teaching more effective renditions that may be pushing their resources a bit, or even be unknown to them. Indicate that the simpler ones are better, but they should be aware of the more sophisticated ones, at least for recognition.

Mixed **master classes** can be organized in multilingual schools (TG-2.4.1) to bring together students with different combinations who do not all understand each other's languages. This exposure to diversity of culture, interests and languages

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13. and indirectly, perhaps even its accuracy, according to research (Setton and Motta 2007).

is especially valuable in teaching into-B and relay interpreting. Also, where some students in the class have a particular language as A and others as B, the into-A students can be called on for the first few passages of each new topic, while their into-B classmates can note how they say things before taking the floor (or the mike) themselves (Donovan 2004[14]).

7.3.4.2 *Relay interpreting from a pivot working into B*

A critical function of SI into B is to provide relay from 'exotic' languages, both in international organizations and on the private market. This is therefore an excellent acid test of the booth-worthiness of a Bsim. To experience directly the 'relay-friendliness' of the students' into-B output, in a team-taught class (TG-2.4.5) the second or assisting instructor (or a TA) can work from them on relay in a free booth; otherwise, another SI student who does not know the pivot's A language can fill this role. The exercise forces the pivot to be clear in content as well as regular in delivery. Using a fellow student with the same combination as the one who is interpreting is not very effective, since s/he will understand shaky B output much better than someone from a totally different background – and will possibly make too many allowances, or be reluctant to critique usefully out of solidarity with a classmate.

The instructor listens to the original SL speech and relay output, auditing carefully for distortions and misunderstandings. The student who took relay provides feedback to the class, so that problems can now also be identified and addressed now not just from the point of view of the relay-takers, but of all users of the pivot's performance.

As discussed in CC/TG-9, the first experience with relay is highly edifying: the pivots realize the importance of clarity and coherence, while the experience of mutual dependence creates an awareness of professional solidarity and *esprit de corps.*

7.3.5 Working into B in difficult conditions

Working into B in the conditions described in TG/CC-9 might seem like the last straw, but there is room for optimism, due to the 'comprehension bonus'. Accents or mumbling are obviously easier to understand in one's A language, but in fact almost every one of the hazards listed in TG-9.6.2, from disconnected speech through puns and jokes to mixed-media input, will be less severe when you are listening to your native tongue, thus sparing more attention for production.

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14. EMCI workshop on interpreting into B.

This comprehension bonus can often be decisive: some input speech is so difficult to process that it can *only* be done from A into B (for example, speakers with rare rural accents, or using certain kinds of slang, or quoting from archaic classical texts[15]).

Other hazards, however, still call for very agile production. Fast and dense speeches will often require *summarizing* and *vocal highlighting*, which are both harder in B (although the points will be easier to pick out in an A-language source). These skills must be practised, making an extra effort to step back from SL forms, with playback and feedback. The same applies for the alternative strategy – trying to be complete by *talking fast* – since that also calls for close self-monitoring to stay clear and comprehensible.

The best exercise for honing into-B performance for difficult conditions is **Sight Translation**, but *varying the demands on the product,* from semantically complete ST insisting on correct grammar in every sentence, through moderate then more radical compression, to intelligent gisting, while steadily working to increase speed, fluency and linguistic quality.

7.4   Knowledge Enhancement: general and special modules

In CC-3.2.3/TG-4.2.2 we have tried to define the level of general knowledge that is expected at admission. Deliberate choice of materials for the final certifying exams (PECI: TG-11.6.3.2) will to some extent test the vastly broader world knowledge that candidates should have acquired at that point, but graduation should also be conditional on earning **credits in** two or three of the **key domain-specific modules** described below (7.4.1).

Students will expand their general and domain-specific knowledge through

1. Researching and systematically preparing for each topic, event, domain to be interpreted in class, as announced in advance by the instructor, especially in the SI–Consolidation and Reality stages. Topics chosen in the last two semesters should sample the domains most relevant to the school's target market(s).
2. Independent reading and listening on currently topical issues (or any others relevant to the school's markets, e.g. specialized agencies of the UN, tropical diseases, silicon wafer manufacturing), doing background research to fill in

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15. The ILR-5 (top, 'functionally native') level of listening proficiency includes the ability to understand "difficult regional and illiterate dialects, highly colloquial speech and conversations and discourse distorted by marked interference from other noise [or] extremely difficult or abstract [*we would add: 'culturally-loaded, elliptical'*] speech." http://www.govtilr.org/skills/ILRscale3.htm#5 (Accessed November 17, 2015).

knowledge gaps, making glossaries, and delivering and interpreting presentations on these topics. Instructors should regularly set such research projects, then quiz students in class to make sure that they have followed the necessary steps for effective preparation, understand the basic concepts, and have prepared good glossaries.

3. Knowledge modules in mainstream and/or other specialized target domains, taught in a way that is adapted to the needs of interpreters (not of experts in the field).

7.4.1   General domain modules: Law and Economics

At least two modules will be needed to instil knowledge that is mainstream for conference interpreting but not necessarily familiar to most students, and should therefore be compulsory:

1. **Economics and Finance** (at least 2–3 semesters, from S1 through to S3)
This should cover 'Economics 101', including basic macroeconomics topics like supply and demand, stocks and flows, monetary and fiscal policy, interest and exchange rates, etc., as well as a basic understanding (and some terminology) of such areas as taxation, insurance, banking, trade and investment, and an overview of business practices and how companies work, and an introduction to accounting and budgeting.

2. **International Law** (at least 2 semesters, e.g. in Y1) focusing on the law and language of diplomacy, treaties and conventions, then moving on **International Organizations** in S3 (to coincide with SI–Consolidation) and/or **Parliamentary** (meeting) **Procedure** in S4 (voting, drafting etc.), especially for students targeting the UN system or the EU institutions.

7.4.2   Talking the talk: the language of research reports and presentations

As conference interpreting has spread from the oratorical world of diplomacy to more workaday administrative meetings and a growing emphasis on 'evidence-based' governance, more and more meetings include the presentation and discussion of research, in fields ranging through economics, social sciences or demographics through to and including some harder science, depending on the market. We are now routinely required to 'talk the talk' of experts and academics.

An introduction to the **language of research** will therefore be a valuable addition to an interpreter's professional competence. This module might include an introduction to scientific method, covering the conventions of data collection

(surveys etc.), presentation (graphs, charts, tables, equations and formulae and how to say them), inference (and the graded language of hypothesis vs. assertion) and basic statistics (sampling, correlations, controls, tests of significance, probability, regression etc.); and the names of functions and commands in spreadsheet and word processing software, browsers, etc. in their working languages.

Obviously, students who pursue some academic activity (such as doing an MA or PhD see 'Theory' chapter) will get the added bonus of familiarity with this world, along with the salutary habit of rigorous analytic thought. Learning about research methods and conventions 'upgrades' a practitioner just as some knowledge of cognitive science upgrades an interpreter trainer.

7.4.3 Specialized knowledge and customized modules

Some slight variation on this scheme may be appropriate depending on students' prior training (for students with a solid background in law or economics, for example, attendance might be replaced by a test), target markets or course load.

In schools where many graduates find work in specific organizations or locally important industrial sectors, other specialized modules may be offered subject to course load, such as Medical English with Latin, Legal Proceedings and Depositions, health science/pharmaceuticals, environment, intellectual property, the European Institutions (for EU-oriented schools), the oil and gas industry (in the Middle East), financial services and logistics (Hong Kong or Shanghai), semiconductors (Taiwan), the auto industry (Germany) copper production (for South America), conflict minerals and human rights (for Africa), etc. Institutionally, as explained in TG-13, tailored modules can also be used to convert generic conference interpreter training into a specialization such as legal and judicial interpreting.

Finally, interpreters must learn how to speedily acquire knowledge specific to each meeting to which they are assigned ('adhoc' knowledge acquisition: Gile 2009: 129 ff.), in a dedicated class on conference preparation techniques (CC-9.2.5.1).

7.5   Some background science

7.5.1   Language enhancement: the art of the possible

The reader will have noticed that in the early stages, from Initiation through Experimentation, our pedagogy seems almost to deliberately downplay language itself, focussing on the ability to listen for meaning *through* the words, as it were, to identify the speaker's message and intent, recognize the discourse structure, and make these the main drivers of production rather than the words of the original.

This is not to say that fine language cannot again emerge at the endpoint of this process, merely that this requirement should be suspended while students are still struggling with process and technique. Language proficiency can only be clearly assessed in *interpreting performance* once we have mastered the mechanisms of capture and formed a clear representation of the message with enough attention still free to self-monitor and attend to the quality of our output, as when preparing a presentation of our own. Conversely, however, the fruits of expert message comprehension and capture will wither on the vine without the linguistic proficiency to deliver them. The focus of feedback must therefore shift to the product as students reach the Consolidation phase and are performing for an audience, who neither know nor care about the inner workings of interpreting.

But what is the potential for enhancing language proficiency in L2 (B and especially Bsim)? How far can we hope to upgrade a language not acquired in childhood, but learned after the critical period? Should we focus on enhancing *langue* or *parole* (in the Saussurean distinction)? Competence or performance (in the Chomskyan)? Neurolinguistic and second language acquisition (SLA) research suggests that both are possible.

7.5.2   Implicit and explicit competence

Implicit competence is our preferred term for the tacit, unconscious procedures that native speakers possess for spontaneously recognizing and generating well-formed language without necessarily having conscious access to the principles and rules that govern the combination of sounds, words, and sentences (Fernández & Smith Cairns 2011), and are the bedrock of our linguistic ability. (The Chomskyan term 'linguistic competence', contrasted with 'performance' – what we actually produce – does not seem to distinguish innate and acquired components clearly enough for our purposes).

It is widely accepted, despite different theories about the language acquisition mechanism,[16] that the underlying rules and parameters of our mother tongue(s) are unconsciously **acquired** during a critical (or optimal) period in childhood (Penfield and Roberts 1959; Lenneberg 1967) – usually, pre-puberty – by which we can thereafter, effortlessly and usually for the rest of our lives, produce sounds, forms and grammatical utterances in the language of our childhood environment. We build on

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16. Chomsky (1965: 25) posited an innate language-learning module, a 'language acquisition device' (LAD) embodying a universal grammar (UG) that is then parametrized for the rules specific to our first (native) language by exposure during childhood. Piaget (1926), in contrast, saw language learning as part of general cognitive development, but saw this as being subject to phases, and recognized an optimal period for language acquisition in childhood.

this baseline with the words and expressions that we go on acquiring in adolescence and adulthood through education, mainly (traditionally) through **explicit learning**. It seems that syntax and accent are harder to master after the critical period than lexical and semantic functions (Singleton & Lengyel 1995; Scherag et al. 2004; Moyer 1999). However, these added layers are more fragile than the natural implicit knowledge of our bedrock competence; and any new language we learn after the optimal period will be more vulnerable and reliant on regular practice and maintenance. However much brainpower we devote to it, our feel for its structures and flexibilities will never be as solid and instinctive as in our native language.

Although explicit learning takes over for second (L2) languages, implicit learning never disappears altogether. It seems that some individuals are more linguistically open and flexible than others and remain able to acquire solid and useful competence in one or more new languages through this implicit channel well into their adult lives. This works better when we can 'trick' our minds into implicit learning, by living – i.e. socialising, interacting, working – in the new language, without focusing on the language itself but absorbing it naturally, perhaps with some conscious enrichment of vocabulary through explicit study, but always in the context of usage.

Motivation, identity and other factors can help a minority of individuals buck the trend and achieve near-mastery of a second language, including accent (Young-Scholten 2002). According to Singleton (1995), 5% of adult bilinguals 'master' a second language even though they begin learning it when they are well into adulthood. In some rare cases, differences between L1 and L2 will only be detectable on close inspection (Paradis 2004: 59–60).

7.5.3   Linguistic knowledge, pragmatic competence and motivation

How are languages organized in the brain, what does 'bilingual' mean, and how can we make the best of our cognitive limitations for interpreting? Language was long thought of as just competence in a particular linguistic code (*langue*), i.e. phonology + morphology + syntax + semantics. But neurolinguists, among others, are confirming that verbal communication[17] engages not just the language system, but several brain systems cooperating with each other. To speak or understand, we need (1) affect, or motivation to communicate, (2) pragmatics, or the ability to infer people's intentions, and a mixture of (3) *implicit* language *competence* and (4) *explicit* language *knowledge* (Paradis 2004).

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17. This includes both spoken- and sign-language communication.

What role do these play in L1 and L2 communication? Our knowledge of language, first of all, is part implicit, part explicit. Implicit (or 'procedural') language knowledge, acquired in the earliest stages of childhood, is what we use unconsciously and automatically to produce grammatically 'correct' language (such as, for example, in English, using the past tense in the appropriate context).[18] Explicit linguistic knowledge complements this with the declarative, representable and conscious knowledge that we graft on later through formal or focused learning, and that we need, for example, to monitor long and syntactically complex sentences. In adults, explicit language knowledge mostly takes the form of an expanding lexicon, and is intertwined with cultural and world knowledge learned throughout life.

Implicit language is acquired unconsciously (while focusing on something else) not only in childhood but also to some extent later, in conversational and interactive settings. Being fast and automatic, it is the default use of language that the brain falls back on under pressure. This may explain why interpreting schools welcome (and often require) candidates who have spent at least a year in the country of their learned language, or who have used it in the study of other disciplines than language and literature, or in work experience, thus acquiring reflexes in that language implicitly.

To complete the ability for mature verbal communication, language knowledge must be mobilized and accompanied by two more brain systems: **pragmatics** and **motivation** (or affect).

Pragmatics is the ability to use contextual information to infer people's meaning and intentions from any sign, including speech, however explicit it may seem superficially, since language always under-determines meaning: we do not, in fact cannot, say *exactly* what we mean (12.2). People lacking this ability (in most forms of deep autism, for example) interpret utterances literally and are deaf to the unspoken components, such as connotative or implicit meanings, affective intonations and rhythms, indirect commands or requests, metaphor, humour, logical coherence or story structure, and thus are often unable to 'get the point' or sense a speaker's mood (Paradis 2004: 16–17).

In healthy brains, the **pragmatic competence** used in communication is partly universal and partly culture- and language-specific. We unconsciously project and sense mood through clues like pupil size, facial expressions or even smell, but also through cues specific to a culture or language, ranging from gestures through intonation to word-choice and sentence structure. The 'meaning' of such clues (or cues) is almost always context-bound and hard to define, so they can usually only be learned and internalized implicitly, through contact and interactive experience.

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18. or playing a musical instrument by ear, etc. Compare declarative memory: knowledge of geography or chemistry, but also of what we had for breakfast this morning (but not memory of the experience of having breakfast this morning, which is 'episodic memory': see TG-6.8.2, Table 6.4, 'Our multiple memories'.

To understand an utterance, both grammar and pragmatics are necessary, and neither is sufficient; each has its own underlying rules and both are necessarily used in concert (ibid.: 19–20).

However, foreign language learners are more likely to understand the *semantic* meaning of utterances (which can be explained and learned explicitly) than their *pragmatic* meaning. Apart from literary metaphors, taught in literature classes, L2 learners learn mostly the literal meanings of words. The pragmatic components are difficult to teach explicitly; they are best acquired through practice in natural settings (ibid.: 20).

Finally, performance in a language depends on **affective motivation**, centred in the limbic system. Paradis cites two kinds of motivation that may typically drive and enhance effective L2 language learning:

i.   instrumental: to improve the individual's professional status;
ii. integrative: to become part of a community (a special case being courtship, although evidence here is more anecdotal…).

For interpreters, the first of these can be taken for granted. As for the second, it seems that the individual's attitude to the L2 community also has some influence: when the environment is positively evaluated, more opiates are sent into the system by the amygdala (ibid. 27). As for the special case, clearly, the more drives support the endeavour, the better!

What does this mean for interpreter training?

According to the critical-period hypothesis, only a language acquired largely implicitly and in childhood – before around age 8 or 9, or before puberty, depending on the author – could be embedded deeply enough in primary instinctive systems to become (potentially) a full 'A' in the interpreting sense when enriched by subsequent knowledge added through explicit and implicit adult learning.

However, performance in a language learned later in adolescence or adulthood, through mixed implicit and explicit learning, **may nevertheless be developed sufficiently for active interpreting ('into B'), provided that enough linguistic and pragmatic competence can be internalized well enough to become quasi-implicit, hence relatively fast and automatic**. But this requires exposure through contact and conversation, and intensive and regular practice, rather than rule-learning. This applies especially to the acquisition of language-specific pragmatic competence, which is difficult or impossible to describe, formulate and teach explicitly, but is key to interpreting, since it provides the vital insight to the speaker's intentions.

How can this pragmatic competence be acquired? A characteristic of implicit learning is that it is incidental: the knowledge is internalized while focusing consciously on something else. By listening to and reading a wide variety of speeches and texts in the foreign language, concentrating on content (extensive reading and listening), but also through active reading (reading aloud or subvocally and

trying to 'be' the writer or speaker), and doing exercises which focus attention on content rather than form, we can unconsciously and gradually acquire a sense for implicit meanings which goes some way to approximating to native competence in understanding, and some native-like habits of expression – like voice tone, melody and cohesive links – which, even if only rudimentary and used carefully and selectively, contribute hugely to making speech listener-friendly and communicative.

7.5.4 Selective activation in the multilingual brain

All our linguistic resources cannot be active and available all the time. The key to linguistic proficiency lies in the ability to activate and mobilize them selectively, by preparation and self-priming, and in cultivating linguistic readiness. Recent research helps to understand how this can work in the multilingual brain (see also TG-12.2.6).

The Activation Threshold Hypothesis (Paradis 1993) can help us understand how items from different languages may compete for availability in the brain, or how availability could be enhanced. An item is said to be activated when the neurons representing it have received a certain number of neural impulses (its 'activation threshold'). A high threshold means the item is hard to activate; a low threshold, that it is easily activated. Each activation of a given item lowers its threshold, making it easier to activate, but if time passes with no stimulation of the item, it becomes harder to access, by attrition. According to Perani et al. (2003), intensive use of a language lowers its activation threshold, even in balanced early-acquisition bilinguals. Activation is a function of frequency and recency of use/exposure, and to some extent, of frequency/recency of use of its immediate network and whole sub-system. A simple schema that can be used to get the idea across to students is Gile's Gravitational Model (Gile 2009: 224 ff.).

The Activation Threshold model seems to account well for recency and frequency effects, priming phenomena, and language attrition. Applying it to interpreting, we can assume that the two languages involved must both be activated, but at different levels – the SL enough for comprehension, and the TL enough for production. The production of an item takes recall and self-activation, and is more difficult than comprehension of the same item, needing a lower threshold (Paradis 2004: 29). In interpreting, production does not need to be 'cold', indeed ensuring one's linguistic readiness is part of an interpreter's professional competence: various associative lateral links, schemas and other associative structures between and within languages can be stimulated through advance preparation to boost activation of items we need to have ready for production (Setton 2003b).

To summarize, neurolinguistic evidence now provides some scientific support for many principles that interpreter trainers have intuited and acted on in training:

▶ that a second language can become booth-worthy with adequate development of implicit and explicit competence, by **increasing automaticity** through intensive, regular and diversified exposure and content-focused exercises and practice;

▶ that an active language needs **more maintenance** than a passive one (C), since production takes more effort than comprehension;

▶ that a B language can never attain the full instinctive and varied richness of an educated native tongue, but can be adequate to the task (and perhaps even indistinguishable from a native language to some listeners in some circumstances) with appropriate mobilization of implicit and explicit **knowledge**, **motivation**, and **pragmatic competence**.

According to Paradis (2004: 31), communicative, motivational language learning may increase linguistic competence; practice may speed up controlled processing and/or promote implicit competence (automaticity); and a language needs to be used to keep its activation threshold low enough to prevent accessibility problems (which also suggests that even to maintain a (purely passive) C language, occasional active use may be necessary).

With more advanced and challenging inputs under more severe temporal pressures and other complicating conditions (CC/TG-9), quality interpreting depends increasingly on cognitive support, hence the marriage of language and knowledge enhancement in these chapters. The more context and background information and associations we can retrieve, the quicker we can understand and anticipate speakers. The more words, phrases and possible structures we can activate, the more choice we will have among synonyms and paraphrases, the more freedom we will have in how to start sentences, and the easier it will be to finish them.

The notions of activation and priming should be explained to students early on, as they help to understand how linguistic and other knowledge can be enriched and maintained, and how it can be made and kept active for the duration of an assignment. We strongly recommend a module on *conference preparation* (CC-9.2.5) to explain how documents and online sources can be tapped in targeted preparation, how to make a useful glossary, and how to prime and activate key vocabulary at the last minute before an assignment.

7.6　Summary

The type of language proficiency and knowledge that are *specific* to the needs of interpreting cannot be entirely left to students to imagine and acquire on their own initiative. A responsible interpreter training course should provide dedicated classes in passive and active language enhancement, and introductions to key domains of knowledge relevant to both the local and international target markets

for conference interpreting. Instructors should show students exercises, practice techniques and sources of relevant language enhancement materials, include help with language in feedback at the appropriate stages, and where necessary, provide tutorial-format expert language coaching to help students achieve communicative and error-free production in their active languages.

SI into B (only taught from an A language) does not come naturally but means using the 'comprehension bonus' to shift more attention to monitoring the product, and fighting the 'production deficit' with constant targeted language enhancement – and possibly falling back on tighter chunking and less adventurous restructuring, though the jury is still out on what might constitute a specific into-B pedagogy.

Linguistic readiness for SI into B means consolidating a reliable active vocabulary and sufficient expressive breadth and agility to cover a wide range of subject matters and speech styles. The fine literary expressions learned passively as an undergraduate and that constantly hover on the tip of the tongue must be ruthlessly ignored and replaced by clear, updated phraseology with an immediate impact on the listener.

Errors of grammar and usage – varying according to language combination and learning background – may at first proliferate under pressure of interpreting. Remedial coaching and 'tough-love' on-line instructor intervention may help up to a point, but when the correct usage is *known* to the student, having her listen to her own recordings, and self-monitoring more closely when next in the booth, will yield more lasting results.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Language enhancement

Leaver, Betty Lou and Boris Shekhtman (eds.) 2002: Developing Professional-level Language Proficiency

See also Further reading in CC-7

Multilingualism and interference

Green 1998, 2000: control and activation in bilinguals

Paradis, Michel 1993 (Activation Threshold Hypothesis), 2004 (A neurolinguistic theory of bilingualism), 2009 (Declarative and procedural determinants of second languages)

Directionality

Collections of papers:

Chang & Schallert 2007: Directionality in Chinese-English interpreting

Godijns & Hinderdael 2005: Directionality in Interpreting. The 'Retour' or the Native?

Kelly et al. 2003: La direccionalidad en traducción e interpretación

(see also the many unpublished dissertations on this topic reported in the CIRIN online bulletin of interpreting research at http://cirinandgile.com)

Teaching simultaneous interpreting

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 Prerequisites for SI training

The prerequisites for successful SI training (given a progressive, well-defined curriculum and sufficient contact hours) are:

▶ *Pre-qualified students* who have already reached a confirmed and robust baseline in language, knowledge and consecutive interpreting and ST skills (TG-3.3.5).

▶ *Trained instructors* who are themselves practising professional conference interpreters with the appropriate language combinations (TG-13.2.3). Most especially, every student must have at least one such instructor with an A in each of their target languages.

▶ *Materials:* carefully sequenced and tailored (instructor-generated) input materials for SI-Initiation and SI-Coordination (described in detail below); access to live speechmakers/speakers and appropriate speech recordings (on video) for SI-Experimentation; a supply of realistic texts and speech materials, and a large library of recordings of representative recent meetings, speeches and discussions in target domains for SI-Consolidation, including some with good live interpretations by professional interpreters.

▶ *Facilities:* an installation simulating a modern meeting room with authentic SI equipment and two-person booths (designed to meet ISO 2603 as closely as feasible) – *never* a language lab – augmented with two-track recording and playback facilities in each booth. At a minimum, there should be enough booths to accommodate all the students in the class in pairs (e.g. three two-person booths for a class of six); but ideally, there should be one booth per student. Students will need access to the facility outside class hours for extensive individual and group practice.

▶ *Opportunities* to listen in/observe (and ideally do dumb-booth practice) at real-world meetings with interpretation in the relevant languages.

8.1.2 The instructor's challenge

SI has for some time been the dominant and most sought-after form of interpreting. Because it is associated with higher professional status, higher levels of pay, and opportunities to travel and to be part of high-profile events, the opportunity to learn SI is probably what draws most students to Conference Interpreting programs. But the dynamic and immediate quality of SI also makes it difficult to describe, teach and evaluate.

Even for a qualified professional instructor, teaching SI is a tricky business requiring careful preparation and practice. Getting it wrong or failing to convey the right message will be counterproductive and could create confusion that will be difficult to repair. The progression of exercises and input materials described in this chapter are designed to manage cognitive load as skills are being acquired, and avoid student overload or demoralisation. Pedagogical notes and theory should help instructors to be accountable to students through consistent feedback and answers to their questions (see TG-2.5.8 for a more complete overview of feedback and guidance to students on how to practice).

8.1.3 The learning curve: discovering SI

Like Initiation and the Introduction to Note-taking, the first experience of listening and speaking at the same time in an SI booth at the start of the second year (unless SI begins earlier, see options in TG-3.3.5) should be an exciting moment that instructors can build on. Some students may have tried whispering interpretation in the past: they should now appreciate the isolation from noise and the comfort of working with headphones, facilitating shared attention between the speaker and one's own voice, which makes very good SI feasible.

Real SI begins with a change of language. This novel experience, the first time that students are actually 'translating' live and simultaneously, should be enjoyed for a while during the SI-Initiation phase by

▶ keeping classes varied and enjoyable, as well as challenging, by alternating between the different 'strands' described in the box below: chatty on-line material at normal speed, offline 'drip-fed' or scrolled ST-type exercises on denser, more structured input, and occasionally, doing the same material in consecutive and simultaneous, comparing and discussing technique;

▶ not recording students' first attempts (Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002: 176).

We have structured SI training in five stages: **SI-Initiation**, **Coordination**, **Experimentation**, **Consolidation and Reality**, described in overview and in detail in CC-8. The objectives of each phase should be clearly explained to the students (and, of course, to anyone giving feedback, such as teaching assistants and visitors).

8.2   SI-Initiation

The SI-Initiation phase should take about 3 to 4 weeks (Table 8.1 below and TG-3.3.5). Our proposed design for this module calls for some preliminary explanation, since this is one of the most critical episodes in the training of a conference interpreter.

8.2.1   Rationale and organization

Pedagogically, it makes sense to introduce trainees to this new mode of interpreting by

a.   building on what they already know – Consecutive and Sight Translation – and demonstrating the differences; and
b.   exposing them to the new constraints of simultaneity separately and progressively, with the right mixture of realism, problem-solving and variety to keep classroom activity lively and stimulating.

After a brief **booth orientation** session, we therefore propose alternating (even within the same class session) between two kinds of exercises – 'on-line' on easy 'chatty' speech, and 'off-line' on more awkward, drip-fed material – that illustrate these two facets of SI, then gently merging them into a single complex experience under on-line conditions ('Spoonfeeding') as a bridge into the next stage, Coordination. The rationale for this two-track approach is explained more fully in the box:

Twin-track SI initiation: rationale

As explained in CC-2.3.1.6, conference interpreters must deal with a wide variety of speech, but in SI in particular, there are points on a continuum from lively and spontaneous exchange to frozen, formal and pre-arranged discourse that may require significantly different technique.

 Shermet (2012) has captured this experience in a contrast between free 'standard interpretation' and a more rigid 'oral translation', required in different communicative situations. One end of the continuum is typified by largely impromptu or semi-prepared exchanges between experts or colleagues working together towards a common goal, where users are mainly concerned that the interpretation should flow, make sense and be pleasant to listen to; correct terminology is always appreciated, but putting sense before words, and maximizing idiomaticity and naturalness, will allow for (or require) freer paraphrase, more reordering and a more elastic lag (ibid.; see also CC-8.4.1–3 and CC-8.6.2).

 In some situations and settings, however, speakers read carefully crafted statements that may be primarily 'for the record or for the media' rather than as a contribution to the immediate debate. Here the interpreter is expected to provide a rendition that is more "like written translation done in an oral environment in real time […] Oral translation […] differs from standard interpretation […in] pacing [i.e. lag] and the balance of macro- and micro-analysis. Due to the emphasis on word choice and translation-type accuracy, most

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interpreters are only one or maybe two meaning units behind the speaker. They will shift into emphasizing micro-level analysis" (ibid. 126–9).

A more linear, tightly-chunked technique may be necessary when users expect a very literal rendition, but also, more generally (i) for the opening words of an utterance, while its sense is still unclear (Lederer 1981: 296); (ii) in ST and SI-text when there has been no time to prepare; or (iii) when working from text in a script that is much harder to scan ahead (e.g. Chinese for a 'Western-A' interpreter, and vice versa).

Despite this somewhat artificial polarization, both kinds of discourse (and therefore, tactics) often alternate within the same speech – for example, when direct quotation alternates with extempore commentary. **All-round SI competence [therefore] includes both the ability to reformulate radically (often unconsciously, with all our attention on meaning), and the ability to stay as 'linear' as possible, tracking the SL speech tightly without compromising quality.**

Different discourse styles may also seem to dominate on different markets. The Paris School, targeting an intra-European market with a tradition of impromptu speech, has stressed spontaneity and 'real interpreting', de-emphasizing SI-text and, especially, leading the resistance against interpreting from recited material without text provided; the UN, in contrast, explicitly warns candidates for accreditation that they will be tested in precisely these conditions (see CC-8.5.3–4). For the Paris School, doing the same speech twice is counterproductive (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989: 175–6). But the UN recommends it, and Shermet suggests that "in training interpreters to adapt the technique of standard interpretation to oral translation it is vital to have them practise the same piece many times (5 to 15), much like the musician practices a piece by Chopin or Mozart repeatedly" (but we restrict this to some specific kinds of text: see (ii) below). In China, textbooks by authors of the Beijing school (with its origins in a UN training programme) place much more stress on the linear chunking technique (e.g. Zhong 1984).

The more constrained form of interpreting that Shermet calls 'oral translation' is now pervasive in almost all segments of the conference interpreting market, and must therefore also be prepared for. This explains

i.   our inclusion of exercises to train the ability to work more closely and linearly, doing "micro-level parsing or cutting of the original sentences and re-assembly into target language sentences" (Shermet 2012: 130), from CC-6.3 through Strand B (below) to the tightly-controlled technique needed for drafting, or crafted diplomatic statements where every word counts (see TG-9.6.2.5);

ii. our prescription of some repetition of performance on the same text (more relevant for crafted and formulaic, not original, conceptual or impromptu speech), and the use of a 'deliberate practice' mode of coaching (TG-2.6.2).

Shermet stresses that even when attending to micro-analysis, "the challenge […] is to **maintain macro-level analysis in the background**, as a check for what is being said" (2012: 130; our emphasis). The abilities that underlie 'standard interpretation' – macro-analysis, deverbalization, anticipation – are indispensable and basic in interpreting, and must be developed first (as of Initiation, CC-4/TG-5) as a **prerequisite for all other variants on what is expected of the interpreter**. This approach is continued here in Strand A of SI-Initiation, practising on faster, chatty and redundant speech to deflect attention from linguistic structure and focus it on hearing, understanding and getting it out in time, encouraging natural and unconscious deverbalization.

However, rather than putting off more linear, constrained 'oral translation' techniques until the end, we prefer to introduce them as of S2, in the pre-segmented ST exercises, continuing with their increasingly dynamic forms in Strand B of SI-Initiation, with the two eventually merging in Spoonfeeding.

As Coordination and Experimentation get underway we return to the mainstream focus on standard interpretation, with Experimentation in particular focusing on adaptation to varied free oral styles uncomplicated by text or unnecessary 'linear' expectations. In mid-late Experimentation, SI-text is introduced in small doses, then gradually increased, returning to practice in 'oral translation' techniques on institutional written materials in Consolidation and Reality.

Target market and language combination may also be a factor in varying the mix and emphasis of training for these different expectations: for example, a primarily UN-targeted programme may want to introduce SI-text (and practise on more frozen, formalized discourse) earlier and in larger doses throughout.

These parallel exercises, off-line and on, should all be enjoyable, whether for their liveliness and apparent realism (Strand A), as problem-solving games (Strand B), or just by keeping students mentally 'on their toes' (Strand C).

A. *Getting the point*: students try to keep up and 'get the point' on chatty, redundant speech delivered at normal speed (8.2.3).

B. *Dealing with linearity*: Students are 'drip-fed' structurally awkward speech (with pauses between imposed segments) or text (pre-segmented and/or scrolled on a screen), which they must render as a coherent, joined-up product that makes sense.

The key exercise forming a bridge to the next stage is 'Spoonfeeding' (CC-8.2.4) in which students must deal **on line** with text delivered under very controlled input conditions – first with artificial pauses, which gradually decrease in number and frequency – and a built-in feedback loop, in which the instructor adjusts input based on what s/he is hearing from the student (see procedure for multiple students in 8.2.5), making sure that the student is rendering material in the last chunk effectively while listening to the next.

C. *Comparing tactics across modes*: Strands A and B should make up the bulk (80%) of class time, but occasionally, classes can mix and switch between consecutive, sight translation and SI on the same or related materials – not only for preliminary warm-up and topic familiarization, but also to contrast tactics in 'previewed' conditions like consecutive and long ST with a 'blind' mode like free SI.

Variations that help to make pedagogical points include A-to-A paraphrase (to show the potential of linguistic flexibility); 'ST proper' with or without the text in advance; classic full consecutive; and 'consecutive for sight', as already described, in which speech is given as for consecutive, but then done from a text as sight translation; or other permutations, each of which must be explored by the instructor for its pedagogical dividends: for example, reading speech as if for consecutive or ST, then again for SI, rephrasing it and/or enriching the content; or doing the same speech in all three modes in various orders, to show how these different modes with their different resources (look-ahead, and possible chunk size) require different techniques.

SI-Initiation has two simple **objectives**:

1. *Ear-voice coordination* (speaking while hearing), which will be tested in the booth;
2. '*Making Sense*' (including speaking naturally and finishing sentences), which is continually tested in all exercises: on-line in the booth, off-line on controlled input, and, of course, in consecutive and sight translation.

As explained above, the relative demand for freer vs. more rigid SI varies between different markets in conference interpreting, so course leaders and trainers may want to adjust the emphasis accordingly. For example, some schools and trainers may find that strands (A) and (C) – free SI and mode-switching – are enough in the Initiation phase, adding more (B)-type exercises (controlled input, structure-oriented) exercises only later as students are ready to be exposed to more formal or deliberate speeches. However, regular ST will still be highly beneficial throughout the early stages.

Table 8.1 shows how these various activities can proceed in parallel before converging in 'Spoonfeeding 1', and then in more advanced on-line exercises in Coordination.

Table 8.1 Progression in SI training: from SI-Initiation to Experimentation

	Input type	Objectives	Input type	Objectives
SI Initiation				
Session 1 (Booth orientation)	Guided tour of booth, explain equipment, manners. Consecutive from booth, very brief session of A-A shadowing or 'smart chatter', then some familiar, slow input from room			Ear-voice coordination
Week 1–2 Alternating strands A, B	**A Natural, chatty** (in booth)	*Balance ear-voice Make sense Speak naturally*	**B Controlled,** more **formal** (classroom)	*Be complete, make sense, speak naturally, finish sentences, avoid backtracking*
Week 3–4 Alternating strands A, B	Redundant, oral easy/familiar content, slowish conversational pace	*Keep up; concision, padding; stay aware of speaker intent*	Pre-segmented 'sight translation' (slashes, pauses, scrolling, 'consequences')	*Chunking and joining, (syntactic agility, open grammar, lexical caution)*
Weeks 2–4	**C Alternating/discussing Consecutive/ST/SI on same (or rephrased) text**			
Weeks 3–5	**Spoonfeeding 1 (paused)** (8 hrs per week)			*All of the above…*
Coordination				
Weeks 6–7	**Spoonfeeding 2,** towards natural delivery			
	SI with Training Wheels (consecutive first) SI on fresh, fluent trainer speeches			*…and keeping up*
Experimentation	SI (natural speed and rhythm, familiar/briefed content at first)			

Of course, Consecutive and Sight Translation continue to be done sometimes in class and also in group practice, throughout the course.

8.2.2 Orientation

One week should be enough for Orientation. Students can be assembled in a 'master class' format for a first extended session. After showing them the booths and equipment, the instructor can explain the conventions and etiquette of booth work. It is important that booth protocol is thoroughly internalized from the start, and any breaches, such as whispering and giggling with the mike on, firmly censured. They can then try out the microphone and headsets (finding their dominant ear), taking turns to speak from the booth or listen from the room as delegates, then practising simple ear-voice coordination for a few minutes by doing 3–4 minutes of some mechanical activity like verbatim shadowing.

   After a break they can begin to engage their brains with the exercises described in CC-8.2.1 – at first moderately, with 'Smart Chatter' (*bavardage intelligent* – just talking about what you are hearing), then some Smart Shadowing (A to A paraphrase) on slow and simple speech. (If students find this too easy or pointless, for additional motivation a pompous or pretentious speech can also be used, encouraging clarity with a change of register.) These exercises can be done in all classes during the first week, alternating with some in-booth consecutive, some sight translation and an occasional Online Cloze for variety.

   These exercises should be both fun and moderately challenging. After each session, the instructor quizzes the students for understanding and recall of content, asking for an oral summary of the speech, in their A or B language, and then probing for gaps or fuzziness through Q&A. This can be an almost routine part of debriefing after any SI exercise.

8.2.3 Initiation 'Strand A': Easy SI on line (weeks 2 and 3)

Students can now can try their first embryonic SI, from B and C to A, from live 'trainer speeches',[1] i.e. easy talks delivered by the instructor with generous but natural pausing and redundancy.

   Subject matter should be very general and accessible, though by no means infantile, posing no comprehension problems whatsoever (SDI 1-2 on all parameters: see TG-2, Appendix). Content can be adapted to the knowledge level already acquired, including some current political, economic and social affairs, for

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1.   See TG-2 Appendix for definition.

example, but without technical terms or difficult concepts; and any proper names or semi-specialized terms should be given and/or explained in advance. Examples of genres and topics can be found in CC-8.2.2.

To minimize cognitive load, the instructor can even give students a brief outline of the talk in advance, setting out its macrostructure, key phrases and terms – perhaps in the form of a very explicit slide presentation. Some numbers can be introduced gradually.

Again, to make sure that students are not forgetting to listen actively (as described in Initiation), after they come out of the booth they can be asked to summarize and comment on the presentation – agree, disagree, or give counter-examples and objections that came to mind when they were listening to the speaker's argument, etc.

While we need to check that students' higher-order cognitive faculties (critical, evaluative) stay engaged even as they are learning a new skill, students must also make sure they are keeping up, not missing anything, and speaking naturally (Table 8.1.). The input should accordingly be designed and paced (in terms of combined speed and information density) so that **this can only be done by tuning in to the speaker's meaning, with no time to search for the right word but only to understand the unfolding message and express it spontaneously**. In contrast to the off-line exercises (Strand B), the trainer makes no artificial pauses, but relieves the pressure by controlling speed and difficulty and by adding some redundant padding in the form of wordiness, natural fillers or paraphrases as s/he reads or speaks. This natural, conversational tone should neutralize any tricky structures (which are resolved more quickly), penalize any attempt to translate every word, and reward idiomatic, concise production. Students should only be speeding up output when the input is denser, regardless of speed in words-per-minute (wpm).

The performance goals for students in this embryonic SI are simple: to hear everything, get the point across, and make sense. To meet these goals, students should be told they can simplify if necessary, and must not get hung up searching for the best word. Accordingly, feedback focuses on these basic objectives, <u>not</u> recommending or discussing more elegant language output at this stage. Also, this experience must be designed to be optimally easy and therefore FUN for students. Most students say that their most exhilarating experience in the whole course is their first contact with real SI – that is precious, don't spoil it!

8.2.4 Initiation 'Strand B': controlled input (classroom)

Objective: to raise awareness of structural issues in SI and help instil reflexes of segmentation (working with short units of meaning, 'chunking-and-joining'), deverbalization (natural expression), and open and flexible grammar, supported by anticipation.

As explained in TG-3.3.5.2, **Sight Translation** is excellent preparation for simultaneous interpreting, but unlike real-life 'ST proper', in which the interpreter sees the whole text and can potentially look ahead and restructure whole sentences, 'pedagogical' ST with controlled, drip-fed input offers an ideal off-line format to drill the tighter chunking techniques needed for the short look-ahead of the SI condition. The instructor can control the speed of delivery, the size of input segments and their 'awkwardness', and the length of pauses – and where appropriate, can do so interactively, waiting for the student's response (and later, deliberately not waiting). The off-line format offers scope and breathing space for 'teachable moments', with perhaps some theoretical explanation, and time out for discussion.

The instructor notes observations on the transcript during the exercise, which – combined with playback of the student's performance – should make it easy to give detailed, blow-by-blow feedback, with suggestions on where to attack sentences, how to join up the chunks, etc.

In these exercises, students learn how to use the techniques of chunking and recasting syntax ('syntacrobatics'), occasionally waiting or stalling, and, eventually, anticipation, to resolve structural problems. In the next, on-line stage – 'Spoonfeeding' (8.2.5), leading into the Coordination phase – they will move into the booth and learn to use these strategies under gradually increasing time pressure to combine listening, speaking, attention and memory; and then in Experimentation, to do so more and more flexibly according to their individual styles and abilities.

For this module it is important to

- explain each exercise carefully in advance with its rules and objectives;
- remind students that these techniques cannot be done mechanically, but depend on applying the habits already learned: active listening, and crucially, *deverbalization.*

The key SI techniques to be developed in these drills are:

i. *Chunking (segmentation)*: to simulate a common and necessary operation in SI, students must segment incoming sentences into units of meaning. These must be rendered sequentially, and joined up using the natural syntax and connective devices of the target language. After the exercise, the instructor can hand out the text and go through it again with the class, to help students find clever ways to join the chunks up into idiomatic, natural-sounding TL sentences.

ii. *Concision* and *compression*: this will become vital in SI, where unnecessary wordiness is usually incompatible with keeping up and staying in control. Concision means expressing ideas with precision and economy, being maximally relevant, and keeping output terse and tight; and some compressing will often be necessary to convey the essentials while keeping up with a fast

incoming barrage of SL words. To develop this ability, students can be asked to find progressively shorter ways of saying the same thing – and occasionally, for contrast, attempt more radical *summary* or *gisting* (see CC-4.2.4 for a distinction between these different degrees of streamlining).

iii. *Anticipation*: to stimulate what will become an important reflex for SI, the instructor can ask students to complete thoughts before they have seen/heard the ending of a sentence, and/or try to predict where the speaker is going with a certain line of argument, and how the speech might unfold.

A few introductory sessions can be spent presenting, explaining and demonstrating each of the above techniques. Initially, the exercise can proceed slowly and gently; then, as students get better at it, the pressure can be gradually increased.

Drip-fed or Scrolled ST (CC-8.2.3.1)
This exercise is pedagogically more powerful, and closer to the free SI condition, when (i) you can only see the current chunks, (ii) structural differences between the languages make some reformulation necessary, and (iii) successful and unsuccessful choices to wait, chunk, postpone some element, approximate or anticipate are rewarded or punished when the next segment arrives. The 'joining up' part of the job can also be monitored by 'grandmothers' (CC-4.2.2.1) who check that the output is smooth and makes sense.

Materials: Texts must be chosen to test flexibility in the particular target language, to illustrate common traps and elicit (multiple) solutions. In some language pairs and text types (e.g. from Chinese or Japanese into Indo-European languages and vice versa, or from formal German into Romance languages or English), almost any formal text will do to illustrate the challenge of structural differences; in others (for example, 'internationalized' Spanish or French into English) texts must be chosen more deliberately. Worked examples in different language combinations are given below in Appendix A.

The relevance of this exercise and the amount of time spent on it will be proportional to the word-order challenge in the language-pair being trained. However, while the techniques developed in these exercises are vital to handling some kinds of speech in SI, they also nurture general salutary SI habits of caution, flexible formulation and use of context that enhance the quality of interpreting even when the patterns of SL and TL seem largely 'symmetrical', since cognate languages may in fact also set more subtle, interference-induced traps (see discussion of word order in CC-8.6.3).

At first, TL production may slow down, as trainees are faced with the new requirement of rendering each segment autonomously. As the technique becomes more familiar, speed and fluency requirements can be gradually raised. Natural texts will always contain some easier and trickier segments; the text should be

long enough to go round the class several times so that each student gets a stab at several challenging chunks.

This exercise can also be done first from A to A (same language), then B or C to A. The scrolling speed is increased very gradually.

In a variation on this, the student must **change the register**, either making the discourse more formal or rephrasing it in simpler terms. This should certainly be within students' ability in their A language, and with a gifted class, may even eventually be attempted in B.

Chunk-by-chunk interpreting (oral input) (CC-8.2.3.2)

In this exercise the instructor feeds the chunks to the students orally, or from a recording, hitting the pause button every few seconds to ask a student "What are you going to say"? "How do you think the sentence will continue?" "Would you over-commit if you said this?"

This will be the first opportunity in SI to sensitize students to the role of **anticipation**. Before starting to read or play the text, the class must be filled in on as much as they would be expected to know about the event, situation, players, occasion, etc., with brainstorming and discussion of the background to the speech to activate relevant context. This will help with *cognitive* anticipation, but students should also be helped to recognize linguistic clues, and encouraged to take the plunge vocally. To encourage a little boldness, students can be shown how a temporary approximation can often help, even when exact prediction is not possible, with compensation or adjustment to the meaning downstream, making things more clear or precise as further context becomes available and/or when better ideas for TL formulation of some key idea come to mind. This technique will be drilled again more actively in Spoonfeeding (8.2.5), then as the more complete technique of 'framing and filling' in Experimentation (CC-8.4.3).

Circle Game (Interpreters' 'Consequences')

This version of the parlour game 'Consequences' (CC-8.2.3.3) is another variant in the chunked-input series that can be used for fun and variety. The input is either read by the instructor or scrolled, but this time the interpreter changes for each successive chunk.

Initially, you can let the class hear the passage once first, for example, by having it done it in consecutive. You can then announce a session of the Circle Game, pick a few paragraphs, and read them out again, this time chunk by chunk.

Later, when students are better at this technique, they should do this exercise 'cold' on unfamiliar texts. As the instructor reads out the text chunk by chunk, s/he can occasionally ask the student who has just rendered a chunk to make an educated guess as to how the sentence will finish and where the speaker will likely go next. The student's guess is then compared to what actually follows in the text.

After a few of these exercises students will begin to adopt useful reflexes, and realize that in real life:

- Not everything heard so far has to be translated immediately, some elements can be postponed or 'sketched', to be fleshed out as soon as more information comes in;
- 'Waiting' should sometimes be replaced where possible by intelligent padding, for example by appropriate connecting language; and that their stock of these expressions needs enriching;
- Some self-contained or unfamiliar items, like numbers and names, can't be postponed without risk but must be off-loaded immediately;
- There are often several possible ways of starting, continuing, ending and re-starting sentences, some of which are easier to follow through on than others: 'as you make your bed so you must lie in it'. This can be brought home by occasionally getting students to do several successive segments instead of only one.

These classes are difficult to teach but crucial, and even experienced instructors are advised to prepare them carefully in advance.

All these slow chunking-and-joining exercises (Strand B) will also help ST technique, and can be introduced in the last few weeks of the first year (S2),[2] then more intensively for the first few weeks of S3, alternating with in-booth practice on easy trainer speeches – before moving on to Coordination.

These exercises are all aimed at making students aware of the possibilities of formulation and of getting out of 'traps', both in ST and then in SI, by using **contextual awareness** (extratextual knowledge) and the always-underestimated **flexibility of language** – which together are key to good interpreting and, when in a spot (see CC/TG-9), to survival. However, just like muscle toning and general physical suppleness, this cannot be taught or internalized in one session or even only at one stage of training, but must be returned to and exercised until the method has sunk in. The ST-based 'Strand B' (off-line) exercises will return in a new format

- in Experimentation, where they can be done *after* a challenging SI exercise just done on line, targeting a specific difficulty; then
- in Consolidation, to practise handling more formal, structurally awkward and written material for SI-text;
- as a powerful tool for working on SI-into-B;
- in the final 'Reality' stage, for practice in more radical techniques such as strong compression, summarizing and even 'bullet-point' gisting for very challenging input (CC-9.2.4).

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2. In a two-year 'option A' timeline: see TG-3.3.5, Table 3.1a.

8.2.5　Transition to real SI: Spoonfeeding

Spoonfeeding (CC-8.2.4) takes students gradually from a micro-consecutive to a simultaneous approach, where they combine ear-voice coordination, following the speaker's meaning, and dodging awkward sentence structure, all now on-line. As such, it forms the transition from SI-Initiation to the beginning of real SI (Coordination).

Initially, speeches can be delivered at slightly slower-than-normal speeds (see SDI in TG-2, Appendix) and/or with 'training wheels' (consecutive first, CC-8.3.2) but this artificial support is gradually removed until students can keep up comfortably on fresh trainer speeches at around 110–120 wpm.

Crucially, the procedure is **interactive**. The instructor monitors student output and adjusts the speech in real time, pausing longer where the student needs more time to catch up, and paraphrasing or further explaining points where it is clear the student is having difficulty following. When the student is following well and is 'on a roll', you can pick up the pace and/or increase the density of ideas until the student starts having problems, at which point you can slow things down again, rephrasing as necessary. (This takes practice, but is easier than it sounds: see below for procedure with multiple students.)

It will be easier to deliver these speeches by reading them (naturally, and with intelligent intonation) from pseudo-oral texts, or texts written in an easy, interpreter-friendly style (such as blogs, or light non-fiction), or even (edited) published transcripts of topical speeches. You can mark the pauses in advance, and can of course also ad-lib while reading, for example to re-phrase, repeat or recap a point as a means of introducing extra redundancy and keeping information density relatively low. But using a well-chosen text with the segments marked in allows you to monitor and react to student performance much more effectively than if you were generating a freshly verbalized speech just from simple notes or an outline.[3]

An additional advantage of using a well-chosen text in this way is that students can be given a copy afterwards on which the instructor has marked the pauses with slashes. It will be much easier for each student to check her recorded interpretation with the script in hand (even if there has been some extra padding introduced during the delivery).

3.　Alternatively, the speech can be read by a TA, or a student already familiar with the exercise, although this is less ideal since only an experienced and fully qualified instructor can make the delivery truly interactive, monitoring the SI and adjusting the pace optimally. Recordings should be used only as a worst-case fall-back, and are not recommended due to the difficulty of manipulation.

At first, the speaker waits (or the instructor pauses the recording) until the student has (basically) finished interpreting the segment. From the second or third session, the pauses are shortened so that the next sentence begins *before the student has finished speaking*. Pauses can then be progressively shortened – and fewer – until the process begins to resemble real SI. Breaks can be taken for discussion when felt appropriate, but with decreasing frequency.

Procedure with multiple students: Several students can practise from booths on the same input. In a class of only 2–3 students, monitor only one student at a time. In a larger class, it is possible to monitor up to 2–3 students at a time, while reading the text, by constantly scrolling through their three channels. With a class of 8–9, this would mean doing three Spoonfeeding sessions of about 5–7 minutes each. Other students can monitor the output in the classroom to check that it makes sense and later, draw attention to any nonsense, unfinished sentences, etc.

If a printout of the text can be given to students when they come out of the booth, showing where the instructor has drawn in slashes, students can listen to their own work on two-track recording and check their success in segmenting, joining and anticipating as necessary to keep up with the speaker. They will also see where they had problems, and why. The class can discuss how to solve the problems, and compare various versions.

After distributing the text and listening to some recordings, the instructor can lead the class in a session of the various ST-based exercises described in TG-7 and above, using the same text to do calque sensitization, deverbalization and paraphrasing, chunking-and-joining exercises to explore different ways of sewing up the segments, flexibility exercises involving imposed structures/devices and starting from different places, and concision/compression drills (CC-4.2.4.1).

The instructor can also draw attention to different tactical options (further developed in Experimentation, 8.4.3) by occasionally stopping and asking students, before, during or after the exercise (with the print-out), how far they should, or need to, listen into each sentence before beginning to render that sentence:

- If you start in early, what can you say to get the sentence going in TL without over-committing or locking yourself into structure that might be difficult to continue?
- If you start in late, how can you keep it terse and tight, to keep your listening unbroken?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of starting in early vs. late?
- How far should you let the speaker get into the new sentence before you say something?

Spoonfeeding simulates a kind of 'take-off' in SI flight training and if done skilfully, is an excellent sensitization to SI in any language combination. It can be managed with up to three or four students in the booths at a time (one at a time is too boring for the others, since the exercise has to go on for a little while to produce any benefit), with the others outside listening with text to follow along, and noting comments for the classmate they are monitoring. However, it takes practice by the instructor, not only in speech delivery, but also in switching channels (say every 3–4 sentences) to monitor the students' progress and pace delivery so that all the active trainees can keep up.

After 1–2 weeks, students can go into the booth in pairs, one interpreting while the other listens and writes down numbers and proper names. Every 3 minutes the instructor calls out SWITCH. This can go on for 15–20 minutes.

Over the weeks, pauses are gradually reduced and speed of delivery is gradually increased. After 6 to 8 weeks, somewhat more demanding speeches (but still 'trainer speeches') can be played from video, and interpreted, initially with 'Training Wheels' (described in 8.3.1 below), then gradually with less support – for example, played or reading the text once, or simply briefly summarizing it, before starting.

The Spoonfeeding format can be revived briefly later, in Experimentation, when students will begin to meet more awkward, formal or complex speech. Controlled input of awkward sentence openings, in particular, can illustrate different techniques for 'jumping in' (8.4.2) and provide practice in sticking to the speaker's meaning while developing one's own comfortable, autonomous grammar, varying lag while being aware of the risks.

Anticipation will have been elicited as of the first 'drip-fed' exercises in CC-6.3, through to the various controlled chunking-and-joining drills of Strand B (CC-8.2.3). Speeches to train anticipation should be delivered with rich and helpful communicative prosody. Just as we showed students a wider range of memory-enhancing techniques in the introduction to consecutive interpreting, we must now encourage them to omnivorously scour for and exploit any and every clue to where the speaker is heading, including

- knowledge of the speaker's identity, capacity, position, previously expressed views, perceived intent and communication goals;
- linguistic clues such as collocations, clichés, frames, patterns, discourse markers, and paralinguistic clues in the speaker's tone of voice, prosody, facial expression, body language;
- our own knowledge of the topic, the world, common patterns of discourse and argument, genre-specific rhetorical conventions, and so on.

All these linguistic and extra-linguistic clues contribute to enable both 'cognitive' and 'linguistic' anticipation (Lederer 1990).

Spoonfeeding can be used to **force voiced anticipation**. The instructor reads from the speech, then simply stops in the middle of a sentence, leaving students to finish the sentence as best they can, verbalizing their best possible anticipation of the sentence ending. The instructor then supplies the missing element (e.g. the delayed verb phrase) and the student can repair or compensate if necessary (see CC-8.2.4).[4]

Appropriate passages can be found in texts in any language for anticipation drills in a broad sense, as salutary training in 'widening the window' for SI processing – the continuations to be anticipated do not have to be restricted to those posing an awkward word-order problem like a final 'delayed' verb or noun. Two examples of spoonfed texts (from German and Chinese to English, for illustration of awkward structures) with good student responses including instances of anticipation, are given in CC-8.2.4.

In practice, students will need quite a few sessions to learn all the lessons of these exercises. At first, they can be given some time, but some may be too cautious, slow and perfectionistic, and tend to 'pick up the sesame seed and drop the watermelon,'[5] not yet realizing that in SI there is no time to agonize over how to best translate a tricky word or phrase, on pain of losing sight of the macro-analysis. In the early stages they will occasionally have to be reminded of the urgency of real SI and pressed to find faster, if second-best solutions.

While all these exercises help to prepare students for SI, and to cheat awkward word order and speak naturally from the outset, they will not be able to internalize the techniques fully while still wrestling with basic ear-voice coordination. These drills will therefore need to be refreshed and extended in more dynamic conditions in SI-Experimentation, then again in SI-Consolidation, practising on more difficult institutional texts, to ensure that these flexibilities are fully developed in readiness for the much more difficult input of real life.

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4. This procedure was experimented in Geneva (FTI, then still called ETI), mainly from German, as a consciousness-raising exercise (and for research purposes, to compare the anticipatory abilities of subjects listening to their A, B, or C language): students asked for it to be introduced as an exercise in SI training. It was subsequently used and well received by trainees in Shanghai (SISU-GIIT). Cf. also the 'SynCloze' test described by Pöchhacker (2011).

5. 捡了芝麻丢了西瓜.

8.2.6 Staffing and classroom procedure in SI-Initiation

Initiation into SI only takes a few weeks, but is such a critical stage in interpreter training that it justifies a special effort of resource allocation by programme administrators, assigning qualified instructors who are also able and willing to devote significant time to detailed constructive feedback. Students may be introduced to SI in mixed-language or language-pair-specific classes. In the latter case, instructors responsible for different language pairs must coordinate closely. Whatever the configuration, instructors must be experienced and capable both of delivering natural, carefully chosen and deliberately paced SL input, adapted to student progress, and of monitoring performance, diagnosing problems and recommending solutions – including linguistic devices – in the output language (TG-2.2). This requires either an instructor who is bilingual or has a very strong active B-sim, or effective **team-teaching** (TG-2.4.4, 2.4.5). An experienced instructor will often be able to guide students to paraphrases and alternative solutions in their A language even if it is only the instructor's 'Bcons'.

Arrangements will depend partly on class size and instructor availability. Some instructors may feel confident that they can deliver the slow, paused trainer speech while also checking students' responses, or even adapt the input interactively. Even so, ideally some students should remain in the classroom to listen to their classmates. Classes should be long enough to make sure that everyone gets at least two turns on line, which should be easy, since turns of 5–7 minutes are enough at this stage. To avoid constant 'musical chairs', students can also pair up in booths and switch at a signal from the instructor, and can thus also listen to their booth partners.

8.2.7 Feedback in SI-Initiation

At this stage, feedback in class (see TG-2.5.8) will typically take up about a third of class time. **Each student should receive some feedback from the instructor in each class**.

The focus in the Initiation phase of SI should be on the three aspects already mentioned earlier: (a) thinking before speaking, making sense (analysis), (b) natural expression (students are only working into A), and (c) ear-voice coordination (hearing everything and keeping up). At this point, students should be more focused on listening and understanding than on speaking. Ideally, analytic listening should help to find concise formulations so as to keep up with the message without trying to translate every word.

Feedback can be given (i) live, by other students, teaching assistants or other visitors immediately after the performance; (ii) on dual-track playback of selected passages in class, that can be paused for comment and discussion; and (iii) by the instructor, occasionally in writing (at least three times a semester, and after exams), based on careful listening and analysis of the dual track recordings outside class.

i.   *Instant 'live' feedback from listeners*: depending on class size, having some students work while others listen (either sharing the booth or in the classroom as 'delegates') can add some superficial realism to the experience. Teaching assistants and trainee teachers (TG-2.2.6) may also participate, and visitors who do not understand the source language are especially valuable throughout SI training ('pure users', TG-7.3.4.1). However, listeners are not all qualified to give the same kind of feedback, and so should be carefully briefed to avoid unfair or irrelevant criticism. The instructor should explain that despite appearances, monitoring SI fully and fairly for accuracy is probably even harder than *doing* SI.

At first, all listeners (listening in their A language) should adopt a pure 'grandmother' role (CC-4.2.2.1), checking only that the interpreters are speaking naturally and making sense. After a while, however, even students monitoring their classmates (and any TAs and trainee teachers present), should be able to spot places where the interpreter

a.   didn't *hear* (and perhaps guessed, leading to errors, incoherence or a breakdown of logic);
b.   heard and just translated without *thinking* first, producing calques, or nonsense;
c.   embarked on too ambitious or rash a structure and broke down, was trapped, forgot to end a sentence, forgot how she began, or made some other error of judgment or prioritization.

The 'performers' can also be invited to describe their own experience and difficulties, before or after their 'monitors' make their comments.

At this stage all feedback-givers should abstain from comments about language quality per se, or suggestions for more elegant formulations, provided the output sounds reasonably natural and makes sense. The instructor, however, should detect any significant or unusual linguistic weakness, either in comprehension or production, and give warnings and recommendations for targeted enhancement (TG/CC-7). The final diagnosis should be left to the instructor (who may have to politely restrain comments about 'lag being too long/too short', as well as comments on language).

However, in the SI-Initiation phase, the instructor will usually be more or less fully occupied with delivering the 'trainer speech' and therefore unable to monitor effectively while speaking naturally (except to some extent in Spoonfeeding, when

reading artificially paused text interactively). But qualified, diagnostic feedback from the instructor is indispensable, and can be provided in two ways, at different levels of detail (TG-2.5.8):

ii. *Playback in class for instructor comments and discussion*: After Orientation and throughout SI training, but especially from Experimentation to Consolidation and Reality, students should routinely record themselves on dual-track devices. Selected passages (at first, perhaps a volunteer's) can then be played back immediately in class, while the experience is still fresh in student's minds, for discussion and comment, focusing on the current objectives.

iii. *Analysis and written feedback*: Once a month or so, and especially after tests and exams, instructors should analyse students' recorded performances at leisure and provide each student with detailed written individualized feedback with examples, diagnosis, general assessment, and recommendations. In addition to focusing on the current objectives of naturalness, completeness and making sense, when listening to recordings instructors should also be alert from this early stage for any tendencies to fabricate, embellish, guess, which may be coherent and convincing but unfaithful (cf. 'accidental relevance').

8.2.8 Variety and class momentum

To keep up momentum and interest it is important to balance the time spent on exercises, feedback and discussion, and to introduce some variety. In addition to alternating booth and classroom exercises, consecutive and sight translation 'proper' will still be done regularly, in alternation with or supporting the SI Initiation exercises.

Out of class, students should not try to practise SI on their own for the first month of Initiation, but should spend their time expanding their knowledge and language horizons by reading and listening, aiming for more comfortable comprehension of natural speech in their B or C languages (TV talk shows, etc.), and frequently practising sight translation and A-A paraphrase, alongside continuing practice in consecutive. Bsim students should continue to practice consecutive and ST into B regularly to avoid getting rusty over this period of SI into A only.

In the next two stages, the students' goal will be twofold: first, to learn to manage their attention so as to hear and render everything without dropping any content; and second, to integrate these techniques more and more spontaneously until they eventually blend together into internalized expertise, equipping the interpreter to handle ideas presented in all kinds of packaging, convenient or not – our daily lot in SI, in all languages.

As a foretaste, they can be shown some authentic snippets from conference speech that would be awkward to handle without such techniques. Such examples may begin appearing in authentic texts as of the Experimentation stage (and in the international-officialese genre, as of Consolidation), but they can be given to students to think about:

> "The second point is I frankly think that – we will discuss later about the security situation – there should be a clear separation…."
>
> "Again – in addition to the fact that whilst – – (pause 1–2s) – the interaction we've been talking about between work here and efforts in the Transport Committee goes both ways…."
>
> "This means that the Committee will be able to take the guidance to donors – to be presented to the Council at its April 2013 Meeting – further."
>
> "I don't know what scope delegations which have flagged that they can't agree to the Council decision this afternoon would like to give the Secretariat to summarize their reservations…."
>
> "To try to bring a little bit of structure into what are now 12 sub-areas – which I must admit is a little bit difficult although I have attempted it myself, …."

This kind of speech should not be given to students until later, in Experimentation, and then – as always – in real speeches with some advance explanation of context; and they will not be expected to handle it *comfortably* until Consolidation.

Finally, in this phase of discovery of SI, students should occasionally be given a chance to listen to high-quality SI in their own language combinations by a range of senior professionals (or failing that, by advanced students at mock conferences).

8.3   Coordination and Control (early/mid-Semester 3)

In the next stage – roughly over the next 4–6 weeks – students will improve their coordination and control of the process as they begin to work from material more closely resembling real speeches in ordinary language. These are still trainer speeches – semi-prepared or pseudo-oral productions on general topics, clear and structured and with some artificially added redundancy and coherence – but also, some 'nuggets' including occasional simple numbers, and now picking up very quickly to normal speeds (see SDI in TG-2 Appendix).

Classroom sessions can now follow a standard procedure (by default, i.e. except for special guest lectures), as first outlined for Consecutive (CC-5.6.5), with an advance briefing and brainstorming.

The **goal** of this stage is confident SI into A on fluent trainer speeches, keeping up with the speaker at normal talking speed (~110–120 wpm) without losing any

content. This will require students to *coordinate* their attention so as to hear and process all the ideas and information in the SL speech, and demonstrate enough *control* of the techniques of deverbalization and segmentation to process and linearly reformulate the 'units of sense' smartly enough to keep up with the speaker.

8.3.1 SI with help

To ease this transition, we recommend the following exercises, each of which offers some relief or support to the SI process, either in combination or in alternation:

1.   In **Faster Spoonfeeding** (CC-8.3.1), input begins at a leisurely pace and with pauses at natural break points and between sentences, then accelerating gradually over about three weeks until students are interpreting fluent trainer speeches in the range of 110–120 wpm. Again, appropriate written texts can be used (Density/Style of 3–4[6]), provided that they are read well and come out as natural-sounding speech. Copies of the original can be handed out afterwards for more efficient and convenient performance review. Gradually, texts can be chosen that are more challenging in terms of formal structure or register, building up to 'advanced spoonfeeding' for the introduction to SI-text (CC-8.4.4).

2.   In **SI with Training Wheels** (Déjean Le Féal 1997; CC-8.3.2), students first do the text in consecutive (either in the class, or in the booths to save time), then SI. This exercise can be done in parallel to Faster Spoonfeeding, and creates a nice contrast to it in that the speed of delivery can be much faster from the very start. It also provides a direct experience of the difference between modes explored in Initiation ('Strand C').

   Importantly, students must be reminded that although they will have heard the ideas once before, when re-doing the speech in SI they must not rely on memory and blithely ignore the speaker, nor get ahead of the speaker. This is primarily an opportunity for them to practise SI technique at speed, so they must make sure to follow behind the speaker, maintaining a viable lag, chunking and deverbalizing, and rendering units of sense linearly and rapidly, in succession, without any unrealistic look-ahead. Nonetheless, having an overall grasp of the content in advance will significantly reduce the listening burden, allowing them to focus on SI technique at natural speed. This is what makes Training Wheels the ideal complement to Faster Spoonfeeding, where the pace is slow and controlled but the content is fresh or unfamiliar.

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6.   Difficulty parameters for input at each stage are given in the Speech Difficulty Index (SDI) in the Appendix to TG-2.

3. **Simultaneous Consecutive**[7] (CC-8.3.3) is more advanced than SI with Training Wheels, but still provides support to help students keep up with relatively fast speech at this stage of their training as they transition into fluent trainer speeches. With a discourse model already installed in their minds and visual recall clues in their notes, students will not have to listen as hard as they would if the speech were coming to them 'fresh'. This should release processing capacity for deverbalization and chunking technique, and some self-monitoring.

Again, students should be reminded that they must pretend they are hearing the speech for the first time and must not become decoupled from the speaker, getting either behind or ahead, but must instead concentrate on applying proper SI technique to process units of sense as they come in.

During this Control and Coordination phase, the sight translation-based drills begun in Initiation can continue occasionally to add variety. These and the two new exercises, Spoonfeeding and Training Wheels (of which Simultaneous Consecutive is a variant), should 'triangulate' onto fluid SI technique.

8.3.2 Take-off: Real SI on fresh trainer speeches

After these transitional exercises, students are ready to try simultaneous on fluent trainer speeches at normal speed (see SDI, TG-2 Appendix), but these no longer need to be or should be given by the instructor. From now on, they will need more variety, with good speeches played either from videos (but still trainer speeches, carefully *selected*, for example, among recorded speeches by other instructors, shared among schools or language sections), and good live speeches (again, for now, only by tried-and-tested speechmakers, such as TAs or instructors from other sections), at least half of the time if possible. Student speeches should *not* yet be used at this stage, although instructors may find some particularly clear and structured speeches on Speechpool,[8] for example.

The learning curve: in the driving seat
At this critical transition to fluent input, students must not forget the habits of autonomy, analysis and distance acquired in the preparatory stages and lapse into unthinking, word-for-word translation. Both parameters – input difficulty and demands on output quality – must be set at 'elementary'. The objective of this stage must be clearly stated: balance listening and speaking to ensure that all content is heard, understood and rendered comprehensibly.

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7.   Not to be confused with 'SimConsec', a trade-marked use of digital smartpen technology (see TG-6.6.4).

8.   http://speechpool.net (Accessed November 19, 2015).

Until this is achieved, students will still experience SI as 'multitasking' between conflicting activities (CC-8.6.1, TG-3.2.3), and will be largely unaware of their own production. For this reason, from this point on all students must **record themselves** on the dual-track system, to be played back at first for private consumption, then quite soon, in class, immediately after the exercise, for feedback and commentary.

Playback will instantly show students where they misheard or were talking nonsense. If they try to translate too quickly and unthinkingly, they will soon either be 'garden-pathed' by the sentence structure, or be left behind by the flood of words, and – having turned off the spontaneous mode of language production (from understanding) – be unable to find the simple expression that would get them out of the maze, or worse, talk nonsense, as when trying to speak from exhaustive, literal but meaningless notes in consecutive. Hearing themselves fall into this trap should not demoralise them longer than it takes the instructor to explain, so they must get a detailed, individualized and *explanatory* critique of their performance (TG-2.5.8) without delay.

The main problems that will arise have been listed in CC-8.3.4: mainly, difficulty in keeping up; no spare capacity for self-monitoring, resulting in missing information without even realizing it, or in output that is confused or is hard to follow; or if basic coordination is still shaky, a stop-start or staccato pattern of 'mini-consecutive' alternating with silent listening breaks; or possibly – which is more serious – trying to bluff and pad with platitudes or guessing what the speaker might have been likely to say. This is very bad, and must be nipped in the bud.

In our experience, these are the most salient issues, each of which must be shown up and addressed thoroughly, by playing back and reviewing the recorded performances in detail. To balance this, students should be encouraged and praised for their good points wherever possible. But in the next stage – Experimentation – the instructor's feedback must focus on each student's technique, illustrated by concrete examples immediately after the performance, backed up by occasional fuller analysis of selected passages (TG-2.5.8).

Practice outside class
Students still need close supervision throughout the two first phases, and should be discouraged from practising on their own until the instructor judges them ready, except with 'Training Wheels': in other words, they might begin practising SI

a.　on their own, using recordings of speeches they have already done in their last consecutive class and that have already been thoroughly explored and discussed with an instructor;

b.　in group practice sessions, on fresh speeches delivered by classmates, but first interpreted in consecutive and discussed, then again in simultaneous.

SI-Coordination will be a brand-new challenge, like trying to juggle several balls for the first time. Even if they don't fall into the more serious traps described above, some students may be dismayed (as in Consecutive) at seemingly losing their fluency and ability to find the right words. It should be explained to them that this is normal and temporary – perhaps in terms of processing capacity overload (Gile 2009) – and that their expressive powers will return after a few weeks (by Consolidation), provided they work analytically and get plenty of practice. As they move into the Experimentation phase, occasional teacher demonstrations may be helpful.

8.4 Experimentation (and personal style)

8.4.1 The learning curve: adapting to 'natural terrain'

Experimentation marks the transition to authentic speeches, selected to avoid certain special difficulties but delivered at normal speed, in real situations, by speakers who are not concerned or even aware of being interpreted – in other words, first contact with the messy, variable and unpredictable moving targets of real life. The entry-level expertise needed to handle this variety has been built up in stages, from the basic aptitudes checked at admission through listening, analysis and speaking clearly and naturally (Initiation), then more SI-specific techniques like chunking, anticipation and open grammar. Having rehearsed and practised these skills under controlled conditions (SI-Coordination), students must now deploy them in a bumpy, externally-paced ride over natural terrain.

In choosing speeches for this stage – whether videos, invited lectures or student presentations – the instructor must try to avoid the special difficulties that are still to be kept in reserve for Consolidation and Reality (q.v.), but must also aim to provide maximum variety, so that at students can appreciate the wide potential range of speaker styles (up to now they have mostly heard only their own instructors), while at the same time gradually identifying common patterns that will help them automate part of the task. These may be set phrases or clichés (often with virtually context-neutral equivalents), logical patterns of reasoning and discourse development (cf. CC-4.5.1.2), or semi-predictable peaks and troughs of old and new information to which we can become attuned, significantly improving anticipation and triggering effort-saving procedures (for structure) and schemas (for content). The support that skills can get from language and knowledge should now become increasingly obvious to students. Prosody and other pragmatic clues are precious aids to anticipation; another is familiarity with the subject matter, which will be the focus of the next stage (Consolidation).

When discourse is more formal, rigid or deliberate, some form-based techniques for dealing with awkward structures may be useful, especially in some language pairs. This kind of input should largely be saved for Consolidation, but some speeches should be chosen to show students through direct experience that they must be able, when necessary, to break away radically from the input structure and *make an equivalent speech in the other language, at the same time, using completely different words and sentence structure*. This can only be done by using clues to the speaker's meaning as they come in, making sense of them with the help of background knowledge, and forming sentences that are flexible enough to adjust to the speaker's meaning while still being linguistically acceptable.

In this stage, individual variability comes to the fore, as students stabilize and settle into their personal SI styles. Research has confirmed (as was already clear from observation) wide strategic variability among individual interpreters who may nevertheless all produce work of comparable expert quality. Some reformulate and re-order more, some are more 'linear' (Isham 1994); some are more 'lean' or concise, some more voluble (Van Besien and Meuleman 2008) and so on, reflecting differences in personality, cognitive strengths and weaknesses, life experience, linguistic habits and background knowledge.

The purpose of Experimentation is to facilitate this stabilization of an SI style, or effective combination of techniques, on as wide as possible a sample of authentic speech. Students now have the requisite skills and techniques, but may now ask for 'strategies'. We prefer to keep this term for more global and deliberate actions that can and should be controlled deliberately especially with regard to optimization (see TG-3.2.4.1 for these distinctions). The interpreter's lag (or *décalage,* or ear-voice span [EVS]), for example, is sometimes treated as a strategy in the literature, but we see this more as a corollary of technique than as a variable that the interpreter can or should manipulate directly.

The instructor's job in Experimentation should be to explain such phenomena, show how the basic techniques can be combined according to the terrain, with additional tips such as where to 'jump in' and stay afloat (8.4.2), how to use placeholders for temporary approximation (in 'framing and filling': CC-8.4.3), or how to manage slow speakers.

In this stage, students can also be introduced to basic **SI-text**, at first without deviations (8.4.4), and should start regular practice in dealing with numbers (8.4.5). But the emphasis of SI-Experimentation should be on free SI and adapting to the irregularity of natural speech, combining and deploying all the techniques learnt so far. The instructor's main task is to give thorough, individual '3D' feedback (see TG-2.5.8), focusing on the process aspects of students' work (8.4.6).

8.4.2 Where to jump in and 'open grammar'

This exercise (CC-8.4.1) is an on-line revival of the (pre-SI, off-line) ST-based flexible syntax drill described in CC-6.3.2 that aims to show how many ways there may often be of 'attacking' an utterance (though with different consequences) – and ultimately, to bring home a much more fundamental point about autonomy and liberty in SI: an interpreter *must* reflect the speaker's *meaning* but can make her own *grammar* (the exercise might even be called 'their ideas, your syntax'; see also TG-12.2.3 for theoretical discussion). If necessary, a slow **Spoonfeeding** format can be revived for this exercise for better control.

Some students will at first have a tendency to try and translate what they hear immediately – producing nonsense, if they haven't fully mastered chunking-deverbalization-reformulation, and they can't hear what they're saying – while others may hang back, from timidity or caution (possibly from habits acquired in written translation, or in consecutive) waiting for more context, or perplexed by inconvenient word order, sometimes too long for their own short-term memory to handle, leading to omissions and incoherence.

The examples in CC-8.4.1 are in English, but instructors will find appropriate texts in any language pair to prompt or require a similar approach, which can be generalized beyond just syntax: the SL input may be 'awkward' due to paralinguistic features and eccentric speaker styles – it may be written and dense, or extremely loose and unstructured, culturally marked, or full of back-tracking, self-correction and parenthetical or throwaway comments, where communication relies a lot on the speaker's tone of voice, humour, movements, and so on.

Note that this exercise is not intended to prescribe or impose a strategy. First, reformulation should not be *forced* on students who succeed in producing an intelligent, quality rendition which happens to be structurally and linearly quite close to the original ('tight chunking', see 8.5.2 below). The aim is to uncover possibilities for when they are needed; imposed restructuring in this case would be perverse. However, this drill should illustrate some special constraints of SI, and ways around them (in contrast to ST 'proper', where the choice of starting point is much wider, or Consecutive, where freedom of choice will depend largely on the clarity and layout of notes on the page).

8.4.3 Time, effort and meaning

Students may ask about how far they should be behind the speaker – what is the 'right' lag?

It is important to explain that it makes no sense to try to consciously maintain a distance of so many words, or so many seconds behind the speaker, and that the

lag will naturally vary with the time it takes to understand the speaker's sense and to think of appropriate words for production – which will vary with the density or familiarity of the input, and with your own linguistic readiness – but that too long or too short a lag both carry risks. SI involves constantly steering a path of compromise between memory limitations, the need for more information, and the time we can afford to spend finding the best words.

The instructor must explain with examples – drip-feeding and pausing almost any fairly complex speech will do – how 'enough sense to make sense' only accumulates at irregular points as the discourse unfolds (triggering a *déclic*, according to ITT theory, when 'the penny drops'), how to pad or stall intelligently in the interim, and to remember to keep listening while we produce a complex idea that we have just fully understood, in case it needs correction.

Students will find their own balance through practice, but some warning signs can be picked up on in the early stages of experimentation:

▶ when a student cannot retain the sense of what was said one or two phrases back, in a normal, spontaneous speech on a general topic, and is staying too close, trying to rely on a mechanical and linguistic type of chunking, there may be a problem of comprehension and general knowledge;

▶ when a student seems to prefer a longer, or at least more elastic lag, the instructor should not only check for omissions, but also make sure the student has the production skills to finish sentences quickly and clearly.

Slow and familiar speeches can be delivered by the instructor in the early stages. However, even these have **peaks and troughs of information**, which students must learn to recognize.[9]

In the example below, the interpreter must hear all the words at some level, but those underlined are relatively 'new', unpredictable, and indispensable to get the point:

> Good morning, and thank you for inviting me. <u>Trade imbalances</u> are an inevitable consequence of globalization, and, as I am sure I do not need to tell this audience, resolving them <u>takes time</u> and calls for a complex mix of <u>fiscal, monetary and structural measures.</u>

Speech processing research shows that we never hear every word of input (in the example above, for instance, we wouldn't need to hear 'for', 'am', 'not' or 'them'), but rather fill in the gaps by inference. Some words are critical and cannot be missed,

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9. Natural speech usually shows a rough alternation of old and new information, or segments which are more or less 'dense' or predictable, and thus require more or less attention (linguists have proposed the terms 'theme' and 'rheme', or 'topic' and comment'). For background in functional linguistics, see TG-12.2.4.

or the next passage will make no sense; others just rephrase what has been said before, to refresh the listener's memory during a long and complex argument, for example, or are predictable for other reasons (for example, conventional formulas) and therefore need only partial attention. This **redundancy** is key to the very feasibility of SI and must be used by the interpreter. The more redundancy, the more attention can be freed up for hearing and analysing the more critical or less familiar points in the flow. Needless to say, the interpreter can increase the amount of her 'subjective redundancy' by increasing her familiarity with the topic and the situation, for example, through advance preparation – and this should usually increase as the speech and even the meeting unfolds (Chernov 2004[10]).

The pattern of new and old information in input is never fully predictable, but a good part of learning to do SI consists in perfecting a sense for these rhythms, and using them to coordinate one's own attention and effort. Needless to say, these patterns are easier to attune to in spontaneous or semi-prepared speech, thanks to clues from accompanying prosody (pitch, stress, and hesitation/pauses), which may be less salient in a speech that is read out (unless by an exceptional speaker).

New or unfamiliar information requires more attention to the input itself, whereas when the speaker is pausing, recapitulating or collecting his thoughts we can put more effort into thinking, or polishing, or output. This will result in some fluctuations in EVS. Students should now be encouraged to experiment actively with varying the length of this lag, discovering the risks or benefits of staying close to the speaker (to catch names or numbers, for example, which quickly fade from 'echoic' memory), or falling behind, to get a better understanding before speaking and allow for more concise, apt expression, when the speaker is developing a more abstract idea. They will soon find their natural lag range and how to vary it optimally and safely according to the nature of the input.

At some point the instructor should also find one or two samples of very *slow and/or rambling* speakers for students to develop the skill of spinning wheels, padding or recapping and generally talking while saying nothing much to keep the attention of listeners (CC-8.4.2). This may not come naturally to some people, and may take some practice to sound convincing, especially in the B language.

Finally, while interpreters will eventually settle on somewhat different lag patterns as part of their personal style, students who are learning the techniques of SI should not be encouraged in the habit of waiting too long before attacking each utterance. A persistent delay of five seconds or more usually means that the student is not chunking properly or reacting fast enough, and is likely to get overloaded when

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10. Chernov (1979, 2004) observed that redundancy for the interpreter is partly objective (in the density or repetitiousness of the speech itself), and partly subjective (depending on the interpreter's familiarity with the topic).

things hot up. Students who at this stage are still trying to do 'mini-consecutives', waiting for whole sentences and complete thoughts, and/or simply reacting too slowly to incoming material, will need intensive remedial exercises to get back on track and acquire a viable technique to handle the increasingly fast and dense input of the Consolidation phase and real life.

For a brief theoretical discussion of EVS (lag), see CC-8.6.2.

Anticipation
Another aspect of the question of where, when and how to 'jump in' is *anticipation*, which must also be explored and trained in the Experimentation phase.

In CC-8.6.4 we gave some real-life examples of sentences with delayed verbs or objects that are trivially easy to anticipate for seasoned professionals with minimal risk (e.g. *"I would like to begin by [my hosts and the organizers……….[thanking]]"*).

However, for students, who have not yet built up an internalized database of conventional conference procedures, speech patterns, ideas and other 'overlearned' sequences, the context of authentic conference materials may at first be bewildering or intimidating. At first, therefore, while gradually being initiated into the background they need for contextual help, students can be sensitized at least to linguistic clues, and encouraged to take the plunge vocally (8.4.2). The anticipatory instinct is first stimulated by 'active listening' exercises, and especially, by brainstorming before each session to activate associations which help to project the direction of the speech. Trainees are filled in on as much as they would be expected to know about the event, situation, players, occasion, etc. A Spoonfeeding format (8.2.5) can then be used to trigger voiced anticipation.

8.4.4 Introduction to SI-text

In mid-to-late Experimentation, students can be introduced to 'straight' SI-text – i.e. without deviations and in easy conditions.

After a brief explanation of the challenges of SI-text and basic preparation and mark-up techniques, students can warm up by doing some of the ST-based segmentation exercises from CC-6.3. Since the first step is simply to train the new habit of three-way (ear-eye-voice) coordination, texts of moderate difficulty can be used, but without long and complex sentences. Standard institutional texts will be suitable for both the ST warm-up and SI-text in the booth (see SDI in TG-2, Appendix A for parameters). The text should be provided well in advance for preparation, then read out for the students in the booth, expressively and naturally but slowly at first, then building up to normal speed, and verbatim, with no departures (additions, omissions or text changes). The instructor can monitor the interpretations while delivering from text, just to make sure that students are segmenting well and

maintaining a safe distance, rather than trying to recast ambitiously, and that they are not falling hopelessly behind, getting ahead of the speaker, or failing to listen.

Gradually, through SI-Consolidation, instructors can reduce the preparation time and increase delivery speed, moving on eventually to more realistic SI-text with omissions, additions, stretches of free SI, etc. (8.5.3).

8.4.5 Practising with numbers

Catching and reliably rendering numbers is a special challenge for interpreters (Lamberger-Felber 1998; Mazza 2001), especially when digits must be reversed (e.g. between German and most Western European languages), or the base is different (decimal for numbers between 70–99 in English or Italian vs. vigesimal); but most notoriously, in several major East-West language combinations, for larger numbers over 10,000, and therefore also most economic and financial data, energy, population, etc. (see box on numbers in Asian-Western interpreting, in CC-5.4.3.2).

An additional challenge lies in the possible need to convert *units* such as gallons to litres, Centigrade to Fahrenheit, miles to kilometres etc., which may or may not be attempted depending on the situation, and available time and processing capacity.

A significant chunk of class time (more for East-West language combinations) can be devoted to such concentrated drills on passages with numbers in different contexts over a period of two weeks during Experimentation, and again in Consolidation.

8.4.6 Experimentation: common problems, diagnosis and treatment

In Experimentation students learn to adapt their timing to both the speech and their own particular abilities and find a comfortable and viable personal technique. This is the stage in SI training in which instructors must pay the closest attention to *process*. To give effective feedback, they must be able to diagnose the causes behind the surface symptoms and make recommendations for treatment, both in class (with playback) while the experience is still fresh in students' minds, and more fully later, after re-listening outside class (which will also be valuable training for less experienced instructors).

The successful trainee, with solid comprehension and active language proficiency, attentive analysis and ear-voice coordination, will apply the various techniques and gradually find a comfortable lag range that is both suited to her individual working memory, knowledge and speaking style, and flexible enough for both fluent and accurate interpretation. While any trainee may eventually mature

into an excellent interpreter with a relatively short or relatively long lag, extremes at this stage are usually associated with more basic problems of comprehension or technique.

Realistically, at this point many students will still be showing weaknesses in basic abilities like attention and ear-voice coordination. Every effort must be made to eliminate these before they can benefit from more sophisticated experimentation and more challenging materials.

Some symptoms have several possible causes, to be unravelled using one or more diagnostic tools:

i. *Close analysis on playback*. It may be necessary to listen twice, with and/or without the student. **Even for an experienced instructor, detailed and thorough feedback for SI that goes beyond observation to diagnosis and recommended treatment is often only achievable by listening twice through students' dual track recordings**.

ii. *Eliciting the student's recall* of the problem sequence and discussing it: both the student's and the instructor's insight might be needed to pinpoint the cause of the problem.

iii. *Probing or questioning* to discover if the problem was one of basic language comprehension or background knowledge (does the student understand the original passage now, off-line?) Or if not, of analysis? Or of attention/coordination? (Can s/he hear now what s/he missed on line? What was s/he doing during this passage – listening, speaking? How far behind was s/he?) Or finally, of technique (chunking, rephrasing, etc.) – in which case possible tactics and general principles can be discussed.

Here are some common problems – often occurring in combination – with possible diagnoses and recommended treatments for each (so-called '3D' feedback see TG-2.5.8). Some students may need special coaching (TG-2.6).

1. **Trouble keeping up**. This may be due to one or more of the following:
   a. *Comprehension*: the student is simply taking too long to understand the speaker, due to weak comprehension or background knowledge (possibly aggravated by the speaker's accent or style);
   b. *Weak active language proficiency or transfer skills*: the student cannot get from SL to TL fast enough, due to insufficient availability either of words and structures in TL in general, or of ready SL-TL transcodables ('bilingual phrasebook');
   c. *'Literalist' block*: the student may still be stuck in a literalistic conception of completeness, failing to think contextually and trying to translate all the words instead of analysing and formulating;

d. *Poor technique* (*text processing skills*): the student has not learned to 'chunk-and- join' and is forced to lose precious time on re-ordering and paraphrasing;

e. *Over-perfectionism*: ambitious but unrealistic concern to produce only elegant, polished language: the student falls behind, losing more and more of the speech.

2. **Incompleteness**, from significant omissions to patchy and disconnected output, often combined with difficulty in keeping up. In severe cases, the student is reduced to 'random sampling' interpretation (Sunnari 2003: 243). Most numbers, names and other details are missed. (In extreme cases, students will produce 'Frankensense': a piece of sentence 1 grafted onto a piece of sentence 2 with a chunk of sentence 3.) Causes may include

a. *Comprehension* deficit (not sufficiently automatic for SI);

b. *Basic/pervasive attention or coordination* deficit;

c. *Local/accidental attention or coordination failure,* i.e. only on challenging passages, or due to experimenting with new technique.

3. **Inaccuracies** may be due to

a. *Comprehension*

b. *Attention*

c. *Guessing* things that were missed, or trying to *bluff* by filling the gap with neutral, pleasant words (resulting in vagueness and dilution, or even distortion).

4. **Not making sense**: the student is rendering words and phrases before fully understanding them and how they fit into the speech (lexical calque). This is serious at this stage, since it seems to reflect problems of both comprehension/analysis, and coordination (the student doesn't hear what she is saying). Playback with the student is needed to clarify this.

5. **Choppy delivery**, due to

a. *Basic coordination*: the student has not yet learned to share her attention, and is still switching back and forth between all-speaking and all-listening;

b. *Uncertain or hesitant technique*: reluctance to take the plunge ('cold feet') and speak while listening, alternating bursts of silence and mini-consecutives instead of a joined-up flow;

c. *Wide lag fluctuations*, falling behind then catching up. This may be a sign of intelligent experimentation, but is not viable in the long run as it will often require summarizing or omitting to keep up, with significant loss of detail even if the sense is intelligently captured.

6. **Language: ungrammatical or sloppy (vague, literal, unidiomatic) output** may be due to:

    a. *Active language deficiency* (e.g. weak B);
    b. *Analysis*: interpreting without listening and thinking hard enough (may occur with a shorter or longer lag);
    c. *Technique (lag too short)*: the student is too close behind the speaker to notice structural asymmetries and reformulate (structural calque).

7. **Constant backtracking**: student is frequently 'garden-pathed' (see examples in CC-8.4.1–8.4.2), due to either

    a. *too short a lag;* or
    b. *insufficient chunking or use of open grammar.*

8. **Breakdown** on grammatically complex structures. Causes may include

    a. *Comprehension deficit*, insufficient exposure to complex discourse; and/or
    b. *Basic techniques* from SI-Initiation have not been assimilated.
    c. Experimenting with more advanced technique and losing contact with the speaker.

    Though the most spectacular symptom, this is not necessarily the worst – especially if caused by (c) – and may be less worrying at this stage than confident production of pleasant nonsense, or diluting and distorting the message.

Treatment of all these symptoms will depend on diagnosis:

►   *Attention/coordination issues*: return to slower, more regular speeches for one or two sessions, monitoring the students' performance carefully and playing it back.
►   *Analysis deficit*: for a few sessions, spend some time going through the text with the student(s) in advance, discussing the context, situation and speaker's position, and doing a thorough, blow-by-blow exegesis of at least part of the text, eliciting the speaker's probable thoughts and intended message at every point and showing how this analysis can facilitate interpretation (e.g. making it easier to anticipate, and re-phrase) and improve it (apter word choice, etc.).
►   *Coordination issues*: an effective approach can combine (i) instructor demonstration – the instructor does SI on the same or a similar text with the student in the booth – and (ii) analyzing the speaker's rhythm and the distribution of information peaks and troughs, and discussing how to allocate attention to capture each salient 'point' while keeping half an ear open for all the rest (details, names, numbers, throwaway lines and 'afterthoughts');
►   *SI technique*: Where problems seem to be related to the application of SI techniques rather than basic deficiencies, students should be shown, by listening

to their recordings with instructor commentary, what may have been lost due to over-rough or simplistic chunking, or where their lag may have been too long or too short. Resume intensive chunking-and-joining and scrolled ST exercises (CC-6.3, 8.2.3.1) for one or more sessions according to need.

► *Active language deficiency*: in B, intensive coaching in various exercises can be prescribed as appropriate to the problem (particularly various kinds of paraphrase: see CC-7.4.2[11]) and for persistent formal problems, using targeted 'deliberate practice' methods (TG-2.6).

From this stage onwards, and through Consolidation and 'Reality', **demonstration** of SI technique by the instructor, either with students listening in the class or teamed up with the instructor and especially, alternating with them in the booth, can be extremely beneficial (unless it causes anxiety, which may sometimes be the case).

The instructor's job

SI-Experimentation is a period of concentrated pressure, with stamina needed for longer stints in the booth. The variety of subject matter is stimulating, but also exhausting. Alternating booth practice and playback, students will begin to see how much sustained concentration and analysis it takes to produce professional SI. Residual gaps will be revealed in coordination, and even in comprehension, and some students may feel stuck for a while on a 'plateau' similar to the apparent slowing of progress after learning note-taking ('learning curve' effects: TG-6.5.2).

The focus so far has been on process and the incremental acquisition of new skills on relatively easy and accessible material. Most of the mental reconfiguration should now be complete. The remaining challenges, though substantial – speed, technicality, etc. – will be more straightforward, easier to appreciate, and essentially a matter of consolidation through practice.

Instructors must continue to provide regular and specific feedback, but focus increasingly on the product and on preparation, user orientation and professionalism (CC/TG-9 and 10, CC-11). The instructor's job in Experimentation is not to point out linguistic weaknesses or poor choice of words, but to draw attention relentlessly to missed or distorted content, and to segmentation techniques that would have captured the original accurately and in good time. The primary goal is still *completeness of content*, even if somewhat clumsily or inelegantly expressed. Production quality should improve as students gain control, making 'room' to polish their product; if not, they may have a deficit of analysis or even comprehension,

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11. More specifically the following, depending on the student's problem, 'tightening' paraphrase, aiming for concision (using loose, redundant texts), 'loosening' or oralising paraphrase (on dense or formal texts), and register shift paraphrase (either formal to colloquial, similar to 'tightening' paraphrase; or – more difficult – from colloquial to formal).

which will prevent further progress. This should therefore be addressed immediately, either by special intensive coaching, or if serious – where institutional arrangements allow – by an interruption of studies and a stay in the B or C language country. Usually, however, the student will either have to upgrade her language proficiency and repeat the year, downgrade the Bsim to Bcons, or abandon the insufficient C language.

Students need special individual attention at this stage. Those who stick too closely to the speaker can be shown where they failed to capture the sense for lack of perspective, or where the instant equivalents they produced turn out to be meaningless when strung together. Those who fall too far behind may need more practice with chunking on slower speeches with pauses (*ST-based drills, Spoonfeeding, Training Wheels*).

Not surprisingly, given individual variations in working memory, background knowledge, or natural speaking speed, we find a wide variety of personal styles among successful professional interpreters. Students must be allowed to find their own style and comfort zone, but without letting up on the gradual move to more realistic and demanding speech input. There will still be some gaps in basic technique at this point, and instructors should be attentive to the need for remedial coaching while there is still time. Once students have shown they have the basic techniques as well as the new-found personalized agility to keep up and make sense on authentic speeches, they can move on to Consolidation.

8.5   Consolidation – from basic to confident SI

8.5.1   The learning curve: new horizons

This stage can be seen as 'the end of the beginning' of SI training. To prepare for the final stretch, which will be more and more practice-intensive and reality-oriented, the focus now shifts in two ways: to **expanding domain knowledge** to gain familiarity with the subject matters of the target market, and the jargon that goes with it; and attending more to the **quality of production** (by improving *self-monitoring*), in a more user-oriented approach.

Students are always preoccupied with language (especially into B), but by now they should have learned how to manage it better as *linguistic readiness* (CC-7.2.1–2). Exposure to more realistic material – denser, less familiar but also prepared and written – will bring home the critical role of knowledge and preparation. 'Ready equivalents' will again become necessary for recurring boilerplate expressions in the mainstream conference interpreting domains, as well as frozen and technical terms.

Domain knowledge, though always valuable, becomes indispensable for **formal and prepared speech (or text)**, which often combines rigid structure with density of information and specialized content, making it hard if not impossible to pick out key ideas and the thread of the argument unless most of the accompanying material – names of countries, companies or organizations, concepts, terms, common acronyms, anecdotal references – is familiar and can be more or less automatically transposed in TL. Students who have not spent significant time broadening their horizons both in world knowledge, and in the terminology of economics, governance and the international community (Level 3 of the reading programme described in CC-7.3.2), will be overwhelmed.

Working in thematic blocks of 2–4 weeks on authentic material from international organizations and events should be very motivating for students, who are often impatient to make contact with the reality of their future market. Being able to picture the context of the speech and consider the speaker's likely stance, etc. can make the difference between survival and demoralising failure, especially for students working into a B language.

However, this will include a lot of technical and exotic jargon and subject-matter, so each new topic and set of documents (or links) must be provided well in advance. Techniques for preparing an assignment should be taught in a special module in **Conference Preparation** (CC-9.2.5.1).

The novelty and variety of working on real-life events will raise morale, but demands and cognitive load must be kept reasonable, alternating easy and challenging periods. By the end of S3, students should have solid technique in both consecutive and sight translation and be well on their way to mastering SI on run-of-the-mill authentic speeches. One last shock still lies in store: exposure to the reality of the 'borderline feasible' speeches (fast, read-out, mixed-media, accented…) that the modern conference interpreter routinely faces (CC/TG-9).

In this stage, instructors must

► Help students **eliminate residual flaws in technique** (hearing everything, lag management) as trainees improve self-monitoring and awareness of their product and the audience;

► Provide **authentic target-market materials** (e.g. EU, UN) for students to work on and study thoroughly to master their discourse and content, installing relevant, easily retrievable knowledge schemas and reliable equivalents for high-frequency terms. This will now mean doing SI-text regularly and in earnest;

► **Incrementally add difficulties** such as speed (>130–140 wpm) and density, unusual speaker styles and accents, and especially, more formal registers;

► Practice in **SI-text** on somewhat denser (institutional, corporate or financial) materials, still read expressively at normal speed without omissions or additions, but with less time for preparation. Speeches for SI both with and without

text should now also contain multiple names and numbers (often several large
and complex ones in the same sentence), as well as technical terms, all buried
in conceptual argument that must be closely followed (see SDI).

The **performance goals** for the first part of Consolidation (typically, the end of
Semester 3) should be differentiated according to the difficulty of the material or
exercise:

▶ on standard authentic speeches into A: complete, well-packaged and accept-
  ably fluent (though not yet 'eloquent') interpretation;
▶ on more difficult speeches into A (very formal or institution-specific, technical,
  fast, dense, or highly original/atypical): completeness and clarity;
▶ on standard speeches into B: completeness and clarity.

Materials and class organization: Over the 12–15 weeks (S3–4) of this stage, stu-
dents should be fully initiated into the kind of speech and subject matter they will
routinely deal with on their main target markets. This will include a lot of **special-
ized, partly institution-specific material** that will be largely new to students, full
of arcane and intricate jargon and conventions.

   Instructors should not jump from one topic to another after one or two ses-
sions, but choose one specialized topic domain, announce it two weeks in advance,
supervise preparation efforts, then devote a **block of two to four weeks** to doing
increasingly difficult tasks in that domain. One can never hope to cover even a
representative range of all the potential subject matter an interpreter will meet,
so the focus must be on students' ability to research and prepare an unfamiliar
topic. Also, setting this kind of material to do without specific advance warning
and opportunity for preparation would be unfair even for very well-informed and
experienced professionals.

   To ease the passage into formal, text-based and more specialized speeches,
these classes can begin (after sufficient topic preparation and reviewing terminol-
ogy where necessary) with consecutive and sight translation, either on (i) a closely
related text, or (ii) the first part of the speech, which is then either continued in SI
(Seleskovitch and Lederer: 2002[12]), or re-done in SI. However, it is important not
to dwell too long on the same text or re-do it too often, to avoid the illusion that
SI offers the same opportunities for look-ahead, reflection and revision as written
translation.

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12. These authors also recommend having students return to do tricky segments in consecutive
after doing them in SI, "to check that they remember what they said, i.e. if they worked intel-
ligently", and to encourage them to concentrate better in case they are asked to do this in the
future' (Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002: 175).

It is advisable to alternate challenging periods with easier sessions to give students a chance to relax a bit and focus more on the rhetorical quality of their output.

8.5.2 International community-speak: acclimatization

To introduce trainees to the institutional world of conference interpreting, instructors can first pick one organization, specialized agency, convention, regional body, or national ministry (UNGA, WTO, IAEA, UNEP, CBD, WHO, Habitat, European Parliament, WTO, IMF, World Bank, US State Department, etc.) to bring students in contact with its underlying subject matter, standard official-speak, jargon and discourse conventions. Guidelines for preparing such focused **thematic blocks** and organizing **mock conferences** are given in TG-9.4.1. Since speeches in these events are often read out, students must now be fully initiated to the techniques of **SI with text** ('SI-text', see below).

The **Rehearsal** exercise (CC-8.5.3, Step 2) will also help initially to consolidate technique, language and knowledge until students are comfortable doing authentic conference discourse in that particular domain. The variety of accents will be unsettling at first, but the plunge must be taken sooner or later. Then pick another agency/convention/process and tackle that one the same way, making sure students prepare it thoroughly.

As already recommended, **instructors should coordinate** on the topics, meetings or institutions covered over this period, get students to organize mock conferences, and ideally arrange at least one practice visit or internship with daily dumb booth practice, followed by a full debriefing (TG-9.4.2).

This acclimatization stage is obviously necessary to produce market-ready graduates for any setting. (Trainee legal, medical, community or conflict zone interpreters, whatever their skillset, will need to spend equivalent time and work familiarising themselves with setting-specific discourse on an appropriate corpus of past proceedings, exchanges, interviews and case studies.)

Formal and institutional discourse
'Officialese' (national or international) is an unavoidable part of the conference interpreter's lot, justifying preparatory drills from the middle of the second semester, alongside reading in students' own time.

Materials selected will depend on the training institution's target market(s), but should normally cover one or more national (Foreign Office, or other Ministry) or international organizations (see above), and/or one or more chosen private market settings (banks, business, judicial or arbitration proceedings, media, sign-language interpreting, etc.).

Authentic materials from any of these settings will seem daunting to students only a year out of undergraduate studies in language and literature (though some mature students, or those from other backgrounds such as law, science or business studies, may be better prepared). Recordings from the UN or the European Parliament, for example, can be a huge shock: hyperformal style, legalese (and in English officialese, extensive use of passive voice); long and complex sentences with multiple nominalizations, embedding; unfamiliar issues (content); meeting procedure, in-house and 'international-community' jargon, accents (less so in the EU), super-rapid delivery (European Parliament).

Materials with *multiple severe challenges* – read out fast and monotonously from a difficult text in a heavy accent, for example – should be kept for the very last stages of training – 'Reality' (TG-9.6) – but now is the time to tackle 'standard' institutional discourse, including read-out statements.

'Oral translation': tight chunking and automaticity

By this point, trainees should be able to see how different types of speech call for different techniques and processing and product priorities. As the UN's instructions for preparing its accreditation test show, this market segment requires expertise in the style of interpreting that Shermet (2012) calls 'oral translation' (see 8.2.1): the rapid linguistic conversion of (usually unseen) written statements, often read out fast and monotonously, with high expectations of standard terminology and phrasing. Some leading schools have been reluctant to train or test students in this kind of exercise, which is admittedly often less motivating than interpreting more lively, interactive exchanges. But it is part of real life for a conference interpreter, and as Shermet explains, calls for a specific technique focused on micro-level analysis, a short lag "only one, maybe two meaning units behind the speaker", and heavily reliant on fast, automatic conversion of terms, names and set phrases. However, this is still SI between different languages, so chunking and reformulation are still necessary, albeit in this narrow window: "the challenge here, and the author believes it separates the wheat from the chaff, is to maintain macro level analysis in the background, as a check for what is being said" (2012: 129–30).

8.5.3   SI-Text (continued)

SI with text should now be done regularly. For now (mid-S3), the procedure can be alternated between two conditions:

i.   Easy-ish general texts, to be read out at normal talking speed, without major departures or additions but with some oralisation, including occasional omissions to reinforce the need to listen. The main take-home message is to give *priority in attention to listening over reading*.

ii.   Progressively more substantial, semi-technical or institution-specific material (e.g. from a ministerial meeting), read out verbatim. Preparation time can be gradually reduced, and the pace of reading gradually increased, putting pressure on students to increase their reading speed and fully master SI-text techniques, from efficient preparation and mark-up to improved on-line eye-ear-voice coordination and control, in preparation for the vigilance they will need for the realistic exercises in the next stage: SI-text with numerous omissions, additions and other departures (CC-9.2.3.2).

8.5.4   Consolidating the product

The other goal of this stage is to consolidate the **product**; but there will certainly still be some **residual problems of pure SI technique** – hearing everything, keeping up and being complete – that absolutely must be ironed out at this stage before the 'fish really hits the pan' in Reality (CC/TG-9). This will take very close attention by the instructor, who must listen to student performances and recordings with a fine-toothed comb, followed by intensive individualized coaching (varying among students).

Only when these requirements (the goals of previous stages) are fully met on routine speeches can attention turn to **polishing delivery**. A key dimension is **natural prosody**, which students should now aim for, first on speeches of standard difficulty.

At this point students should occasionally sit in classes and consciously pretend to be 'delegates' – i.e. users of the interpreting service, preferably in a different class from their own, relying on the interpretation from a language they don't understand – and give feedback to their fellow students on their clarity, expression, voice quality, delivery, etc.

The learning curve: the last mile

The shift to full realism in S3-S4 marks the first point at which there is a risk of some students feeling genuinely overwhelmed. This is to some extent unavoidable, because as training converges on tasks from the more challenging end of the spectrum, it is by definition no longer possible for the instructor to control factors of difficulty and sequence exercises comfortably. If, however, a solid base of technique has been laid over the course of the standard progression, the instructor can explain and demonstrate the various factors in difficulty as well as appropriate preparation and on-line tactics, and can provide encouragement and targeted feedback to students to help them fine-tune their performances.

Successful students should adapt over a period of two to three months. As they approach a professional performance standard, the instructor's role will shift from 'teacher' to 'consultant' (a shift that began from the Consolidation phase), as each student takes full ownership of her own ongoing, indeed lifelong, learning process.

Deliberate practice out of class (TG-2.6.2) will contribute more to progress than in-class instruction. Indeed, many hundreds of hours of such practice are needed to go from competent performance under controlled conditions to basic professional performance under challenging, realistic conditions.

8.5.5 Stronger and weaker students

Weaker students may now find themselves struggling, and the gap between the top and bottom of the class may widen considerably. Students who had previously still been able to keep up with the standard Skills-based progression may now find it difficult to cope with the increased demands on Language, Knowledge *and* Skills. Some students who could perform a generally acceptable simultaneous on 'trainer speeches' may find it almost impossible to make the leap to more difficult authentic speeches. This may be due, inter alia, to problems with accent, style, register, speed and density; insufficient encyclopedic and domain-specific knowledge and lack of relevant schemas; insufficient availability of lexical and structural resources to keep up; inability to make the necessary inferences in real-time to form a coherent mental model of the discourse and to grasp its nuances; and, especially, the co-occurrence of several of these factors, and others, in one speech.

If the gap between the top and bottom of the class grows too wide, the instructor faces a considerable dilemma. Teaching to the top of the class will exclude and demoralise weaker students; teaching to the bottom of the class will hold back the progress of the more competent learners. A major part of the solution lies upstream: a sufficiently strict check at Midpoint (3.4.1) should have held back students who were not ready for advanced training. But even when students have been carefully selected at intake and again at Midpoint, it is only when they have been exposed to the more difficult tasks, and have practised doing them for some time, that it will it become clear whether they can handle them.

The instructor therefore needs to manage this part of the course with special attention to overall class progress, but also with a clear focus on the end-of-course objective: immediately operational professional interpreters who can work competently and reliably in the real world, with all its demands.

While continually raising the bar in terms of speech difficulty and task complexity, instructors must offer constant encouragement, provide customized feedback on in-class student performances (more demanding when critiquing the work of the better students in terms of its details, nuances, terminology, style, delivery, and optimization decisions); yet still keep an eye on the basics for weaker students, checking for accurate reproduction of the macrostructure (main points, logic, contrasts), encouraging intelligent 'second-best' or even 'third-best' versions (simplified paraphrase), and continuing to offer process-oriented guidance with a focus on the weak links identified.

This can be particularly helpful because some students who lag behind will not be *uniformly* weak, but will just have one or two specific weaknesses that are holding them back and that can be brought up to standard, or at least improved noticeably, through targeted work. Here are some of the most common weaknesses that tend to emerge at this point:

▶ **Listening comprehension** in the B or C language becomes shaky under certain conditions of difficulty;

▶ **Baseline knowledge and/or preparation** are patchy or absent in some key domain (economics, political and legislative institutions and procedures, business and finance, statistics, etc.);

▶ **Scanning**/reading in the B or C language is too slow, impacting on the ability to use a text effectively in SI-text;

▶ Active control of basic **grammatical devices in the B language** is compromised under the pressure of more difficult SI;

▶ **Specialized vocabulary is not activated** and available, causing delays for retrieval and loss of information;

▶ **Syntactic inflexibility**, resulting either in structural calque in the interpretation or in unnecessary restructuring leading to memory overload and losses of subsequent information;

▶ **Insufficient fluency and automaticity**: the student could do the speech well if it were delivered at slower speed with didactic, interpreter-friendly delivery, but cannot keep up with the speaker at normal speed and 'real world' delivery;

▶ **Patchy self-monitoring**: student does not hear herself failing to make sense, or making slips, speech errors, or using unidiomatic, clumsy phrasing; and so cannot achieve a polished, audience-oriented product.

In such cases, the instructor should recommend targeted practice materials and techniques to help bring up the weakest link. The instructor should also focus a good proportion of in-class feedback on each student's progress in addressing her specific weaknesses.

In final examinations and recruitment tests, juries expect not only fidelity but also pleasant, articulate and communicative delivery. In practice, they must often be content with adequate accuracy of content and tolerable presentation, without distracting tics and obtrusive hesitations and repairs. Almost inevitably, though, there will be some students who have multiple weaknesses, or one serious individual weakness, that cannot be brought up to par in the space of one or two semesters. Efforts to make certain steps more automatic (such as comprehension of accents, for example) can help, as described above, but there may not be enough time to achieve the necessary degree of automaticity before the Professional Examination. These students will likely have to take an extra year to be competitive.

At the Consolidation stage, some students may sound more fluent than others; however, instructors must be alert to problems that may be harder to detect, but need to be corrected without further delay.

For example, one student may produce a steady, confident flow which seems to follow the successive phrases statements of the original, but a 'pure user' taking notes for a report finds it hard to pin down exactly what is being said, and in places the message doesn't seem to make sense at all. This betrays inadequate comprehension and analysis, which should have been detected at the admission interview or the Active Listening stage. This student may have to repeat the year. Another student may have a lively and engaging voice, and use simple but expressive language, so that invited listeners are enthusiastic and consider him/her to be one of the best;[13] but checking the tape reveals distortion, oversimplification and significant omissions, so that a note-taker would take home a false report to his superiors. If this is a problem of technique (coordination), it may be corrected in time by first playing back the performance with the student using an SL transcript, stopping and going through errors in detail and eliciting corrections; but if it is due to weak comprehension persisting at the Consolidation stage, it may well be too late to close the gap in time.

Conversely, presentation may be the problem: a third student may produce an accurate, logically coherent and grammatically correct version, but in a flat monotone, thus wasting his effort on the delegates, who fall asleep. Voice training in expressive prosody may help, starting with reading out loud, then sight translation, in deliberate practice mode (stop-start, with prompts and interruptions). However, if he improves off line but this fails to transfer to the SI performance, there may be a deeper problem of effort saturation (no attention to spare for hearing himself and shaping his product): the instructor should check comprehension and linguistic availability.

A fourth student may produce delivery that sounds somewhat irregular at first, with occasional self-corrections and changes of speed and rhythm, and/or may have an audible foreign accent and simple vocabulary when working into B. However, if the self-corrections make the product clearer without being irritating enough to put off the (monolingual) user, reflect thorough, intelligent analysis, and produce a version that is clear and accurate enough to take reliable notes of the content, some irregularities in delivery are a small price to pay. This student may try automating more operations, and with time and experience, will probably be able to enrich her linguistic resources, smooth out her delivery and become an excellent interpreter.

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13. These preferences or biases, unconscious and unrecognized, in untrained but also experienced users, have been repeatedly confirmed in research (see e.g. Collados Aís 1998/2002; Gile 1999a).

In the last months of the course before graduation, make sure that students understand these trade-offs. In real life, only an interpreter whose performance is user-friendly as well as accurate will be recruited both by colleagues and by more and less demanding clients.

In keeping with the shift to realism, in the fourth semester evaluation should become increasingly more 'summative' than 'formative'. This means comparing examination performances to the Professional Examination standard (and the demands of the real world) and assigning marks based on professional performance standards ('criterion-referenced assessment'– see TG-11), *not* on the student's personal improvement over time ('ipsative assessment') or ranking in the class ('normative assessment').

This is important, as students who are not up to the required standard deserve to know this in advance of the Professional Examination, so that they can make a targeted effort to close the gap, and be psychologically prepared for possible failure at their first attempt.

8.6   Teaching SI: themes and controversies

8.6.1 Modelling the SI process

In SI everything is happening so fast that theorists face a major challenge in modelling what is going on in the 'black box'. Clearly both language processing and wider cognitive processes are involved, since – contrary to some early beliefs – interpreters understand both what they are hearing and what they are saying. But despite significant advances in cognitive science, and sophisticated models of memory, attention, speech processing and the bilingual brain, it has not proved easy to adapt them to this peculiar activity and combine this knowledge in a single robust, illustrative and widely accepted model of SI, showing all the interrelated processes, that might be used for training.

Modellers of SI have focused especially on two intriguing aspects:

i.   *Meaning and language*: how is it that, when linguistic cultures express things so differently – regardless of how closely related their *word-forms* and *grammars* may be – the interpreter can extract, process and reformulate meaning to produce a clear, usable (and at best, fluent, idiomatic and complete) translation while lagging behind the speaker by only a few seconds, with not even the option of waiting for complete sentences?

ii. *Mental effort management*: how does the interpreter allocate and balance limited mental processing capacity, in a task that seems to require simultaneous or closely overlapping listening and speech comprehension, analysis, memorization, speech production and monitoring of the speech product?

The first aspect – meaning and language – has been the main focus of the *école du sens* ('theory of sense', or Interpretive Theory of Translation [ITT]), first presented in CC-4.3, which has given us the concept of deverbalization; and of a number of other theories and models (e.g. Chernov 1979, 2004; Setton 1999).

The second aspect – coordination and effort management – has been the primary focus of Gile's Effort Models (Gile 1995/2009), a popular and expressive way of picturing the tension between different components of SI that students have to master, and helping them in particular to understand the main *general* obstacle to their achieving the first objective in the Initiation/Coordination and Experimentation phases: catching and producing all the information.

Most if not all established professional practitioner-trainer-theorists, including the authors of both the *théorie du sens* and Effort Models, share a common conviction about the necessary prerequisites for SI – language skills, context, knowledge and preparation, and appropriate working conditions – but highlight somewhat different aspects in their descriptions of the process.

8.6.1.1 *SI and the* théorie du sens *(ITT)*

Lederer (1981, 1986) describes SI in terms of multiple overlapping operations, of which the three central ones are perception, conceptualization and production, while the interpreter also constantly monitors the situation and her own production. The phase-shift between hearing, understanding and speaking is explained in terms of two distinct memories: a short echoic memory for sounds, and a much longer 'cognitive' memory for conceptualized ideas. Speech contains items that are not (or not yet) recognized as forming part of an idea, but can be translated – and often must be – before they disappear from verbal memory. 'Real' interpreting is possible when, at irregular intervals, words are suddenly understood in context (the *déclic*, as the 'penny drops'), as units of sense in an unfolding message, which can thus be rendered more intelligently, and more confidently and naturally as the speech develops. The simultaneous interpreter learns to produce some words and items provisionally 'between' these moments, while leaving the grammar open to possible changes of course when the sense has been understood, and to delay or re-order verbal production, sometimes even anticipating the speaker, to fit the grammar and conventions of the target language. These alternations, between hearing and understanding, and between understanding and production, provide Lederer with an explanation of the variations in lag found in her corpus (1981: 283–311).

For the ITT school, interpreting from a language with a different structure should not affect the course of understanding, but requires a different technique: from German, for example, the anticipated meaning of the final verb has to be produced early in English or French, whereas *into* German, its production must be delayed. From German into French, the interpreter "starts sentences using different grammar, and chops embedded structures into sub-units that fit the spirit

(*génie*) of French better and are easier for French listeners to understand" (Lederer 1986: 148, our translation).

The ITT training strategy was developed for trainees working only into their native languages in SI, so the focus is on "conserving mastery of the mother tongue [and] continuing to express oneself naturally and intuitively to be well understood by listeners".

8.6.1.2 *The Effort Model of SI*

Gile's model of SI (Gile 2009: 167–174) postulates four efforts in interpreting: Listening and Analysis (L), Short-Term Memory (M), Speech Production (P) and Coordination (C). The first three describe the operations on successive speech segments in SI "in somewhat oversimplified form" (ibid.: 168), recognizing *inter alia* that the order of processing different segments (or 'translation units') may be scrambled, and that it is hard to assess the added cognitive load that can be attributed to each Effort at any given time, which also depends on their interaction (ibid.: 169).

At any time, up to four of the core efforts may be active (including Coordination). As in the Effort Model for consecutive, "for interpreting to proceed smoothly", processing capacity (PC) for each effort must be sufficient to complete its task, and the total requirement must not exceed the total available processing capacity or 'mental energy' available to the interpreter.

In this model, problems may arise when capacity is inappropriately allocated (e.g. too much effort spent on an elegant formulation at the expense of adequate listening and analysis), or when 'problem triggers' (speed, accents, numbers, poor sound, etc.) occur that create increased capacity requirements and thus possible local or complex failures ('failure sequences') (ibid.: 170–1). Gile compares SI to a tightrope that the interpreter is constantly at risk of falling from, as s/he will tend to be operating at close to maximum capacity (ibid.: 182; Gile 1999c).

We can debate whether these are really the most relevant 'subcomponents' of the SI process, as well as the neatness of this subdivision, and can imagine possible interactions and ways of stretching some capacity; but it seems plausible that students' errors, omissions and breakdowns can often be explained by capacity overloads or conflicts between operations (pictured as boxes and other shapes in our diagram below) *as they are equipped or supported at a particular time.*

To that extent, the Effort Model helps students to picture the juggling act that they are learning and be alert to the danger of dropping any of the balls. During debriefing with playback, students will better appreciate this coordination challenge – the first big one in SI training – when they find they *completely failed to hear* certain items or passages (no PC kept for listening), or didn't fully understand the connotations of a phrase in this context before translating it (not enough PC devoted to analysis), or were unable to finish a sentence because they'd forgotten a

key element (not enough PC for working memory), or produced an awkward or unclear rendition of something they had understood (not enough PC for production).

However, as explained in TG-6.8.3.2, working memory capacity can be stretched in the acquisition of expertise by building and mobilising increasingly relevant knowledge schemas and automating some procedures. This carries a pedagogical bonus: research suggests that encouraging students to think of their own cognitive capacity as a quality that they can improve can have a powerful effect on learning and motivation.[14]

8.6.2 Component skills and SI

In the discussion on component-skills vs. holistic approaches to training (TG-3.2.3), we accepted that interpreting can be analysed as a complex cognitive skill (CCS) in which interdependent sub-skills must be combined to serve a higher-level goal (roughly, enabling communication across linguistic and cognitive barriers, CC-4.8.2), but with additional corrective, adaptive input from judgment at the highest, strategic or 'executive'[15] level to fulfil the relational component of the task, which is beyond the scope of strictly CCS analysis, as conceded in the literature.

On this basis, we concluded that while some sub-skills could be drilled in isolated or partly-combined but simplified form, provisionally relieving time pressure, or input difficulty, it is safer to stick to 'incremental realism' as the dominant principle in training, in which the higher strategic goal (communication) is clearly visible in the vast majority of exercises. This still seems to be a safer bet than more analytic componential training by sub-skills, given the lack of research findings on the transfer of competence from sub-skills to the full task, and the differences between interpreting and the complex cognitive skills described in the literature, particularly the key relational factor in its highest-level goal (see TG-3.2.3.5).

In SI the cognitive and time-coordination components would seem to be more critical to mastering the task, proportionally to the relational aspects, than for modes in closer contact with clients that are done in two passes like consecutive, or where the input is easier.

The main challenge in SI can be seen as reconciling the communication of the speaker's meaning with the on-line management of the formal and temporal constraints, each highlighted in one of the two models described above. This might also be seen as a variant on the traditional translation challenge of reconciling form and sense, but with an added temporal constraint, or in terms of Shermet's (2012)

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14. See e.g. the work of Carol Dweck and colleagues at Stanford.

15. See Appendix B, Figure 8.1.

contrast between relatively form-bound 'oral translation' and the more freestyle 'standard interpreting', except that the processes are not neatly separable most of the time, but must complement each other. We have no explicit model of this trick of juggling sense and form, so must approach it heuristically, for now, by high-lighting each side of the equation in two separate strands in SI-Initiation (a free-style Strand A and a form-constrained Strand B), then bringing them together in Spoonfeeding and Coordination before exposing students to the authentic speeches of Experimentation, in which argument, set terms and numbers come in all mixed up together and students must learn to juggle sense and form under pressure.

8.6.3 Preparatory exercises for SI: a controversy

Some aspects of SI training have generated lively and long-standing debates in the literature, apparently reflecting differences not just of pedagogical strategy, but in the understanding of the SI process. CC-8 closes with a series of short discussions of four such issues: whether SI is really a case of 'multitasking'; the interpreter's lag (or EVS); whether word-order differences between the SL and TL are really a problem (or if not, why not?); and the nature and importance of anticipation.

Here we return briefly to one particular long-standing controversy, the choice of preparatory exercises for SI training. Many imaginative exercises have been pro-posed to manipulate various parameters of live or semi-simultaneous translation (e.g. Gillies 2001, 2005), some of which – such as on-line cloze or simultaneous paraphrasing (Kalina 1998, 2000) are similar to those we have recommended. This section explains why we consider some other exercises – notably of the mechanical, 'dual-tasking' variety – much less useful, on the basis of our task analysis of interpreting (TG-3.2.3.2 and above).

For initiating students to SI, *Counting while Listening* is said to develop basic 'ear-voice' coordination (Moser 1978: 363; Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989). Students count aloud while listening to a speech, first forwards (1, 2, 3, or starting from a big number), then backwards, in various combinations – both listening and counting in their A language, or listening to B or C and counting in A to simulate the first combinations (B or C into A) they will attempt in real SI – with checks on the regularity and accuracy of the counting and on comprehension of the speech through subsequent questioning.

The value of this dual-tasking exercise as preparation for SI has been ques-tioned (e.g. Déjean le Féal 1997; Kalina 1998), quite rightly in our view (see CC-8.6.1 and above on 'multitasking'), but it still seems to be used in some schools for want of something better, on the assumption that ear-voice coordination is a distinct mechanical skill which can or should be developed before attempting the real task of reproducing content from one language to another.

Verbatim Shadowing has sometimes been used for initiation to SI (see e.g. Lambert 1996). Here the trainee is supposed to improve ear-voice coordination by trying her best to repeat, word for word, exactly what she hears coming in though the headphones. An exercise which involves both listening and producing language, rather than just numbers, might seem more relevant; but this, too, is a purely mechanical drill. Our experience over the years with beginners in different schools and language combinations is that when shadowing in A, the purely mechanical aspect of coordination is a relatively trivial skill that can be mastered almost immediately, whereas real coordination – i.e. interpreting across languages without missing anything, even on relatively easy 'trainer speeches' – takes months of training and practice, and is usually not fully mastered until the end of the Experimentation phase. We have therefore retained verbatim shadowing as an optional drill for no more than a *single session*, for the sole purpose of accustoming the student to hear and speak through the SI equipment.

Neither of these exercises simulates SI except in the very superficial sense of simultaneous speaking and listening. *Counting while Listening* seems harmless, and may provide practice in using the equipment on the first day in the booth. But there is also good reason to believe that as an introduction to SI, *Verbatim Shadowing* may even be counterproductive. Professional interpreter trainers (e.g. Kurz 1992; Seleskovitch and Lederer 2002) have generally advised against it on the grounds that it is liable to cultivate exactly the wrong habits in the beginner, who should instead learn from the outset to look past the forms of the incoming language to the meaning, and forget or suppress these incoming forms as thoroughly as possible in order better to think and formulate idiomatically in the target language. This caveat seems more than justified.

Because it is likely to imprint the forms and rhythm of the incoming language, *Verbatim Shadowing* would seem beneficial only for an entirely different purpose, and in the later stages of training: interpreters who must do SI into a B language may benefit from verbatim, imitative shadowing of the rhythm and intonation, in particular of eloquent educated native speakers (live or on film), as an ongoing part of their language enhancement efforts (and perhaps just before entering the booth to work into B).

Finally, as part of the Initiation to SI some schools have experimented with an exercise called *Bavardage Intelligent* ('*Smart Chatter*', or Running Commentary), in which the student simply talks *about* what a speaker is saying, while he is speaking, using the third person to create some distance. This can be seen as the opposite of verbatim shadowing (attention to form with little or no need to process meaning), in that attention is now focused on meaning with no constraints on form. This exercise isolates two components of the real interpreting task: listening-while-speaking and (intelligent) language production, while relaxing the constraints of

accurate translation. As often with a new and amusing (though challenging) exercise, students seem to like it, but it is still experimental and its effectiveness remains to be evaluated. Indeed, Seleskovitch and Lederer of the Paris school wrote of the various SI initiation exercises traditionally used in leading schools – counting, running commentary, etc. – that they have had 'variable success' and are 'not always indispensable' (2002: 171).

8.7   Teaching SI: summary

Simultaneous interpreting is now the dominant mode of conference interpreting and no doubt widely seen as the quintessential expression of our craft. Teaching SI, perhaps more so than even the task itself, may be the nearest thing in our field to (practical) rocket science – at least if we aim to make a difference, and to be able to demonstrate the effect of teaching, rather than just letting students loose on speeches of roughly increasing difficulty and telling them where they went wrong. The challenge is both theoretical – we have no model of this task that is both sufficiently widely accepted and explicit and comprehensive enough to guide us in a training strategy, nor any comparative research on the results of different teaching methods – and practical, in terms of monitoring performance and offering valid '3D' feedback (TG-2.5.8) because of the intensity, immediacy and complexity of SI, not to mention the variability of the process that we must assume in different individuals.

To develop these recommendations we have therefore approached the challenge from the usual three directions: theoretical task analysis, the collective wisdom of past trainers, and our own practical experience. As in the case of consecutive, this has crystallized in a proposal for progressive, incremental activities in several clear stages, supported by ongoing language and knowledge enhancement elsewhere in the curriculum. In the case of SI we have had less recourse to separate training in individual sub-skills, but two separate strands of exercises in the Initiation stage reflect different facets of the task that can be distinguished to some extent in professional practice, but must both be mastered and combined for all-round competence.

In the SI-Initiation phase, students practise for 3–4 weeks on two kinds of input – natural and easy contrasting with frozen and awkward – and discover the basic techniques by which enough meaning can be found in short, incomplete bursts of speech, with the help of other knowledge and awareness, to incrementally build up clear sentences despite the various hazards and obstacles of natural and unnatural input.

SI-Coordination brings these strands together in exercises on 'trainer' speeches – i.e. that are still designed to be easy in terms of content, clarity and redundancy, but are increasingly delivered at normal speaking speed.

SI-Experimentation is the first contact with fully authentic speeches and the biggest bump on the road to mastery. Students experiment freely with the techniques they have learned, but within constraints: they must not miss any part of the message, but their output must also make sense and, while the focus is not on elegant formulation in this stage, must still be within acceptable bounds of usage and grammatical correctness, notably for output in B. After five or six weeks of varied Experimentation with intensive feedback, they should have gained enough control, by automating some procedures and using newly-acquired schemas, to capture and render most of the content on routine authentic speeches in a wide range of styles.

By mid-Consolidation (the end of the third and penultimate semester, in timeline option A, see TG-3.3.5.1, Table 3.1a), trainees should be producing fast and fluent SI from authentic, medium-to-difficult speeches that may be semi-technical (with advance warning), and/or institutional, or that involve some unfamiliar and original reasoning, in different speech styles, and occasionally by non-native speakers. Technique into both A and B should be more or less stabilized, yielding a product on speeches of standard difficulty that is clear and coherent – better than just 'usable' – and shows some regard for listeners' needs and comfort, thanks to continuous self-monitoring.

One final stage remains – 'Reality' – in which they must be gradually exposed to the more challenging examples of real-life conference discourse, such as fast, dense *and* formal (or less coherent or standard) speech from text or slides and/or with relay. These techniques, practised in lively simulated meetings that encourage preparation, teamwork and situational awareness, are introduced at the beginning of the final semester, and are accompanied by a special module introducing students to the realities of professional practice (CC/TG-10, CC-11).

The appendices to this chapter include additional worked examples (with transcripts) of some of the SI techniques described in the chapter (Appendix A), and a graphic representation (or model) of the various processes involved in SI (from Setton 1999: 65), with the most vulnerable points to be targeted by training and feedback indicated in different colours (Appendix B).

Further reading

History of SI
Baigorri-Jalón 2004a/2004b/2014: (20th century history of conference interpreting)
Gaiba 1998: The Origins of Simultaneous Interpretation: The Nuremberg Trial
Takeda and Baigorri-Jalón 2016: New insights in the history of interpreting

Theory, SI models and pedagogy
Chernov 1979, 2004: inference and anticipation in SI
Gile 2009: Basic Models in Interpreter Training

Lederer 1981 (in French): SI corpus analysis

Seleskovitch and Lederer 1986, 2002 and *passim*: the théorie du sens and pedagogical recommendations

Setton 1999: a cognitive-pragmatic (Relevance Theory) approach

SI into a B language

Godijns and Hinderdael 2005: Directionality (collection of papers)

Proceedings of EMCI workshops on working into B: Adams 2004; Donovan 2004

Language-specific issues

Romance languages-English: Snelling 1992

English-Chinese: Zhang Weiwei 1999

English-Japanese: Kondo 1992

These are cited as examples; the CIRIN bulletin (http://cirinandgile.com) can be searched for reports abstracts and mini-reviews of publications since 1991 involving specific language pairs

Appendix A

SI Technique: some worked examples

1. German to English: chunking-and-joining in SI-Initiation (Strand B and Spoonfeeding: CC-8.2.3–4) (German Transport Minister's speech to motorists' club, 1990s)

Original	Literal gloss	Interpreter output	Commentary/options
Die größte Bedrohung für die Investitionen in die Infrastruktur /	*The greatest threat for investment in infrastructure*	*The main threat to infrastructure investment*	**[uses fewer and shorter words]**
geht von den 1,5 Milliarden DM Schulden aus, /	*comes from the 1,5 billion Deutschmarks of debt*	*is the 1,5 billion Deutschmarks of debt*	
die von der alten Bundesregierung /	*that from the previous Federal Government*	*that the last Government*	**Recast syntax (Riskier option – voiced anticipation:** *'inherited from the last Government…'*)
überlassen wurde. /	*inherited was.*	*has bequeathed us.*	
Die neue Bundesregierung /	*The new Federal Government*	*The new Administration*	
strebt konsequent das Ziel an, /	*strives systematically for the goal*	*is resolutely aiming*	
in absehbarer Zeit /	*within a foreseeable period*	*.....*	**Wait,** remember item
die Neuverschuldung auf Null zu reduzieren.	*the new borrowing/ debt to zero to reduce*	*to eliminate new debt in the near future.*	Insert 'stored' item in its TL position

Original	Literal gloss	Interpreter output	Commentary/options
Richtig ist unser Weg, /	*Correct is our way//*	*The right policy, we believe,*	
die Schulden zu reduzieren /	*debts to reduce //*	*is to reduce our indebtedness*	
und Mittel, die heute wegen Zinszahlungen/	*and resources that today due to interest payments*	*and make sure that resources*	**Double-embedded sentence:** insert neutral device (*make sure that*) to 'open up' grammar and allow recasting, holding elements briefly for re-insertion at appropriate point in in TL sentence
nicht zur Verfügung stehen, /	*are not available*	*which today cannot be freed up due to interest repayments*	
dann gezielt in die Verkehrsinfrastruktur /	*then targeted-ly into transport infrastructure*	*can be put into transport infrastructure again in the future.*	
zu investieren.	*to invest*	......	**(anticipated)**
Die Wirtschaft kommt jetzt wieder voll in Fahrt.	*The economy is now fully recovering*	*The recovery is now fully underway.*	
Mit Schuldenabbau und guter Konjunktur/	*With debt reduction and a good business climate*	*If we can reduce debt and if the economy remains favourable,*	
werden hier auch Mittel frei, /	*become here also resources free*	*this too will free up funding*	
die wir zusätzlich in die Verkehrsinfrastruktur/	*which we additionally into transport infrastructure*	*that we can also put into transport infrastructure.*	
investieren können.	*invest can.*	......	**(anticipated)**
Meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren,/	*My distinguished Ladies and gentlemen*	*Ladies and gentlemen,*	
mit der Öffnung der Märkte im Osten /	*with the opening of markets in the east*	*[as] markets open up in Eastern Europe*	
wird der Verkehr in den nächsten Jahren /	*will traffic/transport in the next years*	*the next few years*	**Subject ambiguous: recast syntax**
erheblich zunehmen. /	*considerably increase.*	*will see a significant increase in traffic.*	
In diesem Zusammenhang empfinde ich/	*In this connection I feel/experience*	*Against that background*	**Hold verb**
Ihre Aktion "Jetzt reichts!",/	*your 'That's enough' campaign*	*let me say that your 'That's enough' campaign*	**Neutral addition** ('*let me say*') **'opens'** **the grammar** (*that..*)

Original	Literal gloss	Interpreter output	Commentary/options
die ja möglicherweise als Kritik gemeint ist, /	*which indeed possibly as criticism is intended*	*which is probably intended as a criticism*	
eher als Unterstützung dafür, /	*more as a support for [the fact]*	*strikes me more as an act of support*	**Insert** held-over verb in TL position; **wait**
dass wir eben mehr Mittel brauchen für die Infrastruktur.	*that we indeed more resources need for infrastructure.*	*for our view that more investment is indeed needed in infrastructure.*	Neutral padding for syntactic reasons ('*our view*')

2. English (post-verbal prepositional phrases) **into Chinese**: chunk-and-join vs. frame-and-fill (CC-8.2.3.2, 8.4.3); analysis and feedback also given in Chinese:

> **Effective national food control systems are essential to protect the health and safety of domestic consumers.**

Option 1: Wait and store some information(储存等待)，

Effective national food control systems	有效的国家食品控制体系	Render subject noun phrase
are essential	对 [= vis-à-vis/for….]	Frame: 'is (hold predicate) for…'
to protect the health and safety of domestic consumers	保护国内消费者健康和安全	protecting … [etc]….
	至关重要 ['…[are] essential']	Fill/complete with stored predicate

Option 2: Chunk and join for linear rendering (断句顺接)

Effective national food control systems	有效的国家食品控制体系	Render subject noun phrase
are essential	至关重要	'[are] essential'　　断句
		….(add joining devices):
	A: 因为它能／ 没有这种体系就不能／ 只有实行这种体系才能	A: because they can…, because without them we cannot….
	B: 是	B: 是 (this/they) is/are
	C: 要	C: 要 (one/we) must/should
to protect the health and safety of domestic consumers	保护国内消费者的健康和安全	A: …protect the health and safety of domestic consumers
	B: 的关键／ 必不可少的制度	B: a key/indispensable system
	C: 就必须实行这种体系 是离不开这种体系的	C: implement this system, can't do without this system

For discussion:

▶ Has the interpreter used less or more Processing Capacity by chopping the sentence?
▶ What about the rate of delivery (more words/syllables per minute)?
▶ Does it sound clear and natural?

Option 3: Very short lag: Noun Phrase rendered before hearing the prepositional phrase

Effective national food control systems	有效的国家食品控制体系	Render subject noun phrase
are essential	至关重要 '[are]essential'	断句 (chunk)
	因为它能 'since they can'	顺接 (join)
to protect the health and safety	保护人们的健康和安全 'protect people's health and safety'	*people's*: anticipating with generic placeholder
of domestic consumers	*Choice: having said 'people', do you need to add 'domestic consumers'? There will be some loss unless we either…*	
	(i) repeat: 保护国内消费者的健康和安全 'i.e. protect the health and safety **of domestic consumers**'	(ii) continue with: '从而维护国内消费者的利益' – '*and thus* protect the interests of domestic consumers'

These worked examples illustrate the explicit, blow-by-blow feedback that can be given during tape review following an in-booth exercise, which will be clearer with the text in hand. The instructor talks the class through different options for attacking or segmenting a sentence, discusses what is more or less risky vs. what results in more or less smooth output for the audience, etc., also illustrating the moment-by-moment **decision-making and risk management** that are at the core of SI technique.

Appendix B

Vulnerable points in SI

Figure 8.1 highlights critical points in SI in a published model of the SI process (Setton 1999: 65). Inputs – linguistic, perceptual and cognitive – are shown on the left. Linguistic input is parsed and the speaker's intended meaning is derived by processing the decoded product in the context of the other inputs (including, for example, world and local knowledge, shown at the top). The Executive, roughly corresponding to working memory (Baddeley 1986), is the seat of higher (central) processes, including

a. overall *coordination* between the overlapping processes of understanding, retrieving language, projecting the listeners' likely reception, and formulating, including tactical decisions, taking into account available processing capacity, about when to start, wait, put on a spurt, compress, stall, etc., according to the state of the system: what's in immediate memory (anything ready to produce? do I have a sentence to finish?), density of current input (stall while listening more closely?), words coming to mind (stall or paraphrase while thinking of right word?), etc. and

b.   *judgments*, at least partly conscious, on how best to convey and formulate the message, weighing different tactics and strategies and their costs and benefits, or risks and rewards, against the interpretation goal, taking into account what is feasible under difficult conditions, client relations, and role and mediation norms – for example, on whether to take opportunities for optimization or how to a more cautious, literal ('constrained') approach, in the presence of wide social or cultural gaps, or sensitive or adversarial situations.

The apparatus for *formulation* (based on Levelt 1989), also constrained by what has just been said (input from a self-monitoring loop), is shown on the right. 'Automated' stock SL-TL equivalents, collected over years in a bilingual 'phrasebook', can be activated and slotted in to formulation without too much conceptual processing (this short cut is shown in the centre of the diagram).

Captions left in **black** identify basic steps in understanding and speaking – word recognition, parsing, meaning assembly, formulation, etc. – and the basic linguistic and cognitive equipment that trainees are expected to have and develop further during the course (adequate general knowledge and command of the languages). Working into a B language, however, calls for special enhancement (CC/TG-7) focusing on the functions highlighted in **blue**.[16]

The **red** captions and arrows pick out points where problems might occur in SI due to inadequacies in any of the basic prerequisites – in the interpreter's basic language competence, general knowledge, or state of preparation, or in the environment (working conditions: sound quality, visibility, equipment, access to conference documents), or features of input: the speaker's accent, delivery, etc.

The interpreting skills developed during the course add up to task-specific professional expertise (highlighted in **green**), and range from the ability to build a structured, coherent mental model of discourse in context (acquired in the first semester), through such specific skills as coordination of listening, memory and production, flexible use of syntax, and freeing attention for self-monitoring, to the conscientious preparation of vocabulary and subject matter and the exercise of professional judgment in sensitive or critical situations.

Finally, different strategies may be needed for training into B. **Purple** highlighting shows pragmatic-linguistic competence available to A but inherently limited in B, both on the input side – sensitivity to attitude, emotion, irony, humour, etc. expressed in language, which gives a big head start in mental model formation and therefore, anticipation; and native production, whereas work into B must make do with a narrower lexicon, limited prosody and less flexibility in general. Even with targeted language enhancement (collocations, etc.), these handicaps can also be compensated for by tactics such as, possibly, shorter lag and more reliance on a trusty set of well-mastered expressions and reliable all-weather equivalents – but also, even more advance preparation, and closer self-monitoring, judgment and coordination.

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16. The thick blue horizontal line between lexica shows a fast track for getting reliable, overlearned equivalent set terms (the 'bilingual phrasebook') when there is scope and need for such automation (transcoding), the pace is fast, and set terminology is expected.
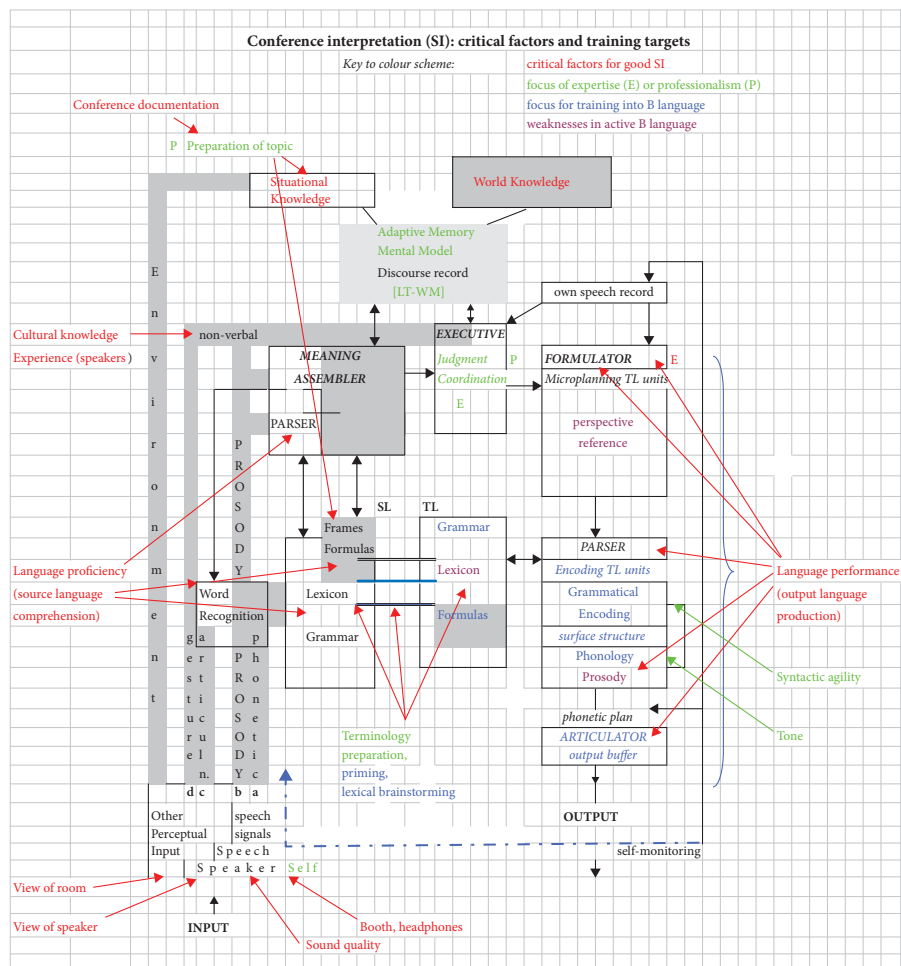
Figure 8.1 Vulnerable points and training foci in SI

Reality and advanced tasks

9.1   Introduction

9.1.1 The last mile

Traditionally, conference interpreting programmes have hesitated – from idealism or a reluctance to demoralise students – to expose students to more challenging tasks that are now routine, and beyond that, to prepare them for dealing with poor conditions or unrealistic user expectations.

Major recruiters such as the EU or UN have called on schools to close the expertise gap between what graduates are prepared and/or tested for and the demands of their organizations, as reflected in the low overall pass rates at their freelance accreditation tests (23.6% at the EU Commission in 2011[1]). Both private sector and institutional recruiters[2] still see graduates falling short in more basic general competencies:

i.   Patchy general knowledge of mainstream domains like law, economics and finance;
ii.   Lack of exposure and sensitivity to real-world conditions and priorities;
iii. SI or even comprehension skills inadequate to handling the speed and variability (accents, styles) of real-life conference discourse;
iv.   Weak knowledge of the institution and its jargon.

With regard to the last point, most schools must prepare graduates for a diverse market, so will not have time to coach students extensively in the particular 'house style' and jargon of each international organization. Some (e.g. the EU) offer both

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1.   No information has been released on how many of the 76% of applicants who failed these EU accreditation tests were graduates of recognized interpreting schools, but the success rate for test-takers who had been granted a SCIC scholarship – for which graduating from a full master's (postgraduate) course in conference interpreting from a recognized university or university-level institution is a condition – was 31.6% as of 2011. (European [EU] Commission, DG Interpretation [DGI SCIC] Management Plan (2012: 12). For bursary conditions, see http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/cooperation-with-universities/interpretation-bursaries/index_en.htm (Accessed November 19, 2015).

2.   Suzanne Altenberg, p.c., for the European Parliament, in 2011 interview.

'last-mile' training to help candidates pass their accreditation test, and a post-accreditation induction course,[3] whereas the UN expects test-takers to be fully prepared, having used their resources online (TG-8.5.2). We have tried to address all the above concerns with special domain modules, beginning with sampling of one or two thematic or institutional domains as of Semester 3. In a two-year course, a final semester should be enough to further expand students' knowledge and range of comprehension, and bring them up to speed with real-world conditions and priorities with appropriate simulations and practica.

9.1.2 User orientation

After three semesters of intensive training in the school environment, students will usually still be focused on the difficulties of the speech and their own mental processes, instead of their product in the context of the meeting. They must now learn to be increasingly **user-oriented**. In a sense, we have come full circle from Initiation: students must now wake up again to their surroundings and revive their natural communicative instincts – but now, with a new confidence based on solid interpreting technique and familiarity with the conference environment.

Close instructor feedback should increase again with the approach to the final exam, focusing on the quality of the product and judging mistakes for their likely impact and damage, rather than as isolated processing errors. As in the mature stages of consecutive, this user-oriented perspective will prompt class discussions of macro-techniques such as compression and pragmatic packaging, strategic optimization (CC-5.8.4), and the balance to be found between user-friendliness and the risk of distorting the speaker (CC/TG-10.4).

9.1.3 Complex but routine tasks vs. hazards and impossible conditions

A responsible training mandate should offer a comprehensive preparation for real life, including criteria for judging when conditions preclude the provision of a minimum or acceptable service, and measures to forestall them through good client communication. But it should also give students a taste of these severe and borderline conditions, and some emergency coping tactics.

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3.   At the time of writing, these include an Integration Programme, a roughly 4-week intensive training course for candidate freelance interpreters who narrowly fail the freelance accreditation test, or interpreters who have just passed their final interpreting exams, in order to help them pass the accreditation test at the end of the programme; and a 'Newcomers' scheme for recently accredited freelancers. See http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/become-an-interpreter/want-to-become-interpreter/index_en.htm (Accessed November 19, 2015).

In the second half of the final semester, students must be exposed to real-life hazards and extreme conditions, to acquire tactics for emergencies, but also to understand what tasks are truly impossible and can justifiably be refused on grounds of feasibility, ethics and best practices or working conditions (TG/CC-10 and CC-11), thus rounding off their training to market readiness.

What contributes to difficulty in interpreting? The relative difficulty of interpreting tasks can be understood as an interaction between two challenges:

1. The key parameters of the **input** itself, such as delivery speed, density, subject matter, register, accent, etc. (see Speech Difficulty Index: TG-2 Appendix);
2. The number of **concurrent sources**, such as speech, text and slides, that the interpreter must juggle (and/or other complications due to removal or dispersal of the source, as in relay or remote interpreting).

From Experimentation onwards, we have been using materials that are progressively more challenging on one or more of these input parameters, and have also added some complication of the source with SI-text (though still verbatim), slide presentations, and relay.

For the last mile, to Reality, we can distinguish two different levels of added complexity, for which we should have different expectations:

i. **Complex but routine real-life tasks**, including SI-text with any amount of deviation; blind SI from text (read out but not supplied) within reasonable text parameters (speed, density, accent etc.); relay from slide presentations; and consecutive mixed with sight translation. On these tasks we can aim for a clear and user-oriented performance.

ii. **Extreme conditions and challenges**: impossible accents, legal text or numbers read out monotonously at high speed but not supplied – and unreasonable client expectations (9.6). The goal here should be for students to develop viable strategies for dealing with these various hazards. Since they are also now being introduced to aspects of professionalism and professional practice, these strategies will include not just coping tactics but also the ability to distinguish what expectations are reasonable, and when to interact with the client and in some cases, decline service.

9.1.4 Overview of the final semester

The main components of training in the final semester are summarized here for convenience:

1. *Knowledge and comprehension* range are expanded further with more specific, second-level modules in key domains (e.g. Parliamentary Procedure, Language of Research: TG-7.4);

2. *Advanced interpreting skills*: compression, paraphrase and agility for faster, denser and mixed-media input (9.2.3), advanced consecutive with ST (CC-5.8), slide presentations with relay, etc.;

3. *User Orientation*: close any remaining gaps in self-monitoring to polish delivery and voice quality; raise situational awareness and learn to make quick judgments to cope and/or adapt to user needs (optimization, CC/TG-10.4);

4. *Survival* through both mitigation (professional foresight, teamwork, client relations: CC/TG-10, CC-11) and adaptation (coping tactics: TG-9.5.2).

On reasonable ('doable') input, performance goals should now be set higher, with a more user-oriented dimension. **SI into B** should now increasingly be held to the same criteria as into A as regards clarity, completeness, and use of judgment (optimization strategy, risk management), but with allowances as regards linguistic polish.

9.2   Competence for the real world: complex but routine tasks

9.2.1 Extending comprehension and knowledge

The final semester should explore a wider range of conditions, working on speeches in a range of registers from highly formal and written to extremely loose and colloquial, sometimes delivered at high speed and with difficult accents, or read out, often with departures, from text (or slide handouts) provided late, with little time for preparation, and on demanding real-world topics requiring solid advance preparation.

As in Consolidation, a challenging but important domain or genre can be covered in a block of two or three weeks, but now with more technical and difficult presentations. In class and for mock conferences, maximum use should be made of authentic materials from recent meetings, video or live input wherever possible (such as guest lecturers from around the University), and a still wider variety of speakers, nationalities, topics, disciplines, points of view, genres, idiolects, accents, and speaking styles. (On finding authentic speeches, see TG-2.5.5.3.) Additionally, every opportunity should be taken for exposure to reality in on-site visits with dummy-booth practice, followed by debriefing.

The range of registers and genres to be covered by the end of the course is given in CC-9.2.1. In terms of speech genre and texture, the focus of the first half of Consolidation is on written institutional material that calls for Shermet's (2012) 'oral translation' techniques, working toward a high degree of automaticity, a shorter lag and tight chunking. This genre must still be visited regularly, but we must also sample a very different style: structured, allusive, original or

'inspirational' speech, for which help is found less in automaticity and ready-made, boilerplate equivalents than in sophisticated analysis, inference, creativity and optimization judgments (cultural annotations, explication, etc. for user adaptation), and thus typically a more flexible and variable lag. Students should be exposed to the contemporary management-guru (shirtsleeve academic, relaxed whizz-kid) style that is now widespread in international business and other seminars. This alternation between genres echoes the two strands of the SI-Initiation phase (on freer vs. tighter input: CC-8.2) but at a much higher level.

9.2.2 Completing the skillset

To round off their skillset for the real world, students will need to practise on some more complex variations on the standard interpreting tasks, and some supporting skills. These activities are described at length in CC-9.2 and include

▶ *Real-life SI-text*: interpreting speeches based on written texts that may be provided days, hours or minutes in advance (or not at all) and are delivered with unpredictable additions, omissions, paraphrases, etc.;
▶ Supporting skills such as *fast reading* (*scanning*) and dealing with *proper names*;
▶ *Relay interpreting* from the point of view of the pivot, the relay-taker and the audience, with special attention to SI-text and slide presentations.

Perhaps the most indispensable 'supporting skill' for difficult conditions is the ability to streamline or compress, preferably without loss of information.

9.2.3 Compression and Abstracting (cf. CC-9.2.4)

Concision will often be a natural outcome of the process of analysis and reformulation. The ability to convey the same message in fewer words (compression), or even, if necessary, to extract just the key points and express them clearly and succinctly (summarizing or abstracting) is not so much a tactic or a strategy as a basic ingredient of default interpreting expertise – though it may be frowned on, exceptionally, in 'constrained' interpreting in judicial and some diplomatic situations: see CC-5.8.4 and 10.4).[4] We have therefore introduced exercises to train it as of the Initiation stage.

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4. Kalina (1998) discusses compression as a strategy; Gile mentions omission and paraphrase in his long list of 'coping tactics' (2009: 200–211) but does not explicitly include compression or abstracting.

In CC-4.2.4 we distinguish concision, compression and summarizing or abstracting. Concision is generally welcomed in conference interpreting, but since the interpreter's default goal is to communicate the speaker's meaning fully and faithfully in respect of content, register, nuance and rhetorical effect, we should have some justification, with criteria and priorities – not least to answer students' questions in this regard – for compressing beyond a certain point, and especially, for abstracting, under severe conditions. Let us review some of Viaggio's (1989, 1991) categories:

i. Except in cases where every word counts, or linguistic form is critical (see below) cutting out **pure linguistic redundancy** seems uncontroversial, for example, compressing "The next step in the process must be…" to "Next, we must…".

ii. As for **what is already known** (given vs. new information), it seems equally reasonable to skip information (unless deliberately repeated for effect) that is still fresh in the memory of anyone following the meeting, or manifest in what everyone can see – such as information on a slide that needs no translation (e.g. visual or numerical) and can be referred to by the interpreter as 'this' or 'here' as the speaker points to it.

   To this we might add **what listeners can easily infer**, as deduced from the interpreter's discourse model. Under most conditions, intelligent, justifiable omissions are not penalized in evaluation (11.6.5), and will even be applauded when they save resources for improved communicativity.

iii. '**What can be conveyed paralinguistically**' covers any unnecessarily verbose explicit links, repetitions or emphasis that could be conveyed more economically and perhaps even more effectively by rhythm, intonation or contrastive vocal stress.

iv. Under pressure, eloquence and **expressive polish** (looking for the best word) will obviously also have to go by the board, so the interpreter – especially the Bsim – must be able to fall back on words that, albeit pedestrian, are more immediately available.

v. Under the most severe conditions of speed and density, we may be forced to move into summary or abstracting mode, **omitting content** that listeners may not be able to retrieve even by inference; for example, skipping some items from an undifferentiated list of examples (of countries, or products, or whatever) to focus on the speaker's main line of argument. Beyond this, judging what is 'relatively important' is more delicate, as it might also vary between the speaker and different listeners.

Judgments about these categories may vary, of course. Viaggio (1991:4) gives an example of a UN meeting in which he can confidently assume that his (Spanish-speaking) listeners are more interested in Yemen's position on a political issue than its congratulations to the chairman on his election, and concludes that 'if scissors are needed', we should first cut these 'flowers', then, if necessary, *what is already known* about Yemen's position.

Students' choices can be discussed in class after playback (having checked that the omissions were conscious and deliberate…) with suggestions from the instructor, bearing in mind that (i) in real-life interpreting, we make relevance judgments (consciously or unconsciously) based on our immediate experience of the meeting that we might not make when translating text or even in the artificial environment of the classroom; and (ii) that while *knowledge* is a more powerful aid for intelligent streamlining than mere linguistic skill, it will be less accessible to students than instructors, who – here as elsewhere – must make a significant effort to put themselves in the students' place (2.5.2), guiding them gradually to a world where information is an even more important resource than language.

9.2.4 Pedagogy and feedback

Monitoring by the instructor, and most of all, **playback**, can raise students' awareness until they can produce a stable, reliable and user-friendly product. Where possible and appropriate, this means sounding lively, engaged and convincing, and in terms of style, developing a chameleon-like ability to sound like participants in the meeting. Even when difficult conditions force the interpreter to race along, compress, synthesize and be content with second-best choices of words, s/he should at least strive to eliminate excessive 'ums' and 'ers' (or their equivalent in that language), keep pitch from escalating, enunciate, and provide enough basic vocal sign-posting – through discourse markers or contrastive prosody (intonation or pauses, however short, in the right places) – to help listeners follow the logical thread.

This is one of several aspects on which **monitoring by a 'lay' native speaker** of the output language – the public speaking coach, another interpretation instructor, or a teacher from another department in the University, preferably with little or no knowledge of the source language and culture, (a '**pure user**', see TG-7.3.4.1) can generate very useful feedback.

For Bsim, especially, any persistent and irritating problems of language, delivery and prosody at this stage will urgently need targeted, intensive, hands-on coaching and *deliberate practice* methods to overcome them (TG-2.6.2).

9.3   Making life easier: preparation and teamwork

9.3.1 Conference preparation (Semesters 3 and 4)

The module on Conference Preparation should cover search techniques and sources and show students how to prepare from minimal, or maximal (multilingual) documentation, and how to make and use glossaries (CC-9.2.5.1). Research and preparation techniques can be introduced using partial or complete sets of documents from conferences interpreted recently by the instructor (with permission if the documentation is not in the public domain), as well as online materials found by the interpreters themselves.

All of this can and should be drilled on a variety of topics, probably once a fortnight during the last semester in the run-up to mock conferences (9.4.1) on semi-technical and eventually technical subjects. Typically, the instructor will have to walk students through the process in a very hands-on way, since at first, students tend to be either too passive – relying on materials provided – or not selective – doing lots of research that turns out not to be of much value. In particular, they may not correctly identify what is 'technical' or why (Donovan 2001; Lucarelli 2006).

Students show the instructor how they have prepared and the glossaries they have made, but should also be tested for coverage and for appropriate command of basic facts in the domain, key players and recent news. This will reveal the inadequacies of the preparation and can be followed by suggestions on how to prepare better. The class can then start on a 2–3 week module on that topic. The next time a new topic is chosen, check for improved preparation.

Autonomous topic preparation can also be trained through occasional sessions – with plenty of advance notice – on unusual and unfamiliar topics, such as freemasonry or the history of jazz.

Some examples:

► For trainees from non-Western cultures: A 'general' talk on jazz music and American culture, in which the speaker weaves together a dense fabric involving dozens of musical instruments, song titles, instrumentalists and vocalists, composers and lyricists, styles/schools of jazz, African-American cultural icons, key issues in African-American history, race relations and civil rights in America, all against a backdrop of 20th century world culture and history – none of which is explicitly spelled out.

► Similarly, for trainees from European cultures (not necessarily having Chinese, Arabic or an Indian language in their combinations) – some examples:
   • a conference on Chinese vs. Western medicine;

- a 'general' talk on Chinese-style management in which the speaker liberally quotes from the Yi Jing, the Confucian analects, the Dao De Jing, and the Art of War; elliptically refers to well-known (to Chinese audiences) historical episodes involving famous figures from Qin Shi Huang and Zhuge Liang through to Li Hongzhang, Chairman Mao and Deng Xiaoping; and applies all this to analyse case studies of contemporary Chinese business figures like Li Ka-shing, Wang Jianlin and Jack Ma;
- Hindu cosmology and modern astronomy;
- Historical interpretations of the Hadith/sharia among different Islamic sects and their implications for banking and legal systems in modern states.

For most students listening to such material in their B or C language, nearly all of it will be 'technical' and will require intensive preparation over a period of many days, just to understand enough to interpret even a single speech without making fools of themselves. For students following in their A language, these speeches may be immensely stimulating to listen to, but will also require extensive preparation of B-language terminology to be able to convey these ideas to their customers.

9.3.2　Teamwork

The importance of teamwork and cooperation has already been stressed in relation to practising with a partner, for preparing assignments, and briefly for booth orientation as part of SI-Initiation. Mock conferences and opportunities to work in dummy booths on internships should be used to introduce and instill the habits and conventions of teamwork in the booth (spelled out in CC-11.2.3.3). Best practices may also be observed during visits to real-life events – preferably followed by a debriefing, in case the situation observed turned out to be especially stressful… and/or the colleagues observed were not quite behaving as the models you want the students to emulate!

9.4　Simulation and reality

9.4.1　The mock conference

More realistic (simulated) exchanges, with visiting speakers, are widely appreciated as an enjoyable and motivating experience, and should be organized throughout the course. From the second year, however, full-scale mock conferences with live speakers, two hours or so in length, should be a regular event, if possible twice a month and ideally as a climax to a thematic block of 2–3 weeks of classes focusing

on a particular subject matter domain, topical issue or institution (CC/TG-8.5.2). Here are some guidelines for planning each specialized block and/or conference:

1. The **topic** and simulated context of the meeting should be announced in advance for preparation, moving from semi-technical (late S3) to quite technical subject areas by the fourth semester (see (4) below). A realistic-looking **agenda** for the mock conference (prepared by the coordinator – see (5) below) should be sent out at least a week ahead of time, with full information on the topic, organizers, composition of the audience, names, titles and backgrounds of speakers, titles of their presentations, and the language they will be speaking (but with occasional last-minute surprises).

2. Students **prepare** by reading, making glossaries, listening to relevant recordings and doing ST on similar or supplied materials in their own time to 'grease the grooves' (CC-8.5.3).

3. In the first classes of a '**thematic block**' on a particular subject area, students do general, typical, doable speeches, then work gradually up to more difficult presentations (faster, denser, read from text, with slides, etc., even accents if available).

4. Mock conferences should be **less challenging in Semesters 1 and 3** (when first-year students are just learning the rudiments of consecutive, at first without notes, and second-year students are in the early stages of SI) and **more substantial and authentic in S2/S4**.

5. **Roles** are assigned to students (or invited volunteers), as Overall Coordinator or Event Producer (under supervision), Moderator(s), and Speakers. Roles should be switched around. First-year students can role-play the Chair, speakers, discussants, consecutive interpreters (perhaps for Q&A), and people in the audience with challenging questions for the speaker, while second-year students man the booths as interpreters for both presentations and discussion.

6. **Delivery formats**: some speeches should be left to speakers to prepare, who must each send the coordinator (cc'd to instructors) their outline, with a short glossary if needed. Some speakers can have **texts**, other can speak from notes. Some texts may be read fast, others may be partly semi-extemporized from notes and partly read, adding or dropping things, and including some **real-time impromptu reactions** to things heard in the previous speakers' presentations. Some presentations with slides and/or text (depending on the stage reached in the course) can be given to speakers to practice delivery (who also submit an outline and glossary) before the event (indicated in our samples as 'simulated by' etc.).

7. **Texts** or **outlines** can be **sent in advance** to the 'interpreters' at different intervals before the meeting day – some several days before, some the night before, others (but not the most challenging ones) 10 minutes before the meeting starts.

8. The involvement where possible of **outside speakers** who can talk confidently on subjects on which they are experts is invaluable. Not all speakers should speak in their A language – dealing with non-native speech is part of the exercise.

9. **Other outside visitors**: Professional interpreters with a day off and an interest in training can also be invited – including recent graduates, if active on the market – to monitor different booths, role-play, or even better, sit in and work with students live. The guest should rotate between booths, to be paired up with different students, and should do less interpreting than the boothmate (say 2/5ths to 3/5ths).

10. **Relay** should be built into the conference arrangements if there are students with different language combinations. If not, it can be occasionally simulated by having students with the same languages take relay from each other (the speaker speaks English, booth 1 interprets into Chinese, booth 2 takes relay from booth 1 and interprets back into Chinese).

11. The entire mock conference should be **recorded** (a) on video, from the room, capturing the process of the meeting AND (b) on two-track audio from each booth, so that students can review their performance in detail afterward.

12. **Feedback** is a key part of the exercise. Breaks can be taken at intervals throughout the meeting for quick feedback: if left to the end it will come too late after the performance in question, and risks being too sketchy or general; and both instructors and students may be too tired. Ideally, several instructors and listeners should participate, perhaps being responsible for different aspects of feedback. Feedback should cover

    – the organization of the meeting and the role of the chair;
    – the public speaking skills and content preparation of the different presenters, and their ability to handle questions;
    – the work of the interpreters, of course, but also their preparation and glossaries, their ability to adapt to last-minute changes (finding the names of speakers, their organizations, bios, for example, when the order of speakers suddenly changes), their ability to help each other in the booth; relay, etc.

13. The use of checklists, **scoring rubrics or feedback sheets** can make things more efficient and structured. **Peer feedback** can also be encouraged, with students (especially from different language sections) giving structured feedback to one another. A sample feedback sheet is given in the Appendix (with thanks to Phil Smith and the European Patent Office).

Recordings must be reviewed afterwards by students. Some passages or speeches – the trickiest ones, or those that students did not themselves do at the conference – can be redone. This applies to both speakers and interpreters. All pre-conference materials, agenda, speaker outlines, texts, etc. should be archived together with the video of the proceedings in the speech library, so that future classes can use them for practice.

9.4.2 Internships and on-site visits with dumb booth practice

Practice visits to real events, at which trainees can listen to instructors and other professionals working, and practise themselves in a 'dumb (or dummy) booth' (i.e. in a real SI booth at a real meeting, but with the microphone turned off), have proved to be a turning point in students' awareness and, paradoxically, self-confidence.[5] Opportunities may vary from a chance to work in the dumb booth in a meeting lasting one or more days to an extended visit of up to a few weeks in an international organization.

Immersion in the live context of the meeting, if the beginner knows how to use it, can make the job easier in many ways than it is in the classroom, not least due to the excitement and stimulation of being at a real event. Preparing novice interpreters for real life means making them aware of both sides of this coin: the new challenges to their technical skills and the new opportunities of the live context. A visit to a private-market conference, in particular – especially if an interview can be arranged with the consultant interpreter – should make trainees aware of interpreting as a real-life contract in which thorough preparation and communication with the users of the service before and during the event are at least as important as the coping tactics they may have to resort to in the booth.

Post-internship debriefing reports from students confirm that, despite abundant instructor prodding and detailed guidance on how to prepare, they will typically underestimate the amount of preparation required, the specificity of the institutional jargon (or spend too much time making extensive glossaries, and too little thinking about the most important concepts and terms and activating them in time for the meeting); and on site, the challenge of document management – also bringing home the value of teamwork.

Students should not attempt dumb-booth practice in real meetings unless they have been able to prepare fully, ideally not before late S3 (SI-Consolidation)

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5.   It may, however, be necessary to warn students that doing the dumb booth at a UN meeting, and having photos to prove it, does not entitle them to present themselves on their personal website or blog as a "UN-certified simultaneous interpreter"! (see CC-11.2.4.1).

after learning conference preparation skills and acquiring some knowledge of the institutional jargon. On-site visits can be organized earlier in the course or year, but only to take bearings and observe, without attempting to practise.

Here are some tips for getting maximum value from internships and dumb-booth practice:

Getting the best value from practica

1. Pick a meeting that can be prepared, with clear and focused subject matter, documents or recordings from previous sessions available for study and preparation. Make sure that the interns have access to all the same documentation as the team of interpreters working on the meeting (both in advance and including any statements and working texts delivered to the booths in the course of the meeting).
2. Have students prepare thoroughly in advance under the instructor's guidance and supervision. Students will almost inevitably underestimate the amount of preparation needed to do a good job in a real meeting.
3. Where possible, in class do speeches or recordings from previous sessions of the committee or session at which students will be practising meetings, in all modes, to test the students' familiarity with the topic and terminology.
4. Experienced professionals – senior staff interpreters, head of booth, the chief interpreter, and/or the students' own instructors – should monitor the students' work and give feedback.
5. If allowed, students' performances should be recorded for later analysis and practice.
6. Students should keep a journal of the practicum, making notes of difficulties, things not understood, questions about meeting organization, etc., and review it with their instructor at the end of each day.

9.4.3 Mentoring and apprenticeship ('Y3 and Y4')

Post-graduation mentoring goes beyond the scope of a university-based course, but should be mentioned here as a beneficial 'finishing' cycle to interpreter training. In a natural extension of the apprenticeship model, teachers have traditionally helped their former students to find their feet on the market – and in the booth or other settings – after graduation (Herbert 1952). This tradition has survived informally or locally, especially in some regions (Japan, Taiwan) and is formalized within some institutions (e.g. in EU induction programmes for new recruits, see footnote 3 above).

Instructors on the course who are on staff in an organization, or are recruiters (e.g. consultant interpreters on the private market), are well-placed to find opportunities for fresh graduates to work at real meetings in a *semi-protected environment*: for example, by assigning beginners in a team to work only in the relatively low-exposure meetings in an event at first rather than the keynote or closing

addresses, and/or to work in the booth alongside their former teachers who can provide assistance and be ready to take over for especially challenging or critical speeches, and for critical retour or relay.

9.5 Expertise and survival

'Expertise' normally implies special knowledge combined with highly effective or efficient procedures for performing a complex task, within certain parameters. Expertise in interpreting has resisted precise formulation, partly due to lack of data enabling comparison of experts and novices (Ericsson 2000), or has been difficult to demonstrate convincingly (see Tiselius 2013).

Expertise could certainly be deemed to include tactics for coping with unexpected challenges and emergencies, but we find it useful to distinguish between (advanced) *core expertise* on the one hand, and coping, emergency or *'survival' tactics* on the other.

9.5.1 Expertise in interpreting

Ericsson and Smith (1991) identified the two aspects of expertise most generalizable across tasks as (i) acquired **mediating mechanisms**[6] and (ii) **deliberate practice** (in contrast to playful or casual interaction, competition or work: see TG-2.6.2). Studies contrasting expert and novice interpreter performance suggest that these two factors may also be key to expertise in interpreting (Ericsson 2000).

The mediating mechanisms that help us in interpreting – and that become critically important as the task becomes more challenging – are **knowledge schemas**, or cognitive structures and the ability to manage them (TG-6.8.3.2 and TG-12.3.6, Table 12.1). Ericsson (2000) suggests that

> expert interpreting is mediated not by fully automatic translation processes but rather by mechanisms and mental representations that provide interpreters with tools to gain more control over their [performance…]. The increased facility with which expert interpreters perform tasks – typically viewed as evidence for automation – can be explained by the acquisition of refined representations…
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> (2000: 202–3)

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6. "Expert and exceptional performance are shown to be mediated by cognitive and perceptual-motor skills and by domain-specific physiological […] adaptations […] For example, acquired anticipatory skills circumvent general limits on reaction time, and distinctive memory skills allow a domain-specific expansion of working memory capacity […]" (Ericsson and Lehmann 1996: 273).

Künzli and Moser-Mercer (1995) found that experts' translation choices drew more on the context of speech than novices'. Faced with difficult or unfamiliar input, experts try to make sense based on what they know, while novices "focus on the unknown – and get stuck" (1995: 109). They conclude that "experts have built up **schemata** for different types of speeches, negotiating situations, texts, paragraphs etc. into which they embed individual utterances" (ibid., our emphasis), while novices treat utterances in a more isolated manner and fail to establish discourse links.

The findings of expertise research help to understand why the extreme conditions listed in the next section pose special challenges even for experts in whom the sub-components of competence are well-integrated. Experts draw a lot on top-down, situation-specific knowledge, recognizing and 'reasoning forward' from gestalt-like patterns that draw on information in multiple perceptual and cognitive channels. This is the only 'strategy' – more like a technique, and by now internalized as spontaneous processes[7] – that will do the job. This is because, as we know (CC-2 and CC-8), faithful on-line translation is simply not possible by the superfast purely linguistic bottom-up process that SI was assumed to be when it was first introduced to a sceptical world – i.e. decoding, translation of the decoded items and restructuring the results in TL. SI is only possible with the support of several 'side channels' – context, cues from the environment, previous knowledge and paralinguistic or pragmatic cues in the speech – that allow the interpreter to synthesize meaning at a conceptual level, and thus get a sufficiently 'wide-angle' impression of the unfolding web of the discourse to anticipate its general thrust on the one hand, and on the other, to furnish the product with the cohesive material that makes it comfortable and informative for the listener – all this, of course, providing she has the trained mental *procedures* to make these syntheses, adequate mental *schemas* to (re)cognize the incoming concepts, and the *ready language* (CC-7.2.1) to produce these syntheses – a 'discourse grammar and phrasebook', as it were, adapted to the appropriate genre of the discourse.

Expertise is to a large extent the ability to use these supporting channels, schemas and procedures to reduce cognitive load and thus attend to polishing the output, both in consecutive and SI (CC-5.8.2/8.5.6; TG-8.5.4). This is what training is designed to develop, as the necessary complement to pure linguistic ability and brainpower, which, though required in students admitted to the course, are not enough to provide an acceptable interpreting service, even in 'normal' conditions. The hazards of modern, real-life conference interpreting (9.6.2) test even the trained expert to the limit, and sometimes beyond.

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7.   See TG-3.2.4.1 for a defence of this distinction.

9.5.2   Crisis management and coping tactics

A fairly complete list of coping tactics as described in the literature (Gile 2009: 204–211; Jones 1998/2002: 95 ff.), is given in CC-9.3.1.[8] Some of these proposed tactics or strategies are in fact basic cognitive processes in all comprehension, but that can be consciously boosted when a special effort is needed. Others can be considered part of basic or advanced interpreting technique, as covered in previous chapters (Skills), and will already have become part of the students' spontaneous behaviour, as of their first interpreting exercises and as they come to grips with the demands of each new task and find ways to get the speaker's message across as best they can within their current constraints. Others are complementary aspects of good professional practice, such as document management, teamwork or client/user relations (CC-11).

Even with improved general expertise, the most difficult conditions will occasionally call for some emergency expedients. These will be new to students, and can be presented as a menu of options when in trouble, drawing attention to their pros and cons. Some will involve major trade-offs of completeness or linguistic polish against survival. One such category, in particular - *'non-translation' solutions for emergencies* – has been kept in reserve here in our trainer's guide, to be prescribed for use only when absolutely necessary.

Emergency 'non-translation' solutions are of two kinds:

a. *Local, form-based expedients* for dealing with items which the interpreter doesn't understand or has no reliable equivalent, when there is no help from context:

- Reproducing the *sound* heard in the source-language speech as accurately as possible[9] (often the only choice for unknown proper names); or, for some language pairs, 'naturalizing' the SL term by pronouncing it in the target language – e.g. 'teledetection' for French *télédétection* (remote sensing) (Gile 2009: 207). The main risk is in producing a term that is not just unidiomatic but wrong – e.g. Fr. *albacore* and En. *albacore* designate different species of tuna.
- *Transcoding,* i.e. 'translating' the item literally when unsure of the correct TL equivalent.

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8.   For these lists we owe a general debt of acknowledgement to Gile (2009: 204–211) and Jones (1998/2002: 78–139, especially 95 ff.), many of whose proposals overlap with our own classification.

9.   Gile calls this '*instant naturalisation*'.

- *Guessing* 'conservatively' at the meaning or translation of something not fully understood. To minimize the risk, choose something as neutral as possible, that won't cause problems, ruffle feathers, or stand out and invite being quoted by other delegates (or worse, journalists); e.g. for "Claude was a persnickety ninnyhammer" say "Claude was a person who had his own style".

b. More radical solutions which significantly simplify or *substitute* for parts of the input:

- *More radical omission,* under pressure of impossible speed and density – leaving out all examples and explanations, for example – but still aiming to give a minimal bullet-point report of the message.
- '*Parallel reformulation*': inventing or producing a speech segment that is 'compatible with the rest of the speaker's statement'. This somewhat desperate tactic is reported by Gile: "When working conditions are particularly bad and interpreters feel it is imperative to continue speaking despite their inability to understand and reformulate the source speech properly, they may *invent* a speech segment which is compatible with the rest of the speaker's statement" (2009: 182). Gile (2009) does not rule out teaching this tactic, but only at the very end of training. A real-life example from an anonymous 'coper' is given in the box below ('Wikipedia Gambit').
- *Switching off*: In extreme cases – if for reasons of poor reception, an incomprehensible speaker, or excessively fast or dense read-out text you can no longer provide reliable interpretation – the AIIC Practical Guide recommends that "you may state that you regret that you will have to stop interpreting until reliable interpretation becomes possible again. Turning off your microphone is of course an extreme tactic, but when no interpretation is better than the best interpretation possible under the circumstances, it is undoubtedly the ethical thing to do" (AIIC 2004).

Parallel reformulation: the 'Wikipedia Gambit' – a confession

At a meeting of legal experts on the role of public hearings in lawmaking, the agenda foresees a presentation in Chinese by a Chinese NGO about how public hearings were organized by the authorities responsible for managing waterways along the Yangtze River as part of a consultation process on proposed new river navigation regulations designed to protect the Chinese sturgeon (中华鲟), an endangered fish species that is a "national treasure" in China. No materials being available, the interpreter preemptively prints out the Wikipedia article in English on the Chinese sturgeon and brings it into the booth, just in case.

Just as the interpreter had feared, the speaker begins with 1–2 minutes of technical introduction of the biology, physical appearance, habitat etc. of the Chinese sturgeon. Faced with a choice between producing a fragmentary and possibly stammering version which would probably capture less than 30% of the content, the interpreter confidently reads out the part

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of the Wikipedia article that seems to fit, telling the audience that the Chinese sturgeon "is a comparatively basal species of fish, dating back to the Cretaceous period. It is believed to be a transitional species of cartilaginous fish and bony fish, and is also regarded as a kind of Ganoidei with cartilage. It is marked by multiple blocks of osteons. The sturgeon is *anadromous*: it spawns in fresh water and migrates to salt water to mature…".

The audience of lawyers is very impressed at the high quality of the simultaneous interpretation, and praises the interpreter at the coffee break, several delegates asking how to spell 'anadromous'.

The interpretation was probably not *accurate*, but it could be considered globally and functionally faithful; moreover, this short biological description was not at all the main point of the presentation, which soon went on to discuss the actual topic at hand: public hearings in the rule-making process. This more mainstream material was interpreted the 'regular' way, and was much easier.

This is also about preparation. For a meeting about public hearings, it seemed unreasonable for the interpreter to prepare and memorize technical vocabulary about this fish, given the small chance (as it seemed) that it would be needed for this one 15-minute presentation. However, the interpreter anticipated a possible problem and prepared for it by bringing a 'parallel text' into the booth to use if need be. Today, s/he could call it up on a tablet or smartphone.

Instructors should explain the pros and cons of each tactic and the responsibility we assume in choosing them, and invite students to explain their choices during exercises.

Students can be shown these tactics as a menu of options, with specific examples, and then be given speeches presenting various difficulties for practice and discussion. Feedback should include explicit analysis of the positive and negative impacts on the interpreter's control and the audience's reception of the message.

A more hands-on type of crisis drill may also be beneficial.

9.5.3 'Tough Love' Crisis Management Drill

Expertise research suggests that a 'stop and start' format, with immediate feedback, active coaching and repetition, is an effective mode of deliberate practice (TG-2.6).

One such drill is a fast-paced Sight Translation exercise with frequent interruptions from the instructor, who stops the student and asks any of the following questions:

"Okay, now pretend that you didn't understand the word XYZ, what would you do?"
"Okay, now pretend that you didn't hear the number, what would you do?"
"Okay, now pretend that a moment ago you got XYZ wrong and said 'ABC' – how are you going to fix the problem?"
"Okay, now pretend that you don't know the TL word for XYZ, how are you going to get around it?"

"Okay, pretend that you got too far behind on the last sentence. How are you going to catch up?"

"Okay, pretend that you got the speaker's last point completely backwards by mistake. How are you going to repair the damage?"

"Okay, now pretend you missed the topic shift. How are you going to stall, and where are the subsequent clues that are going to help you figure out what the new topic is?"

Short but targeted doses of this exercise should be followed with a discussion of the costs and benefits associated with different tactics. The exercise can be done in different variants – for example, first in SI from a text that is only then given to students for a second try. The exercise can target a clearly defined skill gap for each student. Being interactive and fast-moving, and with built-in feedback, it can be fun and stimulating as well as instructive for all concerned.

This can be done as a standalone ST exercise, but is more effective as part of an SI practice session: students

1. first do SI of a challenging speech in the booths (5–10 minutes),
2. return to the classroom and collect the speech text or transcript,
3. listen to playback, following the transcript or text, and analyse performance,
4. use the same text to do the ST exercise with instructor interruptions, demands and corrections, to drill coping tactics,
5. repeat the above steps for the next 10-minute SI sample.

Finally, students must be given clear and complete guidelines for what to do in real crisis situations. CC-9.3.2 sets out various tactics for what to do when you don't know, and conventions for distancing oneself from the speaker, explaining the problem, making explicit disclaimers or interrupting service, with a brief closing discussion of Gile's 'laws' and recommendations for reconciling professional conscience and self-preservation.

Note that novices who are unschooled in the proper use of disclaimers or legitimate refusal of service may be either too shy ever to complain; or conversely, so shocked at incoherent and non-standard speech that they abuse this option – just as they may be tempted to ask the speaker too many questions in consecutive. (They may also underestimate the range of accents and variants they *should* be able to understand, or the effort they must make to reconstruct from context.) It should be made clear that – especially given today's market pressures – this 'special pleading' is a last-ditch gambit to be used only when all other expertise and coping tactics have been exhausted.

In the last weeks of the course instructors should seek to warn students about exceptionally difficult conditions that may arise in the field and how to deal with them.

9.6 Hazards and impossible conditions

9.6.1 Expertise and its limits

It is important, now and then in the programme and especially as trainees approach their first contacts with reality, to discuss what can and cannot be done, and under what conditions (and user expectations; see CC-10 and 11) and to define baseline goals and priorities.

Utterly impossible conditions (and sometimes, whole assignments) must be refused; but many factors, like speakers' accents or delivery speeds, cannot be known or controlled in advance.

Some types of discourse – such as poetry, or mathematical formulas – cannot really be interpreted, especially in SI. But otherwise, for most speech the basic fidelity goal of getting the speaker's general message across can be met by a trained expert, even if at the cost to users of some style and detail, and to the interpreter, of an extra effort of coordination and information and terminology management. Even this, however, will take a sufficient grasp of the topic and context by the interpreter, to make the relevance judgments that are needed to prioritize and compress evenly.

9.6.2 What is difficult and why?

As practitioners we instinctively recognize difficult conditions, but for teaching purposes it helps to analyse cognitive factors in difficulty and show how they are combined in interpreting tasks. These factors are of three kinds:

1. *Parameters of the **input*** (see SDI, TG-2 Appendix):
   a. High **speed of delivery**: say, above 160 wpm, depending on density;
   b. High **information density**, low redundancy (as often in speech recited from text); may peak locally in names, numbers and lists;
   c. Wide **linguistic variation** from standards: usually, strong non-native or regional accents or dialect, but also confusing syntax and lexis;
   d. Extremes of **register** (unless predictable and prepared for): either formal and 'frozen' (officialese, ceremonial, carefully crafted diplomatic nuance, legalese, archaic); or hyper-casual, slangy, allusive or elliptical (in-jokes, insider talk);
   e. **Incoherent** or **disconnected** speech: excessive hesitation, backtracking, self-correction, digression, fragmented presentation, incomplete sentences/ideas or (possibly culture-bound or 'diplomatic') **vagueness** and **ambiguity**;

f. **'Technical'** (unfamiliar, highly local or proprietary, e.g. corporate in-house) **subject matter** and **terminology**, sometimes aggravated by lack of materials for preparation;

g. **Flat, absent or unnatural prosody**: delivery stripped of natural intonation, pausing etc. usually due to *uncommunicative reading*, deleting the usual cues to new vs. old information, contrasts, topic changes, logical development etc.;

h. **Original, creative content** or expression; poetry; metalingual effects such as alliterations, metaphors, slogans, puns, (in-)jokes; and generally, everything that is considered hard in (written) translation;

i. **Culturally loaded discourse**, historical/literary allusions, quotations, intertextuality, etc. requiring 'annotation' or explanation for another cultural group (CC-5.8.4);

j. **Mixed-media: multiple oral, text and visual channels** combining or alternating between sources, e.g. in presentations combining speech, recited text, and visual aids (slides, video or film clips), sometimes in different languages.

2. *The **interpreter's** qualifications, preparedness, or state of mind:*
   a. **Reduced context**: reduced view of meeting room, and/or access to speakers, documents or background information about the meeting;
   b. Reduced **time for processing** (fast, dense, speakers, no time for preparation);
   c. Special **demands on the product**, whether reasonable (summarizing in consecutive, pleasant voice quality for TV), or unreasonable (literary-quality SI of poetry);
   d. **Stress and pressure** due to
      • **high stakes** or public **exposure**, being recorded, broadcast, transcribed (e.g. for a 'literal' ultra-complete, accurate version to be checked later), consequence of making a mistake;
      • any source of tension with clients, users or colleagues.

3. *Environmental and working conditions:*
   a. Poor physical conditions such as **booth ventilation** and **space**;
   b. **Reduced environmental input**: restricted or no view of speakers/audience;
   c. **Poor sound**: extraneous **noise,** hiss, buzz or cross-talk in the interpreter's incoming sound feed, inadequate volume in the interpreter's headphones (even with the volume dial on the console turned all the way up), distractions; speakers failing to speak into microphones;
   d. **Non-presence/remoteness**, as in remote interpreting, or doing consecutive from the other end of the room, far away from the speaker; relay interpreting with no view of pivot;
   e. **No team support**: lack of a helpful boothmate.

With adequate knowledge of the topic and context – the key resource to be able to make sense, at least, even when form and detail go by the board – most of these factors can, within reason, usually be managed *individually.* Things get more difficult when one or more are combined; when several co-occur, the task can become impossible.

As with extreme climate conditions, we can either try to forestall or **mitigate** the hazards – in this case, by communicating with clients and users to ensure acceptable conditions, or failing that, try to **adapt** to them by a combination of expertise, survival tactics and crisis management.

Certainly mitigation has had mixed success. AIIC and various institutional Interpretation Services have regularly lobbied organizers and speakers, and drafted short guides on how to optimize communication in an interpreted event (CC-10.2.3.1), but despite all these efforts, these near-impossible conditions still occur quite frequently, for one or more reasons that can be frankly explained to students:

i.   Event organizers are unaware of the conditions necessary for quality interpreting, resulting in poor equipment, sound or visibility, uncommunicative speakers or lack of documentation.

ii.   Organizers have been given guidelines, but have not passed them on to speakers and participants, or do not enforce them.

iii. Speakers ignore the guidelines, for various reasons: a speaker may prefer to read from text (and a non-native may need to) and/or be unwilling to share it with anyone before delivery (often the case with government officials, especially at more senior levels).

iv.   Speakers try to say as much as possible in the short time allotted to them (according to the compound misconception that language is to convey information, so that 'productivity' can be measured in words per minute) and thus see no reason to slow down, express their ideas clearly, pause between ideas, explain unfamiliar concepts, recap their key points, etc. – making it hard even for the same-language audience to follow comfortably, not to mention high-quality interpretation.

v.   Interpretation is not considered important enough in the event to justify the cost and effort of providing adequate conditions, or the 'disruption' of repeatedly asking speakers to slow down and speak clearly. This is the case when interpreting is provided as a formality, or for prestige purposes, or is really needed only by a minority considered marginal or secondary by the organizers or the speakers, who may not bother to adjust their presentation style or speed, treating the meeting as a monolingual or even local affair.

Let us look at the hazards listed above, in various typical combinations, to examine the potential of expertise – either 'mitigation' or 'adaptation' (preparation or coping

on line) – to deal with them. Assuming the successful completion of basic training for 'normal' situations, we should be able to focus on specific tips, guidelines and habits of trainable expertise, taking for granted (i) basic prerequisite language and knowledge competence, and (ii) to some extent, the 'unflappability' that should have been acquired in consecutive.

Health Warning: Some Translation Norms may be suspended!

Some of the strategies and coping tactics described and recommended here may shock readers with a conventional or ideal conception of the standards of accuracy and completeness that 'translation' should achieve. This may be the case for readers who have not personally faced these conditions in an SI booth, or even for some seasoned interpreters who have, but prefer to forget the experience and go into denial until next time. Some SI conditions (in terms of input speeches) are indeed so ghastly as to be met with the same incredulity every time, even by seasoned interpreters. The principles to be kept in mind are those of realistic expectations and doing the best we can in the circumstances.

9.6.2.1　*Speed and density*

Since interpreting is information- not word-processing, speed *in itself* is not a 'hazard' for a trained and well-prepared interpreter, who can usually reformulate speech with little or no loss of content at input speeds even somewhat faster than the 'optimal rate' of 110–120 words per minute[10] (wpm) for SI cited by most early researchers (Gerver 1969; Seleskovitch 1978; Lederer 1981), provided that delivery is natural, communicative and comfortably redundant. Information *density* is a key factor, however. Fast input rates pose a problem in proportion to the amount of hard information that cannot be conceptually synthesized or compressed because it is unfamiliar, technical or 'context-free' (like proper names, titles, some numbers, technical terms or lists) and therefore needs to be heard reliably, then transcoded mechanically and quickly.

A recent study (Monti et al. 2005) reported that informationally-dense speeches in the European Parliament routinely exceed 160 wpm, and a trend towards faster delivery has been observed to varying degrees in different interpreting settings.[11] Fast speakers were the leading stress factor cited by interpreters surveyed in 2009 (Neff 2011).

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10. This figure must obviously be adjusted for the definition of 'word' in different languages. German or Turkish, for example, agglutinate morphemes into a single word that would count as several separate words in other languages.

11. TV broadcasters, though they are never interpreted without preparation, speak even faster. Chinese TV news presenters' delivery rate has accelerated by stages from around 185 syllables per minute (equivalent to 130 wpm) in the 1960s to up to 300 spm (200 wpm) today (Li 2010).

Solutions: a number of approaches are proposed in the literature: interpreters can

i. 'Mitigate', by asking speakers to slow down (before and/or during the meeting) either through the organizer, or by directly approaching speakers.[12]
ii. Adapt by speeding up themselves, i.e. talking faster.
   Either of these tactics may work partially or temporarily. Advising and warning users in advance, or asking them to slow down, may work, but usually only for about half a minute before they speed up again. Output speed cannot be increased indefinitely, and even if the interpreter can speak fast enough, listeners may find it hard to follow (Li 2010).
iii. Switch off the microphone and stop working.
   This is a last resort. It may do more harm than good when SI is being provided mainly as a prestige-raising device or for protocol or statutory reasons: in such cases, when no-one is really relying on the interpretation, organizers will prefer approximate, even partial interpreting of an impossibly fast speaker, and the next one may be better. Sometimes, however, if interpretation is important to the meeting, it will draw organizers' attention to a real problem – but to be credible, all booths must switch off together.
iv. Summarize or abstract.
   A skilled interpreter can convey the same message in fewer and apter words and effective prosody (and extra emphasis if necessary, to simulate the speaker's energy). Déjean le Féal (1982) observed that interpreters tend to 'centre' speech rates, speaking slower than the fastest speakers and faster than the slowest, which is more comfortable for listeners. Beyond a certain speed, however, the only way to preserve the essentials of the message may be by summarizing or even more selective *abstracting,* reducing the speech to 'bullet points' (9.2.3). However, this is difficult and extremely exhausting (especially into B), and therefore unsustainable over several successive speeches. When overwhelmed, the interpreter must consider abandoning the attempt to render the speech at all, rather than risk seriously distorting the speaker's intended message.

Compounding the problem: speed with expectations of completeness
User expectations vary according to setting. Some users may be more than willing to be spared redundancy, jargon and ritual padding in favour of the informational meat of the speech; but elsewhere – as hinted at by Li (2010) – abstracting and selective omission may not always be acceptable. Members of the European

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12. Some SI consoles are fitted with buttons by which the interpreter can signal to the speaker to slow down, usually by means of a blinking light on the speaker's lectern, but this rarely works (and is sometimes misunderstood by the speaker, who thinks he is running out of time and perversely speeds up even more).

Parliament, for example, commonly speak at 160 wpm or faster, but they also often check the (web-streamed and recorded) interpretation of their remarks (especially in English) and complain if anything has been omitted (Suzanne Altenberg, European Parliament, p.c.).

This leaves *fast talking* as the only viable option, requiring instant availability of terminology and routinized patterns; and it explains the European Parliament's creation of a summer finishing course for the best graduates of interpreting schools, with the focus on speed in SI and thorough institutional knowledge.

Finally, excessively ***slow or rambling speech*** should prompt the communicative interpreter to **expand**, adding neutral or helpful verbal padding, although this is notoriously difficult in a non-native language (CC-8.4.2).

9.6.2.2   *Unfamiliar or technical subject matter*

In normal conditions, advance warning should be given of the subject matter of a meeting, with access to documentation to allow thorough preparation of the topic and its terminology. Faced with unscheduled surprises, however, one or both of the following emergency coping tactics (Gile 2009: 204 ff.) can be resorted to:

- Falling back on relatively **literal or form-based translation**, 'instant naturalization', transcoding, reproducing the sound of some terms in the target language, or using English source-language technical terms, with which most specialists are now familiar in their own disciplines.
- Suggesting that interested parties **contact the speaker** 'bilaterally' for clarification.

In a world where global English is pervasive, the real value-added of interpretation may sometimes be just to offer a comfortable and idiomatic TL version of the line of argument. To practise maintaining this clear logical thread in very difficult conditions – a fast and highly technical or jargon-rich presentation in English, for example – there is an exercise which (in a departure from incremental realism) isolates and removes one component of difficulty.[13]

'Swiss Cheese' exercise

In this exercise, students do highly technical presentations from English into another language 'cold' (with no preparation), but leaving all technical terms in English. The instructor then checks if the logic is correct and the speech can be followed by a listener, despite the non-translation of the technical jargon. Note that this still requires familiarity with the 'packaging' language of research in the TL (TG-7.4.2).

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13. See Cheung (2001) for the use of a code-mixing exercise in interpreter training.

The exercise is artificial – or should be, if we have a chance to prepare our assignments – but a mild dose of this code-mixing can be (and has been) resorted to in emergencies, relying on the fact that many experts know the English terms. It can also serve as a test of the students' ability to keep the forest in perspective in spite of the trees. (However, it can only work *from* English, given the ubiquity of terms from that language.[14])

9.6.2.3 *Register, eloquence and style*

Interpreters are expected to reflect speakers' register and tone – whether business-like, solemn, somber, indignant, warm, formal, relaxed or humorous – and to try to speak more or less like the participants in the meeting, whether lawyers, trade unionists, business people or academics. Whatever the dominant setting in which they work, they are sure to come across a wide variety of registers and styles, covering at least the following range (see CC-9.2.1):

a. *Standard educated*, as in informed oral discussion or presentation;
b. *Officialese/formal*: institution- and/or country-specific, usually text-based, and jargon-rich;
c. *Ceremonial or ritual*: sometimes culture-specific (praise, awards, valedictory, obituaries, opening ceremony, welcome speeches; also elaborate parliamentary procedure); may be flowery and/or solemn;
d. *Oratory*: meticulously crafted political speech (e.g. Churchill, Malraux, Obama…) built on devices of rhetoric and persuasion;
e. *Informal, relaxed or colloquial*: multiple sub-types according to social class, occupation or level of education; may also be jargon-rich and/or elliptical, sometimes sub-culture-specific (e.g. academics).

Extremes of register are problematic for interpreting, but they may crop up – contract legalese, for example, at one end of the colloquial/formal spectrum, or slang at the other.

Training and remedies: Most input speech for traditional conference interpreting falls between 'standard educated' and 'formal' (officialese or ceremonial) registers. This is where most active B-language enhancement work should be focused, but different students may need help on different parts of the register spectrum:

▶ **Informal, conversational styles** found in small-scale closed-door meetings, sometimes combined with highly sophisticated content, e.g. among academics. Trainees who have acquired their B or C language(s) more from books or recordings than extended social contact (having been unable to spend time

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14. Or possibly the language of a regionally dominant bureaucratic or technological culture (Arabic, Russian).

abroad, as is the case in some schools) will need to study and familiarize themselves with this genre deliberately and thoroughly;

▶   Written **legalese**: all trainees should acquire some competence, at least passive, in this style, perhaps by doing one semester of **legal translation**;

▶   Ideally, interpreters should also have at least some passive familiarity with *slang*, which crops up in jokes and anecdotes.

High-profile **political speeches** are typically crafted for maximum rhetorical impact (often by professional speechwriters) and are often also delivered by consummate orators, with rhythm, information density and meaningful intonation congenial to real-time listening. Such speeches are a pleasure to interpret (preferably into an A language[15]), but they also contain deliberately and **carefully chosen words** and phrases that an interpreter cannot reasonably be expected to render optimally without preparation. A notorious problem is the carefully crafted **quotable catch-phrase** that a speaker will especially want to get across:

> We must live simply, so that others may simply live.   (Pachauri, quoting Gandhi)[16]
>
> This affluent society is rapidly becoming an effluent society.
>   (J. K. Galbraith, opening words, 1970s)[17]
>
> You've got the pollution; we've got the solution.
>   (OECD leader at cleantech meeting in China)

Short of a lucky flash of inspiration, interpreters cannot hope to find the pithy, crafted equivalents that the leisure of written translation might allow. To approximate to the formal equivalence that clients will expect, interpreters can

i.   maximize our familiarity with all the *formal and informal registers* in our working languages, learn to produce them as well as possible, and build a high-availability stock of *ready-to-go phrases, expressions, collocations*, etc. to express common ideas in the appropriate register;

ii. use the *oral dimensions of tone and rhythm* (and in consecutive, body language and demeanour) to simulate formal or relaxed styles, to compensate for imperfect terminology.

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15. Effective teamwork (9.3.2) can include assigning speakers among boothmates for optimal results. We give two examples in this section: B into A is preferable for high-register speeches in high-exposure situations; A into B for more information-oriented speeches posing exceptional comprehension difficulties (rare accents, arcane cultural references).

16. In exemplary Chinese translation: "生活只求过得去，他人才能活下去". (With thanks to Wen Xiluo, p.c.)

17. In exemplary French translation: "Cette société qui abonde devient vite nauséabonde". (With thanks to the late Emmanuel Weintraub, p.c.)

In an analogy with the speed-centering tendency, professional conference interpreters tend to 'center' register, bringing it back from the extremes of the formal-colloquial continuum to more neutral, communicative or layman's language (Shlesinger 1989) (whereas court interpreters are often explicitly required to simulate all registers as exactly as possible). Register-centering may be beneficial in the oral mode, or in some cases, the best we can do, though for discourse types (b) and (c) – officialese and ceremonial – clients often expect fairly close adherence to stylistic and terminological convention.

Some forms of speech are so strongly connotated with conventional historical or political meanings and references accessible only to national or local 'insiders' that they would make little sense to outsiders even if faithfully translated. Culture may even determine the expected translation strategy. In the three 'officialese' styles below, the Chinese client (in the unlikely event that this extreme case of internal officialese were presented at an international meeting) might require the use of pre-set English phrasing; the French might expect the interpreters to paraphrase and explain. In contrast, the third example, though equally conventionalized (and remarkably content-free) is mainstream interpreting fare: any market-ready graduate should be equipped to transpose it fluently.

Culture-specific or highly conventionalized register or style (authentic examples*)*

(1)   China: *Party officialese*[18]*, in approved English translation:*
[…] The Seventeenth Congress is one of vital importance being held at a crucial stage of China's reform and development. The theme of the congress is to hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, follow the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents, thoroughly apply the Scientific Outlook on Development, continue to emancipate the mind, persist in reform and opening up, pursue development in a scientific way, promote social harmony, and strive for new victories in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.

The great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the banner guiding development and progress in contemporary China and rallying the whole Party and the people of all ethnic groups in the country in our common endeavor. Emancipating the mind is a magic instrument for developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, reform and opening up provide a strong driving force for developing it, and scientific development and social harmony are basic requirements for developing it. Building a moderately prosperous society in all respects is a goal for the Party and the state to reach by 2020, and represents the fundamental interests of the people of all ethnic groups.[19]

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18. See Link (2013) for an analysis in English.

19. Report by Chinese President Hu Jintao to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China on Oct. 15, 2007, entitled "Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for New Victories in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in all Respects". Official English translation posted on http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/229611.htm (Accessed November 20, 2015).

> (2)   French: *the 'hexagonal' style (on educational reform)*
>
> …les inspecteurs généraux […] constatent que la mise en œuvre des nouveaux pro-
> grammes n'est aujourd'hui qu'engagée. Ces textes sont perçus comme difficiles et alourdis
> dans un horaire restreint. La question qui se pose alors à l'encadrement de proximité est de
> savoir comment aider les enseignants à réorganiser leurs pratiques pédagogiques pour en
> couvrir l'ensemble. Les évaluations nationales, quant à elles, sont considérées comme une
> source essentielle de connaissances pour piloter le système à tous les niveaux. Il importe
> aujourd'hui de stabiliser ce nouvel outil, directement lié à la mise en œuvre des programmes,
> pour mieux intégrer les références qu'il procure dans les pratiques de fonctionnement de
> l'Èducation nationale et permettre un approfondissement des exploitations pédagogiques.
>
> (3)   *Internationalese: authentic PowerPoint slide ('xyz' is the activity under discussion)*
>
> Interlinked policy challenges:
>
> ► In order to maximize xyz's full economic potential, a range of inter-linked policy chal-
>   lenges need to be addressed, including
>   - ✓   promoting a robust international framework
>   - ✓   promoting xyz policies for growth and open xyz markets
>   - ✓   identifying new high-value sources of growth and competitiveness
>   - ✓   addressing long-term issues, such as globalization, demographic change, infra-
>   structure quality, and climate change
> ► Important to identify policy inter-linkages and to effectively consider them in analyti-
>   cal frameworks and policy responses
> ► Need for innovative approaches to identify emerging issues and trends, and to deal with
>   potential trade-offs and synergies

Realistically, however, we can allow for – i.e. be dispensed from reproducing ex-
actly – cultural and linguistic differences in stylistic 'depth'. Chinese, for example, is
fond of literary and flowery expressions that would seem excessive in the same con-
centrations in English, even if equivalents could be found for all of them. Japanese
discourse has been characterized as especially vague (Kondo 1988), Italian legal and
political argument as especially tortuous, and logical patterns in various cultures
as 'spiral', elliptical or allegorical. Clearly expectations must be adjusted – depend-
ing on the audience and occasion – when equivalent registers, styles, metaphors or
proverbs either do not exist in the target language, could not be expected to be ready
to an interpreter's mind, or would sound too precious and artificial.

9.6.2.4 *Linguistically deviant or incoherent speech*
Not all speakers in international meetings are naturally good communicators; and
many are now forced, or choose, to use a non-native language (usually English)
to communicate. Interpreters often have to deal with mumbling, stammering,
backtracking, excessive repetition, self-correction or digression and other kinds
of confused, mispronounced or garbled speech (even in native speakers). An ex-
ample is given below:

> **Multiple Grammy-winning music producer and composer interviewee speaking in a 'loose' style (verbatim transcript)**
>
> "I know I am lucky enough to be with the Nobel doctors of Stockholm and they are the ones that promised me 110.[20] And don't make up your mind until 109. [laughter] And they said the key words, I did not realize before, they said we are all self-contained emotional machines. And your thoughts – we do not have any programs on this and everything. It all happens here and here. If your heart and mind is okay, they can fix the rest, but they say the key words, positive words are love, laugh, live, and give. And if you have the mean thoughts, darkness and everything, you will get sick. It is strange, I have learnt so much, I will shut up…" (etc.)

It is usually pointless or unfair to blame speakers – we just have to manage. But any of these factors can impose significant additional effort on interpreters in terms of heightened attention, inference, memory (for what is coming in as you try to disambiguate) and even guesswork, on the comprehension side; and major efforts of reconstruction and repackaging, on the production side, to provide an even and usable product, without putting words into the speaker's mouth, to an audience that may not be aware of the problem.

Remedies: Professional interpreters should gradually develop a better-than-average **ear for unusual accents** and rhythms. Outside their regular interpreting practice sessions, students should listen to recordings of non-native and regional speakers (e.g. in English: Japanese, Pakistani, Thai, Spanish, Texan, Scottish, etc.), noting regularities in their pronunciation patterns, then practise interpreting them, first in consecutive.

Other forms of expertise that can be deployed to handle incoherence and 'signal problems' include making use of **lag, with neutral padding, to make time for the penny to drop** (CC-8.4.2). However, linguistic opacity may still cause overload, especially when combined with monotonous delivery and/or speed and density. When speech becomes particularly opaque, the interpreter must either be content with providing a fragmentary version**,** or switch to '**sports commentator' mode** (cf. *bavardage intelligent*, CC-8.2.1.2) or, if even this is impossible, **explain the problem** briefly and **switch off**.

Note that this is an example where an interpreter working **from A into B** may be equipped to do a better job (for example, understanding a very thick accent like Glaswegian or Québecois). Occasionally, multilingual teams of interpreters have enlisted a colleague to interpret a particularly opaque form of her native language into a more standard version (i.e. English to English, for example) for the other booths to take on relay.

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20. Reference to an earlier comment about aiming to live to the age of 110.

9.6.2.5 *SI from recited text – but without the text*

> The simultaneous speech translating apparatus was often astonishingly success-
> ful for the purely free discussion also, and in any case, not inferior to translations
> rendered without a speech transmitting plant. Only when the interpreter had to
> translate extempore, and the speaker himself was using the manuscript, were such
> efforts not altogether successful, which was natural.
>
> <div align="right">(From an account of interpretation at the Second World
Power Conference, Berlin 1930, in Shenton 1933: 363)</div>

Text that is read out but has *not been provided* to the interpreter in advance may
pose a problem, depending on where it is situated on a spectrum of orality, from
a prepared but well delivered 'pseudo-oral' speech to the fast and mumbled recital
of a text that was never designed for oral presentation. In the latter case, quality
interpretation is difficult and sometimes impossible, since it is basically a **signal
transmitted in the wrong medium**: text composed for self-paced reading (like the
writing in this book), where the reader can check back, look ahead, or scan other
parts of the text, is usually not suited, in terms of **information flow, density and
structure**, to real-time, one-pass aural reception. Some examples are given in the
box below. The main obstacles, as compared with extempore speech, are

- *Information density* making spontaneous verbalization impossible even at
  moderate wpm speeds;
- *Unnatural prosody and/or information flow:* written text is often read out with
  monotonous or unhelpful intonation and rhythm, or even misleadingly, with
  stress and pauses in the wrong places. If the text is truly *written*, and not de-
  signed for comfortable oral reception, the lack of the natural pragmatic and
  prosodic clues that help to anticipate meaning in spoken language may force
  high working-memory loads while restructuring, or impose a literal version
  that is unidiomatic and hard to understand (Déjean le Féal 1982);
- *Complex syntax* is more prevalent in written language, and the risk of 'wrong-
  way-around' sentences without clues for anticipation is much higher (see CC-
  8.6.3 on word order);
- *Low-frequency vocabulary.*

Expedients: The reciting of written texts not provided to the interpreters, whether
at normal or impossible speed, has sadly become so common that it is hard or
even impossible to refuse service. The main expedients to handle this basically
unreasonable task are at best palliatives:

i. *Off line: preparation* to install schemas and vocabulary; and intensive practice
    doing ST and SI on similar texts. If the speaker is known in advance, s/he may
    be sufficiently famous for recent speeches to be available on the internet (e.g.
    YouTube). Such speakers, being busy, often make the same general points and

recycle the same 'quotable quotes' at different meetings. Reading or watching recent speeches can provide significant preparation.

ii. *On line: compression and abstracting.* If forced to work completely blind, the best way to provide a usable product is to focus on comprehension and self-monitoring, reducing the formulation effort radically by using short, clear sentences and sacrificing style and secondary detail for bullet-point statements that make sense. (Mastery of jargon will be critical, as there is little spare attention to waste on lexical searching.) In extreme cases (see box below), radical deverbalization and gisting will usually be the only solution short of refusal of service – which may be preferable when there is serious risk of distorting the message.

Recited text: some examples of (near-)impossible passages in SI

(1) *Agenda item read out at UNEP [UN Environment Programme] meeting*:
Measures, including consideration of their feasibility, practicality and costs, to support compliance with prior informed consent of the contracting party providing genetic resources and mutually agreed terms on which access was granted in contracting parties with users of such resources under their jurisdiction.

(2) 各缔约方、政府、土著和当地社区、有关国际组织和其他利益相关者提交的意见、包括
(Literal gloss): All contracting parties, governments, indigenous and local communities, relevant international organizations and other stakeholders (') submitted opinions/objections, including
执行《波恩准则》的有关经验和教训的汇编将作为背景文件提供。
implement[ing] Bonn Guidelines relevant experience and lessons learned (') compilation will as background document provide.

(i.e. in English, 'A compilation of inputs from contracting parties, governments, indigenous and local communities, international organizations and other stakeholders, including lessons learned in course of the implementation of the Bonn Guidelines, will be provided as a background document'.)

The word order problem here for Chinese-English SI is severe, to say the least.

Compounding the problem: when form and words are important

The general recommendation for awkward material of all kinds – fast, dense, written etc. – has been to focus on getting the *sense* across (on the principle of de minimis 'basic fidelity': CC-4.4.3), since aiming for the usual standards of completeness and style will overwhelm both memory and language resources, resulting in a garbled or unintelligible message.

Viaggio states unequivocally that "the interpreter must convey the sense and nothing less, but also nothing more" (1991:2). However, this principle needs to be revisited and qualified in certain cases where words and forms count – in carefully crafted **diplomatic statements**, when drafting **contracts**, **press releases** or other written documents, in **legal testimony and depositions**, and in general, any

formulation deliberately chosen by speakers to have a specific impact through the choice of words. In effect, this task is 'oral translation' posing as interpreting (Shermet 2012). Also, participants sometimes try to monitor the interpretation of their own or their colleagues' interventions, sometimes with a rather literal conception of what interpretation should or can be.

Solutions: Interpreters may be fortunate enough in having delegates who understand that a crafted, literal rendition cannot be expected in SI at normal speed, and are prepared to read slowly and accept **paused interpreting** – essentially short consecutive from the booth – where the interpreter can **take notes** (Gile 2009: 204). This temporary slowing of proceedings may be a lesser evil than the risk of a wrong guess, or of having to adjust and self-repair later and thus risk giving the impression[21] that it is the speaker who has changed his mind on the fly. Ideally – but only in small, cosy and savvy groups, where there is easy contact with participants – this procedure can be proposed to listeners. (When SI was adopted by the UN in 1948, consecutive was retained for drafting sessions.) Indeed, some speakers (e.g. the Chinese delegation at UN meetings, routinely) will read a sentence at a time and wait for the interpretation before continuing.

In a Q&A session done in SI, an interpreter who feels that a question from the audience is being expressed incoherently may also (after explaining) stop talking, take notes, and then summarize the question to the speaker in a kind of 'gist consecutive'.[22]

9.6.2.6 *Multiple channels or 'mixed-media' interpreting*

The optimal condition for comprehension is presumably the face-to-face communication through which language originally evolved. The contribution of a direct view of the speaker to comprehension, including a likely positive effect on anticipation, are well known from psycholinguistic, and recently, neurological studies (McGurk and MacDonald 1976;[23] van Wassenhove et al. 2005).[24]

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21. Only in this constrained context, since 'framing and filling' in this way is routine and pervasive in ordinary 'standard interpreting' (CC-8.4.3).

22. However, this only works if the speaker really doesn't understand the questioner's language, otherwise he may jump the gun and start answering before the interpreter can continue.

23. By showing participants in their experiment a film of a person speaking, but changing some of the sounds on the synchronised audiotape, these authors demonstrated that hearing and vision interact in speech perception. Participants reported hearing yet a third sound, an illusion known as the McGurk effect.

24. In interpreting research, Anderson (1994) did not find any impact of a view of the speaker on interpreting quality; but interpreters may have had to make temporary increased efforts to compensate. As in many studies, cognitive load, stress and fatigue would need to be measured over time.

To quote from a recent neurolinguistic study:

> In visual speech perception (i.e. seeing the presenter's face), the information provided by the face is congruent in space and in time with the auditory inputs. Hence, we can now talk about *auditory-visual speech*, where one hears and sees the presenter's face. Additionally, the movements of the articulators provided by the presenter's face and the produced speech sounds that one sees and hears pertain to the same type of perceptual representations in the brain. […]
>
> (van Wassenhove et al. 2005)

In conference interpreting, however, processing of the primary input may be so difficult that we close off other channels that normally help us. When the speech is unnaturally dense, fast or opaque, interpreters are sometimes seen to close their eyes, as if sensing they will get more from concentrating on internal mental processes than from visual clues. At other times, however, we have to process an additional source, like a slide or other visual presentation, or the script that we have been given in advance:

> In a PowerPoint slide, none of the natural relations between auditory and visual speech are present. Rather, one may extract some information from what they hear independently from what they read. Reading and visual speech are two different types of perceptual strategies. Hence, while the informational content provided by the presenter may relate to the content of the PowerPoint slides, the underlying mechanism by which these two inputs are related in the brain may fundamentally differ…
>
> (ibid.)

In mixed-media or 'multiple-source' interpreting, we will often have to sample two sources – speech and slides (or more rarely, even three, if there is also a text; or occasionally even more: see box on 'Oscar night' in CC-9.4.1) – *and* decide which information to interpret and/or summarize, since different participants may or may not be able to read the original language of the slides (which may be in English, for example, not the language of the presentation) – not to mention the issue of deducing what the speaker intended to emphasize or not from which part of the slide text he chooses to read out.

Such mixed-media presentations are now among the most common formats of communication in real-life conferences, and should be repeatedly simulated for practice in class and/or mock conferences, with instructors checking that students have made the right strategic choices to prioritize listeners' needs, followed by class discussion.

The limits to simulation will soon be reached, however, in an age in which media are increasingly crowded with information – as in the televised Oscar Night example given in CC-9.4.1. Schools should make students aware of the existence of such cases, play recordings and, ideally, invite the actual TV interpreters to share their experience with the students.

9.6.2.7 *Screened-off: tele- and remote interpreting*

Remote and tele-interpreting involves a loss of environmental input due to a partial, indirect or missing view of the speakers or audience:

> Humans use multi-sensory inputs, processed simultaneously, in order to form understanding. Generally speaking, the more inputs are available simultaneously, the greater ease we have in constructing meaning. The fewer sensory inputs available to us, the more effort is needed to do so, and the more likely it is that input be misconstrued. What makes tele-interpretation particularly challenging is that it deprives us of certain sensory inputs.
>
> 　　　　　　　　(from AIIC Council Paper 2013, drawing on Braun and Taylor 2012)

One common form of indirect interpreting – relay (already described) – certainly complicates the task, but is unreservedly accepted as a small (and possibly temporary) price to pay for upholding multilingualism. Tele- or remote interpreting (RI) is much less popular with interpreters since, mainly for reasons of economy and expediency, it reduces the visual and other context that co-presence provides, increasing stress (although research on its impact on quality is still inconclusive).

According to Mouzourakis (2003, 2006), even with the best technology (deployed at the EU for an RI experiment with up to 23 languages), RI is more stressful, with a higher risk of causing eye strain, back pain, neck pain, psychological discomfort (alienation, loss of concentration), and self-perceived poorer performance, than when interpreters are present and have a direct view of the meeting room.

Presence can probably never be completely simulated, since it seems that we must *actively select* what we focus on to accompany our processing of the audio signal. It appears that no view or choice of views selected by technicians, however 'relevant', can replace presence, regardless of picture quality (in addition to the loss of peripheral vision, a rich source in the construction of this individualized information [ibid. and Moser-Mercer et al. 2003]). Roziner and Shlesinger (2010) reported no significant problems; but a joint ITU[25]/University of Geneva study concluded that remote interpreting, as currently set up, "prevents interpreters from building up the requisite situation models in working memory that normally allow them to perform at a high level of quality", and found evidence that "interpreters seem to be under increased psychological stress when working away from the conference room" (Moser-Mercer 2003). In short, remote interpreting "is not 'business as usual' […] but a completely different new *modus operandi* for the interpreter" (Mouzourakis 2003: 5).

On the other hand, when booths are at the back of a large conference hall, a screen may provide a more direct view of the podium or panel, including a

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25. International Telecommunication Union.

close-up of the current speaker, that is far better that the unaided view from the booth (which is often just rows of heads seen from the back). More sophisticated systems (though currently neither ubiquitous nor reliable) can provide inserts or multiple screens, or automatically switch the camera angle so that interpreters can see the current speaker and/or the whole panel or audience at the same time;.

Monitors are becoming standard equipment in many booths, including those in interpreting schools – although they sometimes unfortunately *replace* rather than complement a view of the room when the booth has been misplaced in a blind corner. The best service we can do students is to ensure that they learn and fully experience interpreting with a clear and direct view of the speaker and the room, and learn how to use that direct visual source to appreciate the contrast with working remotely; but also, that they sometimes work from a screen in order to be prepared for the likely increased future use of remote interpreting, in conditions that may still vary widely.

9.6.2.8 *SI-text from an unknown language (with the help of a translation)*
This task (described in CC-9.4.3) is not often required, and usually a speaker of the source (text) language will be present to guide the on-mike interpreter by pointing to where the speaker is in the text. Sight Translation and SI-text will prepare students for this exercise, but – like some other relatively rare variations – this can be organized once or twice in the last semester for the sake of experience, for example at a mock conference.

9.7   Last-mile feedback

In the last semester, instructors should check in particular that trainees

- are making maximum **strategic use of information** (documentation, slides, background information);
- are aware of their **environment**;
- are aware of their own output (**self-monitoring**): watch for uncorrected nonsense or contradictions;
- maintain a **coherent thread**, capturing relative relevance and emphasis rather than unconnected details;
- are correctly **prioritizing the actual speech as delivered over the text, and** on very fast input, **main points over details**;
- are supporting each other effectively as boothmates and as a team;

- are not getting lost looking for the place in a text or handout;
- are not systematically ignoring 'parenthetical' comments by the speaker that may be delivered in a 'throwaway' voice. Some of these may be secondary, but others may be very important for the perspective the speaker wants to give to the content, for example to signal in passing a connection with work that others (perhaps present) have done;
- are not otherwise systematically editing, or generally diluting and sterilizing the speech.

9.8   Summary

In the past decade in particular, major employers have been calling on schools to provide more 'last mile' training to ready their alumni for market demand in terms of knowledge, language and interpreting skills. This calls for a special effort to make novice interpreters aware of the realities of interpreting and give them ample opportunity to practise some more demanding variations on the basic tasks of consecutive and simultaneous, at least within reasonable parameters; but also, to be ready to deal with conditions at the bounds of feasibility, and beyond.

In addition to honing expertise by stretching all the resources of language, knowledge and skills, trainers should give students additional tips for how to survive by resorting to various coping tactics and emergency expedients. But perhaps most importantly, we should explain that many problems can be resolved by interacting with clients. This is one of the many reasons for instilling a culture of professionalism in students while they are still at school. This is the subject of the next chapter.

Further reading

(see also CC-9)

Concision and compression
Jones 1998/2002: Conference interpreting explained, pp. 95–104
Sunnari 1995: Processing strategies in SI: 'Saying it All' vs. Synthesis
Viaggio 1989, 1991, 1992

Appendix

Sample Feedback Sheet for Mock Conferences
(with thanks to Phil Smith and the European Patent Office)

Assessor	
Assessed interpreter	
Date of meeting	
Type of meeting	From ☐DE ☐EN ☐FR
Technical field	
Degree of difficulty of meeting	

I. Behaviour in the booth

Assessment	excellent	good	fair	unsatisfactory
Punctuality				
Preparation				
Helpfulness				
Absence from the booth				
Team behaviour				
Appearance				
Observations				

II. Quality of interpreting

Assessment	excellent	good	fair	unsatisfactory
Command of passive languages				
Details/nuances/idiomatic expressions				
Command of mother tongue (style)				
Accuracy/content				
Completeness				
Mistranslation				
Structure (full and coherent sentences)				
Observations				

III. Rendition

Assessment	excellent	good	fair	unsatisfactory
Voice				
Microphone discipline				
Sounds convincing				
Complete sentences				
How many "ers"				
Performance under stress				
Synchronicity				
Observations				

General Comments:

Professionalism and ethics

10.1   Introduction

An introduction to the ethical and practical aspects of interpreting as a profession is unfortunately often neglected in curriculum design;[1] but without it, young graduates will be ill-equipped to navigate the more complex situations of interlingual mediation and avoid mistakes that may damage their own careers as well as the image of the profession.

Professionalism emerges from an understanding of the interaction between the craft, ethical and service aspects of the interpreter's job (CC-10.1.2). For instructors, the challenge will be to show, while still in the artificial school setting, how competence, performance, working conditions, standards, ethics, and practice are all interdependent and intertwined.

The initiation to professional behaviour begins in the first weeks of training, as soon as students realize that interpreting is not an academic linguistic conversion exercise but a communication service where *judgment* is often needed, beyond just translation (for example when speakers are incomprehensible, obscure or rude, or seem to contradict themselves), and begin to acquire some basic common-sense habits and reflexes. Basic dos and don'ts of the interpreter's role (CC-4.4.2), exposure to a wide variety of speeches, and an understanding of the limits and possibilities of interpreting (through skills training and Theory) all prepare the ground for a dedicated Professional Practice module in the final semester, when skills are in place and students can take the more global view of an event that is needed to make strategic judgments in managing any ethical and role issues that may arise.

The Professional Practice module can combine readings and lectures, for example on the history of interpreting (see below), the emergence of the modern profession and contemporary (and evolving) norms of practice, with discussion

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1.   For example, in 2012 China had 158 Master of Translation and Interpretation (MTI) programs in universities, 38 BA programs, and 8 graduate institutes of T&I. The only one in the AIIC Directory of Schools and Programmes at the time of writing self-reports as offering precisely zero hours of instruction in Professional Ethics. Elsewhere, problems may also result when programmes neglect this aspect of training on the grounds that they are targeting their graduates primarily on (an) international organization(s).

and analysis of case studies, including examples of outright interpreter misconduct, or of circumstances that challenge the interpreter's ability to do the right thing, with role-playing and simulations where appropriate, and an introduction to the organization and 'ecosystem' of the profession (CC-11).

The "right thing" is not always clear-cut: given the wide diversity of assignments, the best we can do is to present students with a core set of principles and best practices, illustrated in case studies by an instructor with the widest possible experience. Any realistic (i.e. complex) interpreted event involving real motivated players, or an adequate simulation, will make minor or major calls on interpreters' judgment and show how their decisions, behaviour and interaction with clients and with each other can affect the success of the communication.

Lessons from history
One fun way of introducing students to the importance of professionalism is to take them on a trip through the history of interpreting, right up to the founding of the new profession and current challenges. Because of the impermanence of the spoken word (unlike text translations), this history consists mostly of sparse anecdotes and tantalizing snippets, but many of these can be seen as cautionary tales with clear object lessons in professionalism and working conditions.

Apart from local colour, the few sources we have (see Further reading at the end of this chapter) offer a spectacular illustration of problems and their consequences to do with the ambivalence of the interpreter's role and status – including glaring conflicts of interest – and issues of interpreters' competence and user expectations. The image or status of interpreters, and the consequent trust or suspicion with which they were regarded, are illustrated in the roles in which interpreters have been cast through the ages, in life and in literature: as magician, nuisance, outsider, ally, enemy, dumb parrot, walking dictionary, or diplomatic saviour of the day.[2] From Ancient Egypt, Carthage and Rome to Mesoamerica, Quebec or Shogunate Japan, and through the Middle Ages to the colonial and modern eras, the class can visit interpreters as slaves, instruments or deal-makers, problem-solvers, abetters or accomplices, shamans or scribes, neutral conduits or active counsellors and diplomats, until the advent of multilateralism and technology in the mid-20th century, when the opportunity of a historic sellers' market

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2. Literature and film provide additional entertaining sources for understanding public perceptions and misperceptions of interpreting, and some of the most and least flattering images of interpreters, from Asterix (*Rhetoric* in Asterix and the Goths), Shogun (James Clavell) and Le Carré through Bruce Lee (Fist of Fury, 1972) to Star Wars and C-3PO, the protocol/interpreter droid who is "proficient in over six million forms of communication" – to cite just a few. See Further reading.

was seized to establish norms and standards for working conditions and a code of ethics and lay the foundations of a neutral, independent profession.

History (and fiction) can thus provide an entertaining prologue to the presentation of modern Codes of Ethics and standards of practice, contracts and working conditions, and to help illustrate the interdependence between trust, ethics, working conditions and quality. Selected anecdotes can help to visualize the conflicts and difficulties which interpreters have faced when, whether due to ignorance or bad faith, conditions do not permit even the most competent to provide a high-quality, ethically transparent service.

10.2   Confidentiality and integrity

Published codes of conduct for interpreters (surveyed by Bancroft 2005; see CC-10.3 and CC-10 Appendix) show that five principles of professional ethics – competence, confidentiality, integrity, neutrality (or impartiality), and fidelity – are more or less universally shared across settings, though with differences of emphasis and ongoing debate on their application. In conference interpreting, AIIC's *Code of Professional Ethics*[3] and *Professional Standards*[4] are explicit on working conditions (CC-10.2) and a commitment to quality (competence), and on the importance of confidentiality and integrity (avoiding conflicts of interest). The following sections supplement the definitions given in CC-10 with some case studies and notes on possible varying interpretations.

10.2.1 Confidentiality

The AIIC Code of Honour requires members to be "bound by the strictest secrecy […] to be observed towards all persons and with regard to all information disclosed in the course of the practice of the profession at any gathering not open to the public" (Art 2a). Although in today's world the very possibility of privacy and confidentiality seems to be in question, clear guidelines can still be given on the use of smartphones, photography, social media and information on CVs (CC-10.3.2.1 and CC-11.2.4.1). It should be stressed that privileged information covers "everything from the moment of the interpreter's recruitment [and] clearly includes preparatory meetings, information received in the run-up to the event,

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3.   http://aiic.net/ViewPage.cfm?page_id=54 (Accessed August 3, 2015).

4.   http://aiic.net/page/205/aiic-professional-standards/lang/1 (Accessed August 3, 2015).

the meetings themselves, the breaks at the meetings, and all information arising directly and indirectly from the meeting" (Kremer 2012).

When the creation of a professional association for conference interpreters (the future AIIC) was first mooted, confidentiality was seen as *the* key to securing the trust of clients in an unregulated profession. Some former Presidents of AIIC have upheld very strict interpretations of the confidentiality rule. Thiéry (1985) insists, and Kremer (2012) agrees, that this obligation "follows [the interpreter] to the grave", thus barring interpreters even from ever writing their memoirs. However, many such memoirs have been written, and today, even many ethically aware people would probably consider that discretion for the same period as the principals themselves, and/or as long as the information is officially embargoed, should suffice.

As discussed in CC-10.3.2.1, the commitment to absolute confidentiality can be overridden in only two cases: a moral imperative (to save lives), and realistically, presumably (though interpreter-client privilege is not legally protected) a subpoena to reveal information in a criminal investigation. Fiction provides an example: in the 2005 film *The Interpreter*, a UN interpreter (played by Nicole Kidman) alone in her booth after hours overhears a plot to assassinate a national leader due to speak before the General Assembly. The interpreter's default duty of confidentiality would be lifted by the fact that the conversation was not overheard at a meeting that she was interpreting, but also, more importantly, by the superior obligation to prevent a serious crime.

10.2.2 Integrity and conflicts of interest

The commitment to avoid conflict of interest, or its appearance, is another point on which interpretations may differ.

'Conflict of interest' Case Study

The reliance of global business on a relatively small number of highly qualified freelancers means that an interpreter may well find herself contacted to work for competitors bidding against one another for the same government contract or license.

   For a lawyer or an advertising agency to represent these parties simultaneously would clearly constitute a conflict of interest.[5] What about an interpreter?

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5.   "If […] two businesses were not merely competitors in the same industry, but were competing for the same government contract, or the last remaining broadcast license in a particular market and each engaged the same lawyer to help present their bids of applications, Rule 1.7(a)(1) would be applicable." Hazard et al. (2014), Section 12.04, 12–13.

In one view, the interpreter can accept all these assignments without conflict of interest on condition of deriving no personal gain from the outcome of the bidding process; and indeed, even to disclose to any of these clients that she is also working for the others would be a breach of confidentiality.[6] On this view, the trust and collective credibility placed in the profession – in the absence of its legal recognition and regulation – must be protected by *self*-discipline and the conscience of interpreters (Thiéry 1985).

In another view, the interpreter should accept to work for only one of the competing parties, in order to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest, which would undermine trust (given the likelihood that the government officials on the other side of the table will be the same at each such meeting, and that the competitors will soon discover that their interpreter is also helping their rivals). A second argument for accepting only one such assignment is that the experience, topic familiarity, knowledge, terminology and other elements of competence that the interpreter would acquire in the early assignments would unfairly confer an added advantage to his/her subsequent clients (consciously or unconsciously on the interpreter's part) through the quality of the interpretation. We leave this issue to the reader's judgment.

10.3   Neutrality and the interpreter's role

If neutrality and fidelity are perceived as complex and difficult issues, it is because an interpreter's role is perceived as just bridging the language barrier, whereas people are also separated by two more barriers – different knowledge and beliefs, different interests and purposes – that are entwined with their speech (CC-4.8.1; see also TG-12.2).

On neutrality and fidelity, the AIIC Codes are general or silent. To help instructors answer students' questions we have proposed simple theoretical frameworks for each of these difficult issues. First, we attempt to close the gap between ideal and realistic conceptions of interpreter **neutrality** in the various settings of conference interpreting by recognizing 'neutral' vs. 'affiliated' interpreter paradigms: see CC-10.3.3. Second, we venture a closer analysis of the possibilities for achieving **fidelity** along a continuum of accepted norms – constrained, default and optimized interpreting – with detailed examples of optimization (CC/TG-10.4) that teachers may find useful as a teaching resource.

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6.   See e.g. Kremer (2002): "although the interpreter must maintain professional secrecy, he can work for competing companies, successively, for example, identifying first with one and then with the other without leaving himself open to accusations of partiality. Consequently, moral integrity, together with confidentiality, leads to neutrality."

In the simultaneous interpretation booths of an international organization, the interpreter is assimilated to an international civil servant and the norms of neutrality can be straightforwardly applied (CC-10.3.3.1). But conference interpreters may also work in a range of other settings – bilateral diplomacy, private business, and less structured or formal events – where the role conventions are different or less clear-cut. Future professionals will need additional guidance for these situations, which are far more common in consecutive interpreting, and on markets where international organizations have less influence.

Interpreters may be either unconsciously influenced by, or choose to be consciously accountable ('loyal') to various forces, from their own views to the interests of one or more of the communicators, the client or commissioner of the service, some external principle or authority such as required legal procedure, the patient's well-being,[7] religious tenets, national or corporate interest, political correctness, etiquette, the conventional organization of the interpreting service in a particular setting, a higher moral imperative (e.g. saving lives), and/or a body of ethics and standards collectively defined by the profession.

In Interpreting Studies, broadly three positions on interpreter neutrality can be found: scepticism (e.g. Angelelli 2003); activism (e.g. Prunč 2012a, 2012b) in favour of recognizing advocacy as part of the interpreter's role (citing, for example, the superiority of the patient's interest that has been enshrined in some codes of ethics for interpreting in the health sector: see CC-10, Appendix A, 3.2); and conversely, a proactive idealism, dominant in legal and probably also conference interpreting, that expects interpreters to observe complete neutrality at all times.

It is generally agreed in conference interpreting that professional interpreters should not let their *own views and preferences* show in the interpretation; but general calls to observe absolute neutrality are inadequate when they ignore realities, whether linguistic and cultural ('just translate verbatim') or socio-economic, such as pressure to follow the norms and interests of the client. Ideal positions are often framed too generally to provide useful guidance. Thiéry's (1984) principle of an overriding duty to 'the meeting' does not specify whether the interests of the meeting should be judged by the interpreter or the client. Viaggio's (2005/2006) 'loyalty to the profession' is also somewhat vague, and may not reassure clients in substituting an unspecified 'corporate' interest.

The AIIC Practical Guide states that "Professional conference interpreters speak in the first person on behalf of the speaker, and, as such, their primary loyalty is always owed to the speaker and to the communicative intent that the speaker wishes to realize, whatever the speaker's position or point of view" (AIIC

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7.   e.g. in the California and Massachusetts Standards, cited in Bancroft (2005: 39).

1990/2012). Gile (1991; 2009: 33–34) recognizes that the prevailing consensus – probably among all Translators, and standard in interpreting – is 'Sender-loyalty', i.e. primary loyalty to the Speaker. In interpreting, this is realized as 'rotating side-taking', in which the interpreter does her best to interpret each speaker with equal and maximum fidelity, becoming an *alter ego* of each in turn.

However, Gile observes that interpreters depend on their clients for their livelihood, and states unambiguously that "[a]s a professional, the Translator owes his/her loyalty to the Client first and foremost" (2009: 33). The principle of rotating speaker loyalty can thus be followed only "providing there is no conflict with the interest of the Client […]; if decisions must be made in the course of Translation, the Translator is 'biased' in favour of the author's or speaker's interests as long as this is compatible with the Client's brief and interests – and with applicable norms of professional ethics and practice" (2009: 34); but one may also refuse the client's brief if it is "strongly objectionable on legal or moral grounds" (2009: 33).

Gile does not specify what these 'applicable norms of professional ethics and practice' are, or where they are to be found; but his analysis seems to yield the following order of precedence ('>' meaning 'overrides' or 'trumps'):

Law/Higher morality/'Applicable professional ethics'
    > Client brief
        > Rotating Speaker-loyalty[8]
            > Listeners' interests[9]

Can this scheme offer practical guidance in real situations? According to Gile, conflicts between the Client's brief and equal Sender-loyalty are rare and insignificant in practice. But this seems overly optimistic in our experience. Clients may (and often do, on some markets) instruct the interpreter to tone down, censor, summarize, adopt a certain tone, etc. (cf. Setton and Guo 2009). What should the interpreter do? In the professional ethics class, case studies are probably the best way of giving students a feel for how to deal with these situations.

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8. Gile uses the more general term 'Sender-loyalty' to make the principle applicable to the wider activity of Translation (presumably including all forms: written, oral, signed, etc.).

9. If *listeners* seem to get short shrift in such hierarchies, it is presumably because their interests are assumed not to conflict with those of speakers: they will get the benefit of whatever level of fidelity is afforded the speaker. However, it is generally considered desirable (again, except perhaps in legal interpreting) for interpreters to make allowances for their listeners' knowledge and/or comprehension of the target language, insofar as it can be estimated – avoiding rare expressions, or explaining certain references, sometimes even pitching their speech to the 'lowest common denominator' when the audience is known to be culturally and linguistically very diverse (CC-10.5.3).

10.3.1 'Loyalty': Speaker vs. Client

The following are examples of a potential conflict that may arise – in practice, only in *consecutive* interpreting – between the norm of strict equal side-taking and the Client's brief.

The Heckler (or Importunate Questioner) – Case (1)

A freelance interpreter is hired by a company for a major public relations event with media, partners, clients, etc. After the VIP speeches, there is a Q&A session, during which an out-of-line questioner monopolizes the microphone for four minutes, rambling on, not posing any clear question, and casting aspersions on the company and the initiative just announced. The MC repeatedly tries to get this person to ask a question and stop talking, but without success. After four minutes of this, the questioner sits down, and it is time for the interpreter to interpret. Should she

a. faithfully and completely interpret all the rambling and even insulting comments (and persist in doing so, even if the MC asks her to stop halfway through)?
b. summarize one or two questions for the panel, filtering out the rambling, incoherent remarks in the interest of time, and censoring out the insulting bits in the interest of 'event integrity'?
c. look to the MC, or the company's PR director for guidance?

On a strict application of principles of 'equal service' and 'rotating loyalty', the interpreter should faithfully and completely translate everything the questioner said. In the real world, though, the interpreter might summarize, tone down or even censor the questioner, either spontaneously or if instructed by the client. Is this a violation of professional ethics, or an example of good customer service?

A straw poll conducted on a small sample of experienced professional interpreters in Europe found a majority concurring that (b) or possibly (c) were the most appropriate strategy. Most agreed that in addition to summarizing (conveying the core message 'if any'), the interpreter should tone down insulting language, and perhaps hedge and distance herself, for example by using the 3rd person (e.g. "the speaker spoke at some length, and the interpreter had some trouble following, but as I understand it the question was…").

The Heckler (or 'Importunate Questioner'): Case (2)

A televised Prime Minister's press conference is being interpreted in consecutive by a staff interpreter with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A hostile overseas journalist asks a lengthy question that purports to reveal covered-up information and attempts to embarrass the Prime Minister in public on television. What should the interpreter do?

a. faithfully and completely interpret?
b. summarize, possibly censoring out the potentially embarrassing content?
c. look to her employer for guidance?

In this second example, in contrast, the same respondents generally favoured strategy (a), i.e. the interpreter should interpret as usual, completely, accurately and without any special measures, considering that any response to the speech, in respect of its information content, veracity, confidentiality or the publicity to be given to it, was up to the Client and users (politicians and diplomats, and perhaps their spin doctors) and whoever admitted the questioner to the press conference.

The responses to Heckler Case (1) seem to bear out Gile's order of precedence: instead of automatically trying to apply the norm of equal Sender-loyalty, the interpreter either anticipates the instructions of the interest of the Client – whose main concern is the success of his PR event – or seeks, then follows, instructions to abridge. In fact, most respondents said they would *spontaneously* optimize (tone down rudeness, summarize), but would avoid misrepresenting the speaker, at minimum conveying *the point* or general thrust of the message. This can stand as a universal *de minimis* principle, which we may call 'basic fidelity' (or transparency), already introduced in Initiation (CC-4.4.3/TG-5.5.2).

In Heckler Case (2) (the PM's press conference), in contrast, our informants' inclination was to uphold full Sender-loyalty. This can be seen as a prudent reversion to transparent (full) fidelity norms in a high-exposure televised event – but also, as a different reading of the Client's implicit brief or interests. In assuming a democratic society (all our informants were Europe-based), the Client (i.e. the Government) has an interest – symbolized by holding a prime minister's press conference – in appearing to be open, transparent and accountable. This interest would be more severely compromised by publicly censoring an accredited journalist than by saving the PM a little embarrassment on TV. The interpreter can thus be seen as serving the Client's brief in this case by interpreting fully and faithfully the remarks of the journalist, despite his intention to embarrass the prime minister. In contrast, if this scene took place in an autocracy that practised censorship and media control, the interpreter, as a state functionary, might deliberately misunderstand, omit or 'hazify' the offensive remarks, in accordance with a very different implicit brief.

Thus, in each case the interpreter follows the Client's norms as the interpreter understands them. In Case (1), the interpreters questioned (practising in a democracy) did not consider the Heckler's right to be interpreted as a higher moral imperative. In Case (2), they reverted to 'public' (neutral) norms, taking no initiative or responsibility.

In either context, the interpreters appeared to assume that they would not be at liberty to do otherwise than follow the conventions of the setting or take instructions from the Moderator or Chair.

However, if Case (1) was the launch of a cosmetic product, and the 'heckler' was reporting serious burns after using it, censoring out that information would violate a higher moral imperative (CC-10.3.2.1, 10.3.4).

10.3.2 The interpreter's role: scope and balance

There are clearly differences among established professionals over the scope and flexibility of the conference interpreter's role. For example, some may consider that interpreters can or should aspire to full neutrality, whereas we have recognized the 'attached' status of many professionals working in diplomatic or business interpreting.

Views may also differ regarding the extent and nature of service that a conference interpreter should provide.

In the 'affiliated interpreter' paradigm, more will naturally be expected of in-house interpreters than freelancers; but in both business and diplomatic interpreting, a degree of flexibility and helpfulness is widely sanctioned by custom and precedent. Visiting leaders or executives expect more than just interpreting, especially (but not exclusively) where there are cultural gaps to be bridged (Albright 2008: 71, quoted in CC-2.3.1.7). Helpful service conventionally expected of an affiliated interpreter beyond 'just translating' includes a range of dynamic support and 'editing' functions related to the interpreter's expanded role, such as giving cultural advice, filling in gaps in the principal's knowledge, giving reminders or briefings, helping to draft points, but also various kinds of **optimization** of the client's presentation or negotiation through interpretation – filtering out things your principal said that were inappropriate (and telling him why), 'process optimization', etc. – as described in CC-5.8.4 and more fully in the next section (10.4) of this chapter. The range of service expected will also vary by principal – some will expect a more involved interpreter who provides briefings, background, drafting assistance, etc. while others will rely on other advisors for this. The reality of this type of arrangement in a significant segment of high-level (conference) interpreting has not been fully recognized (or approved) by the AIIC Code of Ethics, which requires members to refuse to "perform any other duties except that of conference interpreter at conferences for which they have been taken on as interpreters" (AIIC Code of Ethics, Art. 7).

Interpreters who offer extended service cannot be considered to be practising unethically per se, provided there is clarity on all sides about their role. However, opinions and preferences may differ on the nature or extent of the additional tasks and duties, particularly non-interpreting ones – and especially, of the loyalties and obligations – that an interpreter can assume in the interest of a client while still meeting the professional ethics specific to interpreting. Arguments for restraint include

a. Limits of the *interpreter's own expertise*: for example, if asked to perform strong advocacy or arbitration ('strong mediation': CC-2.3.3, CC-5.8.4.2, and 10.4.6 below);

b. *Dignity of the profession*: Most would consider giving the Client cultural insight and going over talking points to be within the core job of an 'attached' interpreter on this market. However, some might consider that helping to make dinner reservations, or discussing with the driver the best route and likely travel time for tomorrow's excursion, are not; but these are also things that many interpreters would do for their client in the world of business interpreting;

c. *Basic prudence*: Some might consider that an attached interpreter's status would require reporting to her client on conversations overheard among members of other parties in a negotiation (in the hotel lift, for example). However, even leaving aside universals such as integrity and dignity, this would expose an interpreter known to be attached to a delegation – and thus also the client – to the risk of manipulation.

Just as we are free to choose our profession, each professional is free to choose his or her clients or market segment (though such choices will not be equally available on every regional or local market). Some interpreters will feel more comfortable in the more neutral, codified environment of multilateral organizations, others in the potentially more 'implicated' world of business interpreting.

10.4　Fidelity, optimization and mediation

10.4.1　Fidelity

AIIC's Code of Ethics makes no stipulation about *fidelity* (being faithful to the speaker's meaning, or complete, or accurate), apparently taking for granted a concern that appears explicitly in practically all other published codes.

The fidelity debate has traditionally highlighted the contrast between faithfulness to the letter or the spirit of a text or a speech – 'form-based' vs. 'meaning-based' translation – and the difficulty of reconciling them (*les belles infidèles*, *traduttore, traditore*, etc.). Practical guidance offered to students must obviously start from an appreciation of what is *feasible* (the constraints on and potential for fidelity in interpreting) before considering what is *appropriate* and recommended insofar we have some choice and control.

Assuming a high degree of skill in the interpreter, typical residual challenges include such problems as vagueness, ambiguity, 'untranslatables', culturally-conditioned references and allusions, or speaker errors. In each case, the feasibility of different strategies will depend on the mode – in SI, explicitation (Blum-Kulka 1986/2000) will be difficult, and consulting the speaker usually impossible. Finally, not all feasible strategies will be appropriate in a particular setting.

In CC-5.8.4 we describe a continuum of procedures by which the interpreter can try to optimize communication. For guidance on choices to make in professional practice, the next section provides examples, with commentary, from the middle range of this continuum – i.e. where the interpreter has some control and is not too constrained by external norms in the way s/he aims to facilitate communication. In seeking to optimize communication, interpreters assume some responsibility, and some risk, but also provide added-value.

10.4.2   Default, constrained and optimized interpreting

As we saw in CC-2 and CC-5.8, interpreters can optimize communication in various ways, either spontaneously in the effort to be communicative, or by more deliberate, conscious improvements. These can involve adjusting the *form* of the message, or elements of its *content*, or intervening in the *process* of communication to draw attention to possible misunderstandings and obstacles. Beyond this, more active intervention amounting to arbitration or advocacy (what we have called 'strong mediation', CC-5.8.4.2) is beyond an interpreter's default role, but may be more common in such settings as healthcare or conflict interpreting.

Conscious optimization can be seen as one point on an extended continuum from coping through optimization to strong mediation:

1. *Coping tactics*: when *the interpreter* is having problems handling the speaker's message for reasons listed in CC/TG-9 – a difficult accent, unforeseen technical terminology, speed etc. – she must resort to coping tactics to allow communication to continue, even if quality falls short of default or adequate interpretation;
2. *Optimization*: when *the speaker* is not communicating optimally – clearly, appropriately, articulately, or adequately taking the audience's cognitive environment into account – the interpreter can optimize to help bridge the communication gap;
3. *Strong mediation*: when *the parties* are having some trouble reaching agreement – they may have the sincerity but not the ability to communicate directly through 'regular' interpreting, and require more active help – there may be a request (or in rare cases, a moral obligation) for the interpreter to play the role of chair, moderator, conciliator or arbiter.

Around the midpoint of this spectrum – optimization – we can both narrow and broaden the default definition of the goal of interpreting given in CC-5.8.4 (see also TG-12.2.2.5 for theoretical discussion).

> **Default goal of interpreting**: the interpreter aims to make accessible to the interpreter's audience the cognitive effects intended by the speaker as she understands them, at reasonable processing cost and risk, using whatever communicative devices available in the output language are appropriate and effective to do so in her projection of the listeners' available contexts.

> **Constrained interpreting**: the interpreter aims to produce target language utterances that are equivalent semantically as well as in style, register and prosody, but without attempting pragmatic equivalence or projecting the listeners' available contexts.[10]

> **Optimized interpreting**: the interpreter aims to make the cognitive effects intended by the speaker as she understands them maximally accessible to the interpreter's audience at minimal processing cost, in her projection of the listeners' available contexts.

The main constraints on achieving these goals should by now be clear:

a. the interpreter's qualifications, especially familiarity with the issues and the speaker's intentions
b. the environmental and working conditions
c. the nature of the input
d. norms and conventions of a setting, imposed by clients or users, or in the case of legal interpreting, by an organized 'client profession'.

Constraints in one or more of these areas may result in **sub-optimal** interpreting – falling short of the default goal – that fails to give listeners access, at reasonable processing cost, to one or more aspects or elements of what the speaker meant to communicate. For example, excessively fast and dense input in SI may not leave enough processing time for explanations of cultural references, or re-ordering, nor sufficient overall command of the task to ensure cohesion and coherence.

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10. According to González et al. (1991: 475 ff.), in court interpreting, the interpreter must translate 'verbatim', conserving in their target language version not only the speaker's message, register and tone, but "every single element of information that was contained in the source language, including, inter alia, all of the speaker's false starts, hesitations, repetitions, mistakes, and fragmentary, vague, incoherent or nonsensical utterances", to "preserve the ambiguities and nuances of the speaker, without any editing" and "never [to] add anything or elaborate […], not even for the sake of clarifying". These stipulations are quoted here from an authoritative work on legal interpreting. However, as formulated, the authors doubt their feasibility for achieving fidelity in any tenable conception of how linguistic communication works; and research suggests significant variation in the implementation of these norms: see also CC-2.3.1.4. For more on details of norms and practice in court and community interpreting, see Further reading.

Some situations, however – especially in consecutive interpreting – may provide an opportunity for **optimized** interpreting, if the interpreter can improve the *communication* of these intended messages to her audience, by adapting form, content or process, and thus increase fidelity – understood as a function of communication rather than just an aspect of the intended message itself – by approaching optimal relevance, i.e. maximum speaker-intended effects for the audience for minimum effort.

1. Optimization of **form** (eloquence, presentation) can be pursued by default in all but legal interpreting and to a limited degree (subject to instructions) in diplomatic interpreting. This kind of optimization is difficult to isolate from the 'best attempt to enable communication' of a qualified interpreter, but even when consciously performed, is ethically and professionally justified in most situations.[11]
2. Optimization of **content** (annotating, light editing, explicating cultural references). This category covers a wider range, from operations indispensable for making sense to some listeners through welcome intercultural mediation to manipulations of mood and tone or even censorship, making it impossible to define a default practice (10.4.3).
3. Optimization of **process**: interventions by the interpreter in the process of (interpreted) communication are often no less ethically and professionally justified than optimizations of form or content, but raise the question of the interpreter's visibility (10.4.4).

10.4.3   Interactions with setting, mode and role

We have already seen how fidelity norms may vary according to setting, with the more 'constrained' prescription for legal interpreting (González et al. 1991/2012), and some authors' defense of greater interpreter latitude in the service of stronger (cultural) mediation (Katan 1999) or advocacy (Prunč 2012). All forms of optimization will clearly be required more often in proportion to the cultural gap to be bridged, and will be easier and more appropriate to implement in consecutive than SI. In general, the degree to which interpreters are required, encouraged or allowed to optimize increases with proximity and informality, from 'conference' consecutive through business interpreting to community, healthcare and informal settings.

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11. It can, for example level the *communicative* playing field, re-enfranchising the 'underdog' in an encounter in the face of asymmetries of education, culture, class or status (CC-10.3.3.3).

As a rule, formal optimization is done by default and to a large extent automatically, as second nature to professionals, for all speakers. Beyond that, however, 'affiliated' interpreters will know more about their own side's positions, interests and intended messages and will thus be better equipped to optimize their own side's interventions. In terms of 'content optimization', for example, an affiliated interpreter might alert her own client to ambiguities in the other side's speech but conversely, might only fix her own side's blunders.[12] The following norms might serve as a rough guide, using a tentative distinction between optimal and **basic** fidelity (below):

a. A **'shared/neutral' interpreter** should by default follow the norm of 'rotating Sender-loyalty' and do her best (i.e. beyond mere 'basic fidelity') to interpret **each speaker equally and optimally;**

b. An **affiliated or attached interpreter**, with the knowledge and instruction of her Client, may provide extra optimization for her own Client, for example with clarifications, rhetorical enhancements, cultural insight and edits, offline advice, etc.;

c. *Any* **professional interpreter**, regardless of employment status and affiliation, must at least aim to guarantee **basic fidelity** to all speakers, conveying each speaker's communicative intent without misrepresentation or distortion. Under the Client's responsibility, an interpreter may defer to an instruction not to interpret, but should always refuse any instruction to distort or misrepresent a speaker.

'**Basic fidelity**' (CC-4.4.3) is the *minimum* of what is expected of any interpreter: an honest and accurate reflection of each speaker's communicative intent, or main point, without distortion or misrepresentation. For example, filtering or toning down – whether requested of, imposed on or deemed appropriate by the interpreter – should preserve the sense that the speaker is angry. This baseline is contrasted with the fuller fidelity that is the default goal of professional interpreting, and with various degrees of communicative enhancement, or optimization (or conversely, literalism, in 'constrained' interpreting).

The next sections exemplify the three basic types of optimization and discuss their appropriate uses, benefits and risks.

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12. Much depends on the atmosphere, of course. When a jetlagged Director General from China's Foreign Ministry, speaking at a reception in Ottawa, thanked 'the government and people of AUSTRALIA' for their warm reception and kind hospitality, the interpreter who substituted 'Canada' for 'Australia' later received fulsome thanks from both sides.

10.4.4 Formal optimization

> **Optimization of form**
> - presenting the speaker's ideas in a way that is more clear, interesting, persuasive and/or memorable for the TL addressees than direct transposition would be;
> - using expressive and public speaking skills to improve rhetorical impact by means of better style, coherence, concision, clearer logical signalling, recapping, more appropriate register, apter phrasing, more idiomatic or punchier expressions, prosody and body language.

Setting: all these enhancements are encouraged, within reasonable limits, in most conference and business interpreting, and appreciated or even explicitly requested in media interpreting.

Mode: consecutive, SI (except body language). *Concision* may be necessary for processing reasons (fast, dense SI), and is often preferred or explicitly requested by users (for consecutive and sight translation); conversely, some extra *recapping* may help make the speaker's points clearer, while also serving as a natural filler in SI for very slow and laborious speeches.

Costs, risks and benefits: Rhetorical enhancement is appreciated in appropriate settings, especially in consecutive. The main risk is that the interpreter will convey a different impression or image of the speaker or the tone or impact of the speech than the SL-savvy audience received, and/or that (media) attention is drawn disproportionately to the form (such as certain word choices) over the content; this may be dangerous for the interpreter if the phrasing picked out had been 'enhanced' and seems too creative when examined strictly against the original.

Recommendation: Conference interpreters are professional public speakers, and optimization of form within appropriate bounds is generally appreciated by most speakers and users in good faith. But as the saying goes, the interpreter must enlighten, not dazzle. That means not calling undue attention to oneself or overshadowing the speaker. S/he should be capable of adopting a plain vanilla style, or of supplying a rhetorical boost to help speakers make more appropriate, persuasive or impactful presentations, as the situation demands. In conference and diplomatic interpreting, both styles exist and may be welcomed at different times; as a rule of thumb, follow user preferences where apparent, weighing risks and benefits.[13]

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13. A November 2012 case involved the mayor of New York's sign language interpreter, who stole the show from her principal on TV and the internet. In this case the interpreter drew mostly admiration, but this was an exceptional, emotive occasion (after Hurricane Sandy).
See http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/30/lydia-callis-bloomberg-sandy_n_2044871.html
http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/11/why-great-sign-language-interpreters-are-so-animated/26445 (Accessed November 21, 2015).

10.4.5 Content optimization

> Optimization extends beyond form into content when the interpreter adds, changes or omits elements of what the speaker actually said in the interests of better communication.

In some cases, communication can be improved by adjustments to what the speaker has actually *said* in order to better express what s/he *meant* as the interpreter has understood it. We can distinguish three ways in which content can be adjusted to improve communication: **clarifying or explaining** (usually by paraphrasing or orally 'annotating': adding a word or two in explanation); **correcting** (where the speaker has clearly made a mistake, or misspoken); and **filtering**, which might involve omitting something, or toning down (or even censoring) offensive language or egregious cultural, social or diplomatic blunders.

Rationale for content optimization: risks and responsibilities

The goal of interpreting is to communicate what the speaker intended to communicate. However, it is well known that utterances communicate both explicit and implicit meanings. Implicit meanings ('implicatures', see TG-12.2.2.2 (iii)) may be communicated at different strengths, related in RT to the **responsibility** assumed by a Speaker for communicating them: s/he may be completely aware of what s/he is implying ('it's cold in here' > 'please shut the window'), or be unwilling to say or admit s/he wished to say this or that explicitly, but at the same time intend that the speech convey a general tone and message (a range of weak implicatures with an intended cumulative effect).

An utterance translated literally into another language will generally not convey the same implicatures. To choose the TL words that will best convey what the speaker intended to convey, the interpreter must first judge this intention; the weaker the implicature, the more controversial the interpreter's decision to convey it may be.

The interpreter therefore has a responsibility for her interpretation, inherited from the Speaker and associated with **risks and rewards**. We have defined the goal of interpreting by combining the relevance-based definition of optimal communication (maximum effects for minimum effort) with the translation-specific goal of fidelity – in other words, the effects (i.e. meaning) must be those intended by the speaker as far as the interpreter can determine them. The default goal of interpreting in *fidelity* terms is to convey both explicit and implicit meaning at the same strength as the speaker. The risk is in failing to meet the goal of fidelity, either by over-interpreting, but also by under-interpreting. The potential reward of optimization is to achieve this fidelity at **reduced processing cost** to listeners.

Explaining **cultural references** is relatively uncontroversial, since the interpreter has contextual knowledge that listeners may not have, and without which they would miss or mistake meaning. Attempting to explain the '**untranslatable**' is more risky: as the term implies, not only must we venture further from literal translation, but others have already tried and failed…. Clarifying **vague** or **ambiguous** elements can be risky, depending on what clues the interpreter may have to whether the vagueness is deliberate, or the unintended result of poor formulation.

One solution in written translation is to translate literally and explain the context; but in interpreting there is rarely time for footnotes and commentary.

> Advocates of 'conservative' (or 'constrained') interpreting may justify literal or minimal translation on the grounds that 'listeners can always ask for clarification'. But this is inadequate if listeners *believe* they have understood (when the utterance achieves 'accidental relevance' for them, in RT terminology), or as a matter of protocol will not have the chance to ask for clarification.

Recommendation: Content optimization is common in all settings except legal/court interpreting, sometimes with the agreement (even explicit) of the principal or employer; but it should be used with caution in high-risk cases, especially in high-stakes and **confrontational** or **adversarial encounters**.

10.4.5.1 *Content optimization (1): CLARIFYING by…*
a. Explaining, annotating or 'localizing' cultural references
b. Elaborating on or completing fragmentary or incomplete statements
c. Paraphrasing, simplifying or substituting generic terms
d. Explicating vague, confused or ambiguous elements

Clarifying aims to improve communication of meaning elements (e.g. cultural references) deemed too implicit, indirect, vague, obscure or opaque to be understood by listeners in the contexts available to them if they were merely translated. The procedure carries the **risk** (proportional to any doubt and the magnitude of the assumptions made) of wrongly imputing intentions to the speaker – e.g. due to poor knowledge of his position – or explicating an utterance that was intentionally vague. As ever, the crux is in recognizing the speaker's intention: if the speaker intended to be clear but wasn't, you can clarify; if the speaker intended to be vague, you should try to be equally vague.

Examples:
a. Clarifying *cultural references* by annotation, explanation or 'localization' is perhaps the least controversial procedure in this category: for example, when a Muslim speaker refers to the *umma*, or the (Lesser) *Eid*, the interpreter might add 'the world Muslim community', or the words 'marking the end of the Ramadan fast' respectively. Al-Zahran (2007: 155, 255) gives a more complex example: a US State Department official denies reports of the then Secretary of State Colin Powell's plans to resign, adding "It must be August". According to al-Zahran, straight translation is unacceptable, since it will not convey the implicatures that are clear to the American audience, namely that this must be one of those rumours typical of the summer recess, when journalists are starved of real news. The interpreter must recognize the impact of the reference (implying denial by using irony), and either recreate the effect in TL if possible, or if not, just say "it must be the season for press speculation…." (2007: 155–159).

The ideal solution, given time and inspiration, would be to use a target-language device with a similar strengthening effect, but that does not rely on culture-specific knowledge: for example, an expression such as the 'silly season' (UK), French *marronnier*, or even an intonation, that preserves the irony and hence elicits the cognitive effect of conveying an implied denial. Interpreting this as: "that is a false rumour – the secretary has no plan at all to resign" would be *over-interpreting*, since the statement does not explicitly deny or confirm the suggestion (see CC-4.4.3 on 'non-denial denials').

b.   *Paraphrasing or using a generic term:* For an audience unfamiliar with the Indian administration, it may well be more relevant to refer to India's Supreme Court Monitoring Committee (SCMC) as the 'Indian environment watchdog' (Minns 2002).

c.   *Elaborating/completing* elliptic remarks: in a discussion of the Eurozone crisis, an interpreter who has followed the previous discussion might hear the question "What chance is there of reducing the 150?", and clarify it for members of the audience who have just come in, by translating more fully: "[What is the chance of] privatizing some more of the 150 Greek companies still in State hands"?

d.   *Explicating vague, confused or ambiguous elements*: this procedure may carry a higher risk.

Example: eight EU member states are applying to join another international organization. Switzerland says "we cannot have too many European countries around the table". The Swiss delegate is a not a native English speaker, so the interpreter cannot be sure that he knows a construction like "I can't stress this enough". But she knows from earlier discussion that Switzerland is in favour of these countries joining, so she says something implying "we should admit as many as possible". Again, the key lies in knowing or judging the speaker's intention, based on prior knowledge of his position. (It might be objected that listeners to the source language would not get the benefit of this explanation. However, finding an equally ambiguous construction in the target language may not be possible, especially in SI, and attempting it might carry a higher risk of misrepresenting the speaker.)

Costs, risks and benefits: Some references may be clear to some but not all listeners without any editing or explanation; but other listeners may benefit, and without such explanation may even miss a crucial point. Also, explanation needs time, so in SI carries the risk of falling behind or missing the next segment.

If the interpreter judges that the speaker intends to be vague or ambiguous, she should try – usually a challenge – to preserve the uncertainty without calling more attention to it than the speaker did. If not, the interpreter may optimize to be helpful, though is not bound to do so. The interpreter's judgment of intentionality is,

of course, no more perfect than that of anyone equally informed about the speaker and context, but s/he may mobilize superior linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Note that the strategy '*render as spoken, let listeners ask if unsure*' only works if the speaker is being deliberately vague, or if the interpreter has not understood. If the speaker is simply expressing himself poorly or abstrusely, an interpreter who translates literally despite understanding the intended meaning will in effect be adding vagueness, or worse, producing nonsense.

Recommendation: These clarifying procedures are usually accepted, and may be appreciated, in *conference*, *business*, and sometimes *diplomatic* interpreting. Explaining is obviously easier in consecutive than SI. The choice to clarify depends very much on our mastery of time and processing constraints, confidence in our own knowledge, and our individual judgment about costs and benefits and audience preferences.

Culturally-marked speech: 'localize' or preserve?

Should culturally-marked references, such as colourful proverbs, or even ways of thinking and seeing, be 'localized' or 'domesticated'[14] by substituting a TL expression or proverb, or explaining or reformulating in the terms of the TL culture – in effect neutralizing the cultural feature? Or should one try to keep the local colour of the original (known rather misleadingly as 'foreignization')? This is a favourite topic in translation literature. 'Localizing' may be justified to maximize the listener's comfort zone, or in RT terms, to minimize their processing effort, while 'foreignizing' can be seen as more faithful, and in RT terms, increasing cognitive effects. For Seleskovitch (1968/1978: 112), the interpreter is an intermediary "whose task is to help participants understand each other's cultural differences, rather than pretend that they do not exist"; Nida (1993) in contrast, is perhaps the best known spokesman for 'domestication' on grounds of improved understanding for the target audience.

Edward Hall (1976) famously distinguished 'high-context' cultures (e.g. Japan or China) from 'low-context' cultures (e.g. Anglo-American; Mediterranean cultures seem to lie somewhere in the middle). In the former, communicators assume that their audience belong to the same in-group as themselves and will draw similar inferences, based on similar experiences and expectations, so that communication can be elliptical, with much left unsaid, and a deliberate *choice of words* is enough to communicate a complex message. In a lower-context culture, the communicator must be much more explicit and the value of individual words is more important (see also Katan 1999).

If this is the case, interpreting from a higher- to a lower-context culture (e.g. Japanese to English) should present special difficulties for interpreting and will more often require decisions (with associated risk) to explain or explicate[15] than when interpreting in the opposite direction.

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14. To use current terms in translation studies (see Venuti 1995), though we find them awkward.

15. http://interpreting.info/questions/1156/interpretacion-desde-el-chino-cuestiones-de-etica-y-etiqueta (Accessed November 21, 2015).

Indeed, nearly a third of professional Japanese-English conference interpreters surveyed by Kondo (2006) – all native speakers of Japanese, and mostly veteran practitioners – complained that Japanese speakers are often too vague, too obscure and too ambiguous to render their utterances into English.

Arguments for or against localizing and explaining may also reflect different views of the interpreter's role. Localizing or explaining assumes the listeners' ignorance of the source culture, while foreignizing may overestimate their knowledge. A case in point: expressions in Chinese or Japanese which literally mean 'we will give it due consideration' but are often simply a polite brush-off (Kondo 1990: 62): an interpreter who made this implicit (cultural) meaning clear[16] would risk being accused of assuming the Western counterpart's ignorance and upstaging their cultural adviser, who should have briefed them. Not to do so, however, might risk serious miscommunication. Kondo cites a much-discussed case that has "attained the status of *locus classicus* in describing miscommunication across the Pacific": the US-Japan Presidential summit of 1970:

> "[…] In 1970 […] the then Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Sato, went over to the States to confer with President Nixon. After conceding the return of the Okinawan Islands to Japan, Nixon pressed the Prime Minister […] to reduce the rapidly expanding Japanese exports of textiles to the United States. […] Sato [reportedly] responded with the expression 善 処 し ま し ょ う (*zensho shimashou*), roughly meaning 'I will deal with the matter in a forward-looking manner', but [this was] interpreted as 'I will take care of it.' It seems that Nixon expected the Japanese Prime Minister to do something specific [such as] persuade Japanese textile manufacturers and exporters to exercise a bit of 'self-restraint' in their export drive […], but when he discovered that Sato was not about to do anything of the sort, felt betrayed [and concluded that] all Japanese politicians [were] liars and utterly untrustworthy. This experience is put forward to explain Nixon's subsequently neglecting to warn the Japanese government until the last minute of two subsequent historic decisions in US policy: to establish diplomatic ties with Beijing [and] to suspend the gold convertibility of the dollar. A lot has been made of [this] case, from a rather simplistic accusation of the mistranslation by the interpreter to blaming the two primary participants for their inadequacy in cross-cultural communications skills." (Kondo 1990; see also Torikai 2009).

In Kondo's example, three strategies were open to the interpreter: (a) translate literally, (b) explicate, and/or (c) draw attention to the ambiguity. Explicating would almost certainly have been too risky, and publicly questioning the ambiguity impossible for reasons of protocol. The best available strategy would almost certainly have been (a), plus (c) only discreetly for one or more key listeners.

Such dangers justify the interpreter assuming an additional responsibility (spontaneously or on request) to explain cultural connotations and perceived 'subtext' – typically, during debriefing after an encounter, for example in the car on the way to the next meeting. (In both diplomatic and business interpreting, this function is commonly expected of interpreters who are affiliated to one party. Indeed,

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16. Though preferably by some form of strong implicature, not brash explicitation, in line with the principles set out in TG-12.2.2.5.

one drawback of neutral multilateral interpreting, especially in SI, is the inability to provide this extra clarification.) Strategy may be dictated

i.   by **processing constraints:** a literal translation with a brief explanation may come to mind more readily than the equivalent proverb (which is very rarely exactly equivalent anyway);

ii. to guard against **linguistic path-dependency**, or **metaphor trapping**. For example, a Thai speaker might warn against 'escaping from tigers and being eaten by crocodiles' (say, to describe the risks of moving from shares to bonds in an unfolding sovereign debt crisis). The interpreter may say 'out of the frying pan into the fire'; but if any speaker starts making creative variations on either of these metaphors ('don't worry, the crocodiles will have been fed by then' or 'if you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen') the interpreter will be in trouble – not to mention those in other booths who may also have found various equivalent metaphors in their own languages.

Recommendation: Conveying the sense takes precedence under pressure. Some content optimization – explanation or annotation – may be necessary (i) merely to convey the sense; (ii) as a precaution to anchor the TL to the SL against the risk of metaphor drift. Depending on processing time and context (mood and atmosphere), preserving some local colour may also add value (for example, in the 'crocodiles' example, keeping the image and adding "*as we say in Thailand…*"), provided the sense is clear. This would also be our default recommendation in such cases.

10.4.5.2 *Content optimization (2): CORRECTING obvious (factual) speaker errors*

Ironing out the speaker's *speech errors* in the linguistic sense – hesitations, slips of the tongue, mispronunciations – is part of default fidelity. But speakers may sometimes make obvious *factual errors,* for example in names, dates, numbers (confusing millions and billions) or people's identities and functions. Gile (2009: 216) lists three ways in which an interpreter can react when faced with an error made by a speaker, with their attendant risks:

a.   **Leave the error uncorrected**
     Risk: appear ignorant or incompetent, be scapegoated

b.   **Correct the error** in the target-language speech;
     Risk: the speaker is right and the interpreter wrong

c.   **Draw the listeners' attention to the speaker's error**
     Risk: damaging the speaker's credibility.

Options (a) and (b) also risk complications when the SL and TL versions deviate (similar to the 'metaphor trap' in the last section). A delegate listening to the source-language speech might pick up the speaker's error and make a comment on it, forcing the interpreter to explain that s/he has already corrected it; or delegates may object to the interpreter's correcting the speaker regardless (Kopczynski 1994, cited in Gile 2009: 216). In option (c), the interpreter can distance himself from the original and hint at a problem by adding 'says the speaker'. Others have proposed additional options:

d. **Check first with the speaker**, either by directly asking or with a glance or quizzical expression either at the speaker or the speaker's assistants) (Zhou Xiaofeng p.c.).
e. **Omit or blur meaning**: an option often selected, and candidly described by Zhou (ibid.), is to 'muddle through by being creatively vague' (known by French interpreters as the '*flou artistique*', and also used as a self-preservation tactic to save the *interpreter's* face.)

Modes: As with most optimization decisions, **in SI** the interpreter must decide alone, and fast. In consecutive, and especially where the interpreter has a closer relationship with her client(s), she can check discreetly with the speaker before interpreting, as proposed by Zhou (ibid.[17]).

Recommendation: Where possible (consecutive), first check discreetly with the speaker; otherwise, correct sparingly, and only errors that are both blatantly obvious – akin to slips of the tongue – and potentially embarrassing.

10.4.5.3 *Content optimization (3): FILTERING*

a. Omission for concision, or to avoid possible misunderstanding
b. Softening, toning down or omitting rude, aggressive or other potentially offensive language, 'social mediation' and face-saving; correcting or censoring cultural or political blunders.

Omission for streamlining purposes (CC-4.2.4)*, or to avoid possible misunderstanding*

As explained to students as of Initiation (CC-4), comprehension is routinely and in large part inference, and different languages encode different facets of the universe explicitly, so that a perfectly faithful translation that conveys the whole message by any measure inevitably both 'omits' and 'adds' explicit encodings. However, there are other instances when an interpreter might justifiably omit to convey

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17. Advice to in-house (local government) interpreters on dealing with errors made by their principals.

even some elements that cannot necessarily be recovered by inference (such as one or two examples from a long list), for example, (i) when summarizing or cutting short the interpretation at a client's request; or (ii) when deliberately simplifying a reference, perhaps just indicating its relevant connotation, because explaining it in detail would risk confusing the issue and detract from the main point, and even if not, add little or no communicative value. If forced to abstract over a fast passage, the best strategy is to pick out the points that seem most salient and key to the message, and from which as much as possible of the rest of the speech can be inferred (CC-9.2.4)

Toning down: fidelity, 'acceptability' and face
Should interpreters ever soften, tone down or even omit (in effect, censor) remarks that seem rude, aggressive, or potentially offensive or 'inappropriate' (e.g. blasphemous or obscene)? Or conversely, should they add marks of politeness, discreetly 'upgrade' forms of address and soften criticism to save participants' 'face'?

Many interpreters soften aggressive, vulgar or obscene language quite spontaneously, out of personal linguistic habit, or shyness, or to avoid being scapegoated (this can also be justified on the grounds that everyone can see the speaker gesticulating). However, as a conscious decision, toning down or diluting a strong position that a speaker wishes to express is controversial. The line is difficult to draw, making it difficult to discover actual practice through questionnaire surveys, but the dominant *published* view seems to be against euphemizing or editing in this way, on grounds of fidelity.

Al-Zahran (2007) offers two instructive examples. The first is set at the dawn of modern conference interpreting, when pressure was apparently put on interpreters at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference to tone down nationalist positions. Colonel Lawrence (of Arabia), Emir Faisal's interpreter, "was asked to soften the impact of some of Faisal's words that were giving offence in influential quarters [… and] follow the precedent of Professor Mantoux, the official interpreter at the plenary sessions of the Conference, who smoothed out so many rough places in the impassioned appeals of the nationalistic speakers" (Bonsal 1946: 33ff. cited in al-Zahran 2007: 134).

Lawrence is reported to have declined:

> I see the point and I have the greatest respect for this gentleman [...] but I cannot follow his suggestion. You see, I am an interpreter, I merely translate. The Emir is speaking for the horsemen who carried the Arab flag across the great desert from the holy city of Mecca to the holy city of Jerusalem and to Damascus beyond [… and] the thousands who died in that long struggle. He is the bearer of their last words. He cannot alter them. I cannot soften them.   (ibid.)

Al-Zahran's second example is much more recent: an Arabic interpreter 'paraphrases' a reference to 'martyrdom operations' (by a spokesman of Hamas) as 'suicide bombings'. For al-Zahran, such editing is indefensible, as it would have been in the reverse case – rendering 'suicide bombings' as 'martyrdom operations' – on the grounds that

1. It is in the *TL audience's* interest to know what the speaker is exactly saying, how he refers to these acts, or what his position is on this controversial subject [and]

2. It is in the *speaker's* interest to convey his opinion to the TL audience clearly and without any such radical modification. This is why it is not *acceptability* but *accessibility* that should occupy the interpreter in addition to faithfulness to the sense of the original […] "speakers have reasons for choosing their words and tone of the words. The speaker may object, and softening speakers' statements might do much more damage than good"; also, (citing one of his survey respondents), "if the speaker is rude, the listener should feel it".　　　　　(al-Zahran 2007: 138–140)

Other authors have expressed similar views. Kondo argues that by watering down politicians' statements, conference interpreters might "inflict long-term harm to genuine mutual understanding by acting too much like diplomats" (1990: 62).

Deliberate omission, even when aimed at smoothing understanding or avoiding conflict, is clearly more controversial when only the interpreter understands the speaker, and (in 'shared/neutral' interpreting) on the grounds of transparency and the principle that all parties to the exchange have a right to hear everything that is said, however unpleasant – and indeed might prefer to know that unpleasant things are being said. If an attached interpreter omits something her own principal has said, the other side's interpreter can always point the omission out to her principal.

In **correction** and **filtering**, the same inevitable premise – the interpreter's judgment of the speaker's intention – applies as for other kinds of content optimization, as illustrated in this contrast:

1. The CEO of a multinational, describing its operations in Asia to Chinese government officials, includes Taiwan in a list of 'countries' while giving a breakdown of his company's revenues across the region. The speaker has no **intention** to make a political statement about Taiwan's statehood, but is simply not attuned to the political sensitivities in China. The interpreter uses the standard Chinese formula 'countries and regions' to save the day.
2. A politician from Taiwan refers to Taiwan as a country. This must be rendered as spoken – it is clearly intended the way it was said, by a speaker who is obviously aware of the sensitivities.

Recommendation: Again, the trainer's responsibility is

1. To stress **fidelity**[18] **and transparency** as the **basic guiding principles**: it is not the interpreter's role to disguise views expressed by speakers, nor to edit them to be more politically correct, *except* when in 'affiliated interpreter' situations and explicitly asked to do so as illustrated in the example below.
2. To explain **where softening or 'lubricating' may be appropriate** or desirable without contravening these principles – for example, where the speaker's mood and opinions are fully transparent to listeners even if the interpreter is using more diplomatic language; or when the interpreter knows the speaker/client well enough to judge when he would have wished to be more diplomatic, and is thus trusted (and sometimes, expected or requested) to correct any faux-pas.
3. To present some **examples or case studies** of strategically more challenging situations, and of settings governed by specific norms (diplomatic or legal interpreting).

Example: a Western businessman meeting Chinese counterparts might expect (and even explicitly brief) his interpreter to edit out anything he might inadvertently say that would not be politically correct for a Chinese audience. In one case, a Fortune 50 CEO referred to his company's 'next big bet' in technology. The interpreter was criticized for translating this literally, with negative consequences: first, gambling is illegal in China and no government or corporate leader would ever use it as a metaphor for their own decisions and directions – the use of the word thus called attention to itself and away from the speaker's real message; second, Chinese journalists might well take it to suggest that this major company's strategy was based on random and arbitrary gambles.

10.4.6 Optimizing the communication *process*

A third set of procedures for optimizing communication is clearly under the interpreter's conscious control: when she steps out of her role as the temporary *alter ego* of successive speakers to intervene *in her capacity as interpreter* to facilitate the communication process. This may in some circumstances even be ethically required of the interpreter,[19] who may:

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18. This message should have been first instilled as of CC-4.4.3.

19. According to Mikkelson (2008), "it is widely accepted that interpreters can and should act as **advocates for the interpreting process** [our emphasis], as they are encouraged to do in Canon 8 of the NAJIT Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities: 'Court interpreters and translators shall bring to the Court's attention any circumstance or condition that impedes full compliance

i.   (in consecutive) **clarify or explain her own role** and/or optimal procedures for using her services, for example by asking participants to follow certain norms (turn-taking discipline, waiting for interpretation before jumping in, length of segments etc.), or by hand-signalling people to say 'you can't all talk at once'.

ii.   (in any mode, but especially SI): **inform participants** (unless technicians are available) **of a technical obstacle to communication**, for example that a speaker's microphone is not switched on. This is routine and usually expected, and may have to be repeated often in a single meeting (but should not be done too *insistently* if users seem unconcerned – see below, 'judging our usefulness'). Also, speakers may sometimes speak off-mike deliberately, when consulting among themselves, for example.

iii.   (especially in consecutive, less practical in SI) **draw attention to ambiguity** or possible misunderstandings and possibly (in consecutive), offer to try to summarize to the parties what each has understood in the interest of sorting out the misunderstanding and moving the meeting forward. This proactive measure may be welcomed, but while an interpreter in an affiliated role (CC-10.3.3.2) might whisper the correction to their own party, a neutral interpreter would need to make an open and transparent intervention, which would require the trust of all sides.

In ad hoc or less formal situations (as in community and dialogue interpreting), especially when participants have little or no experience with interpreters, an interpreter may have to explain (or initiate a discussion of) her own role more fully, or may be invited, or may volunteer for reasons of conscience, to be more active – for example,

a.   taking more control of the exchange by interrupting or otherwise regulating the flow

b.   assuming a moderator's or chairman's role; or

c.   providing additional commentary, information or even advocacy (but see next section).

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with any Canon of this Code, including interpreter fatigue, inability to hear, or inadequate knowledge of specialized terminology, and must decline assignments under conditions that make such compliance patently impossible' (NAJIT 2005)." Despite the reference to requiring adequate working conditions (also found in conference interpreters' codes), this implies that court interpreters should also seek to ensure compliance with the requirement that defendants have a right to interpretation.

10.4.7 Optimization: weighing risks and benefits

A skilled, trained and well-prepared interpreter can add considerable value to the service by going beyond the default provision of a reliable translation of the speaker's words and optimizing communication of the message. But elevating a craft to an art entails taking initiatives and the heady challenge of weighing risks and rewards. The **risks** are real, and include

i.   being seen as ignorant or incompetent;
ii.   losing the users' trust (in the interpreter herself, or worse, in the whole profession);
iii. distorting the message or creating confusion, thus violating the interpreter's primary mission;
iv.   being challenged or corrected (with more or less justification) or insincerely scapegoated, for example as a negotiator's ploy (CC-10.3.3).

These risks are serious, but can be avoided with vigilance. The pursuit of quality must naturally be balanced against survival (avoiding unjustified blame); but future graduates should be encouraged, as conscientious professionals, to follow Gile's 'good' laws of maximum information recovery and communicative impact (Gile 2009: 211–8; see CC-9.3.4), but with the necessary caution, and resist the 'bad' laws of least effort and self-protection.

In interpreting more than elsewhere, perhaps, the majority view seems to be that discretion is the better part of valour.[20] In all these instances, the interpreter's response depends on her relationship with users as well as personal and professional norms. Judgment and choice will vary according to the interpreter's style and personality, but must be exercised in full awareness of the pros and cons of each strategy.

10.5   The scope of mediation

10.5.1 'Strong' mediation: advocacy and arbitration

The first three kinds of optimization – form, content and process – are considered part of the default role for most professionals, with the exception of legal interpreting, subject to some variation in practice (CC-2.3.1.4).

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20. Even linguistically, interpreters are often advised to err on the side of conservatism in adopting new, racy or fashionable turns of phrase.

Things are different when the interpreter ventures into **'strong' mediation**, which entails assuming an independent identity as someone who *evaluates speakers' intentions and proposes solutions*, thus aiming to *act on or influence* participants' intentions rather than simply representing them. When some authors assert that 'linguistic mediation' and 'intercultural mediation' are part of the interpreter's role – as for example when Viaggio says that competent translation of any kind necessarily involves competent mediation (2006: 37 ff. and p.c.) – we understand this as stopping short of arbitration or advocacy. Strong mediation, in contrast, is a distinct role and function that we consider to be beyond the interpreter's brief, for several reasons.

First, there is the problem of *qualification*. The interpreter is unlikely to be qualified for a strong mediator or broker's role, either in terms of skills or the requisite knowledge of the issues (Straniero Sergio 1998: 149–50), and professional ethics should usually prevent him or her from accepting the role on these grounds (AIIC Code of Ethics, Art. (h)).

Second, even for someone qualified in both functions, the roles of interpreter and 'strong' mediator would seem difficult or impossible to combine *in cognitive management terms*, since they clearly require quite different focuses of attention. An **interpreter** is focused on the sense of the current utterance in the context and the best choice of words to convey it faithfully to her listeners. This is a complex, overlapping mental activity that – especially in SI – involves processing at micro-(propositional) level (see Albl-Mikasa 2008) at least as much as at macro-level, i.e. following the situation and projecting and evaluating the reception of the output by listeners in different cultural contexts. Certainly, beyond the details of the current utterance, a good interpreter will also grasp each speaker's position as he speaks, and *may* also form an impression of his overall stance in a debate. But s/he has no call, nor time, to notice or project subtle changes in participants' positions, or weigh compromises that they might accept – the central concerns of a mediator. To risk a pun, too much *mediation* conflicts with *immediacy*.

A **mediator** must maintain a far more explicit and global representation – taking notes for this quite different purpose – of the position and state of mind of each party, not only while each is speaking but throughout, assessing their potential flexibility, and even that of their hidden principals, such as corporations or States, and the leeway they have allowed their agents, projecting possible solutions and weighing their chances of success, planning the next tactical move, and occasionally, speaking carefully in one language.

More fundamentally, mediators and interpreters are 'intrusive' in different ways. While the mediator must discover the intentions of the parties, the interpreter's focus is properly not on what the speaker *intends*, but what he *intends to say* (communicative intent) (Seleskovitch 1977: 31; Seleskovitch and Lederer [1989] 1995: 227–231); and on what listeners *understand*, not (except for some softening

of language or correcting obvious cultural blunders) their likely *reaction*. This definition of the interpreter's 'domain' justifies *optimizing* the communication of the message but not strong mediation.

In short, interpreting and strong mediation cannot be viably combined, either cognitively or deontologically, without seriously jeopardising the quality of both services. Not surprisingly, qualified practising interpreters-cum-('strong')mediators are not widely found, and these functions are more likely to be separated the higher the stakes and wherever resources permit.

Third, in terms of legitimacy and empowerment, the interpreter's and mediator's roles carry different statuses, different interaction dynamics, and different user expectations. The two roles require a different level and focus of preparation, and will probably not be granted the same access to documentation (partly because of false beliefs about the narrowness of the interpreter's 'purely linguistic' domain). Participants are more likely to address a mediator directly, but not an interpreter (especially in a booth), who will tend to discourage this practice. Perhaps most importantly, the role of mediator may "*already be taken* by other players, who are unlikely to cede their prerogative to take decisions and actions, accept or refuse proposals, etc. […] otherwise, the interpreter will become a conference delegate with the added task of interpretation" (al-Zahran 2007: 149, our emphasis). As Straniero Sergio (1998) observes:

> In theory an interpreter has power over the linguistic resources of interaction, being the only participant who knows both (or more) languages. Nevertheless, this advantage may well be shared by others, those politically and socially responsible for the verbal interaction and its outcome. In these cases the interpreter's interlinguistic and intercultural "authority" may be in conflict with the "institutional authority". By foregrounding his/her bi- or inter-cultural competence the interpreter may encroach upon the territory occupied by other professionals who s/he will often be in contact with (and under contract to). These other professionals will have the *status* of mediator but not the *role* of the interpreter. For example, in public administration the interpreter could clash with consultants working for the Foreign Ministry, the Protocol expert and the chief advisor. In the private sector there will be a press secretary, an entire public relations department, the head of human resources, directors of foreign branches, and so on. In television the programme assistant of the day may be a competing mediator or the programme editor him or herself. They may, for example, ask the interpreter to translate literally (*so I know what they are talking about*[21]), and then 'mediate' to their own liking in the post-editing phase [when producing subtitles].　　　　　(1998: 11–12)

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21. Similarly – though perhaps sadly from the viewpoint of professionals – the value of even *very* rough machine translation on the web has been reasonably defended as being useful for researchers just to find out what an article is about and decide whether to process the material

Any mediating role taken on by the interpreter, strong or weak, must therefore be *ratified* by the principals. Even if only implicitly and in haste, in an ad hoc situation or an emergency, "the mediator must be socially empowered to mediate actively" (Viaggio 2006:137).

One interesting exception to the restriction on advocacy comes from the realm of court interpreting – the interpreter's duty to be an advocate for the interpreting process itself (Mikkelson 2008; see note 19). This may be ethically required in court interpreting, but perhaps less so elsewhere, where it is usually inappropriate for interpreters to seem to impose themselves.

10.5.2 Judging our own usefulness

In the interests of keeping the trust and respect of clients, a subtle balance must be found between passivity and a more directive role. On the one hand, interpreters should never impose their services. Interpretation is necessary only when language is a barrier to the kind of communication sought, and there are many situations where people speaking different languages do not need or want the service. Two teenagers from Japan and Italy who connect up as pen-pals would probably not exchange the excitement of communicating directly, even in the narrow limits of their rudimentary English, for the intrusive presence of an interpreter; but they might be grateful for one later in a custody dispute in an English-speaking jurisdiction over their surrogate-born baby. Interpreting cannot replace and should not obstruct direct human contact: it may be needed in the conference room, but not necessarily at the coffee break.

Participants in all settings are often vague about the bounds of an interpreter's role. They may not be aware of the communication gap to be bridged (as is often the case with monolingual users who are less aware of the world's cultural diversity), or may over- or underestimate the interpreter's competencies. In some meetings, interpreters have been recruited but the participants or organizers do not have a clear idea of the role they want them to perform, or whether they need them at all.

Interpreters may therefore have to decide to be more or less proactive, according to their own knowledge and conscience. In institutions, even when interpreters are present and working, delegates may forget or be unwilling to enlist their help in the interests of communication, even for purely linguistic issues such as a choice of words when drafting documents in committee. Here it is inappropriate

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further. This (see also TG-15) raises the question of how far an interpreter can or may wish to determine the level or extent of service that is within their purview, sometimes entailing a painful trade-off between dignity and survival.

to intervene unless participants ask for assistance – even when burning to make a suggestion – not least because the reasons for their apparent hesitation over a term may not all be linguistic or known to the interpreter. Conversely, in less codified settings where participants may have little or no experience of interpretation, some direction from the interpreters (explaining procedures, for example) may benefit the proceedings and may indeed be ethically justified to prevent the *de facto* exclusion of some participants (who may be shy or unwilling to be a nuisance[22]) from discussion in the 'lingua franca', on the analogy of the right of litigants and defendants to linguistic assistance in court interpreting.

10.5.3 Knowing the audience ('audience design')

The identifiability of the audience ('audience design') is another factor in the degree and extent of mediation. Tailoring production to the audience, not to mention stronger mediation and advocacy, requires specific knowledge about them, which will be more accessible in small and visible settings, such as in community, business, bilateral, or court interpreting. The extent of mediation only becomes an issue where it is feasible, as in these settings. At the other extreme, in media interpreting, the audience is so vast and open-ended that the style expected of interpreters and other speakers can only be based on a vague, projected audience identity (based on research, or other interests of the broadcaster, such as propaganda or ratings).

Conference interpreting is usually somewhere between these extremes; the audience, their interests and especially homogeneity are identifiable to varying degrees, and interpreters pitch their talk at a likely *range* of listeners, in terms of their knowledge, background, language standard, interests, status, etc. The traditionally assumed profile of a typical audience in classical conference interpreting resulted in norms such as linguistic conservatism, standard-to-formal register, and light cohesive optimization, annotation and occasional explanation; but audiences are more varied today, styles have become more casual, and more proactive explanation may sometimes be needed, or more 'global' English for non-native listeners who are now very often the majority.

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22. This example is taken from the report of a debriefing after a *pro bono* student internship (Donovan 2008), so no group of participants could claim preferential service on grounds of payment.

10.6 Summary

In CC-10.1 we introduced Professionalism as the final component needed to implement interpreting expertise in a real-world communication service. Larson (1978: 20) describes professions as – among other things – "occupations with special power and prestige" comprising "an exclusive elite group". But conference interpreter trainers should focus rather on the traits identified by Jackson (2010: 23–4), the "corporate solidarity […], collectivity or service orientation [and] vocational sub-culture [with] implicit codes of behaviour" that must be mobilized to guarantee **competence**, **confidentiality** and **integrity** – the three most widely acknowledged professional values – in both appearance and reality. This is be achieved both externally, through client relations to ensure optimal working conditions and realistic mutual expectations, generating mutual trust and respect, and internally, to optimize the service provided through cooperation and teamwork.

Two other widely-cited values – **neutrality** and **fidelity** – are more specific to interpreting, but somewhat more controversial, touching directly on our **role** and status. The AIIC Codes seem to take these for granted, but norms on the market may vary. Many interpreters are assured a fully neutral status when working in international organizations, but others working in business and diplomacy are often employed by one side for which they are expected to provide extra service. Interpreters should aim for maximum fidelity to all speakers, but the degree of liberty they can or should exercise in making adjustments to form or even content, always with the aim of facilitating or optimizing communication, may also depend on circumstances and client relations. The examples we have provided in an 'optimization continuum' (10.4), and the case studies on other points of ethical practice (10.2, 10.3) may serve as a resource to instructors for class discussion. Our purpose should be to prepare students to exercise appropriate judgment in a wide range of situations that may require them to comply with, propose, adapt to, negotiate, and sometimes possibly reject conditions and arrangements for interpreting, on ethical or moral as well as quality-assurance grounds.

Interpreters are sometimes described as linguistic mediators, but 'just translating' does not necessarily enable communication, and may distort it. More or less proactive mediation may be expected, restricted, forbidden, encouraged, or thrust upon the interpreter, notably in informal and community settings. When interpreters have some licence and initiative, and the awareness needed to minimize risk, their active optimization of communication can add a lot of value. However, interpreters are not advocates (actively promoting one side's interests) or arbiters (helping the parties reach an agreement) and should only accept such a role on request if ethically justified, and on condition of acceptance of this role by all

participants and, if the roles are to be combined or alternated, full transparency as to when s/he is wearing which hat.

Students must be prepared for a variety of situations and given a viable set of principles and strategies for dealing with them, through lectures, case studies for illustration and discussion, and recommendations for ethical and optimal practice, as well as on-site practica with debriefing and discussion to familiarize them with their future work environment and the practical implementation of ethics and standards of conduct, in a process of acclimatization that can be completed through mentoring over the first one or two years of professional life (TG-9.4.3).

Interpreters live in society and may ultimately choose their assignments. We can abstain from an engagement (on arms dealing for example, if we are pacifists), or influence the conventions of mediated communication, but rarely define them. Broadly speaking, interpreters must follow their Client's norms of professional practice, subject to the influence they can bring to bear through their own codes, either to draw the line at requests for unethical or unprofessional practices, or to establish good practice when Clients are unsure about how interpreting works best. The status, credibility and trustworthiness of professionals will therefore depend on such internalized norms being ethical, coherent, functional and compatible with market realities.

Students will also benefit from an introduction to the practical and business side of professional practice. In CC-11 instructors will find the main ingredients for a final-semester module to explain how the market is organized, where work comes from, and some best practices when interacting with colleagues, clients and other partners.

Further reading

See CC-10 for further reading and an Appendix with extracts from codes of ethics and standards of practice in different settings.

CHAPTER 11

Testing and certification

11.1   Introduction

Conference interpreting is a testing-intensive profession. Applicants to profes-
sional training courses are admitted on the basis of an **Entrance Examination**
that checks for very strong language and communication skills, as well as general
world knowledge, maturity, motivation, intellectual honesty and trainability (CC-
3.2/TG-4.2). Throughout their two years of training, students will be evaluated on
their interpreting performance during every single class session, and in structured
formative assessments at events such as mock conferences (TG-9.4.1). A first major
rite of passage occurs after a year of full-time study when students are assessed
to determine if they are ready for advanced training in simultaneous interpret-
ing, either in a **Midpoint Examination** (TG-3.4.1) or a continuous assessment
regime, preferably with end-of-year tests in individual modules in consecutive
interpreting and sight translation, in all relevant language pairs and directions,
on realistic discourse of intermediate difficulty. For students offering an A-Bsim
combination, this midpoint check will also assess the strength, resilience and flex-
ibility of their B language under stress test conditions, a key determinant of their
suitability for SI. Those who pass continue on to the second year in Conference
Interpreting, at the end of which, in order to graduate and receive their conference
interpreter's diploma, they undergo their second and decisive test: a final com-
prehensive **Professional Examination in Conference Interpreting** (PECI) testing
both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting skills, that is, in principle, at a level
of difficulty representative of real-life meetings in the target market.

But this is just the beginning. After graduating, beginners who wish to work
on the institutional market can expect to have to take a **freelance accreditation test**
with *each* of the employers for whom they wish to work, for example the United
Nations, the European Union, the US State Department, or the Government of
Canada's Conference Interpretation Service. And after gaining some experience,
those who wish to become staff interpreters in the full-time employ of an insti-
tution will have to take a **competitive recruitment exam** (known in the EU as
a 'concours'), which may test not just interpreting skills but also other kinds of
knowledge and ability required of international civil servants.

Moreover, in a very real sense, every real-world interpreting assignment is itself a test. Formally or informally, the performance of every interpreter is judged on every single assignment, and often by several different parties – by delegates, speakers, and conference organizers; but also by the recruiter, be it a chief interpreter or head of booth in an organization, or a consultant interpreter, freelance colleague, or an agency on the private market; and finally by colleagues working in the same booth and taking the interpreter on relay. (Informal evaluation by colleagues is perhaps most critical on the private market, where it shapes an interpreter's professional reputation and determines access to work opportunities and eventually membership of the professional association, AIIC.) For this reason, frequent in-course testing has another purpose beyond the usual functions of formative and summative assessment: acclimating trainees to professional reality and the need to perform under pressure.

Despite the testing-intensive nature of conference interpreting in general and within training programs in particular, much formal testing activity is still conducted on the basis of professional intuition and impressionistic peer judgment alone, on the logic that quality is "that elusive something which everyone recognizes but nobody can define" (AIIC 1982: 1). Almost no exams are developed with demonstrable rigour as **criterion-referenced tests** (11.3.2 below) that support reproducible, defensible and accountable decisions, with detailed, transparent test specifications, explicit, non-arbitrary scoring criteria and pass/ fail standards, training and supervision of raters, and documented evidence of their validity and reliability. This is particularly problematic in the case of the major gatekeeping exams that regulate access to training in SI, graduation with the conference interpreter's diploma, and institutional work opportunities – the Midpoint Exam, professional exam, and institutional accreditation exams and competitive recruitment exams respectively – which are by any measure **high-stakes** tests with very large impacts on candidates' lives and futures. According to the authoritative *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, & NCME 1999),

> The higher the stakes associated with a given test use, the more important it is that test-based inferences are supported with strong evidence of technical quality. In particular, when the stakes for an individual are high, and important decisions depend substantially on test performance, the test needs to exhibit higher standards of technical quality for its avowed purposes than might be expected of tests for lower-stakes purposes. […] Although it is never possible to achieve perfect accuracy in describing an individual's performance, efforts need to be made to minimize errors in estimating individual scores in classifying individuals in pass/ fail or admit/reject categories. (AERA, APA, & NCME 1999: 139–140)

In this chapter, we will discuss some common problems we have observed in existing testing procedures and try to propose some improvements, as well as recommendations for further research and action in the longer term. For reasons of coherence and length, we will focus our discussion on the school-organized **professional examination (PECI)**, but much of our presentation and recommendations will apply *mutatis mutandis* both upstream to Midpoint Exams and downstream to institution-organized freelance accreditation tests and the interpreting performance component of competitive recruitment exams.

11.2   The Professional Examination in Conference Interpreting (PECI)

What is a 'professional exam'? Why bother having one? And why should an exam of this kind be school-based, not organized by an authoritative third party? This section reviews the role, purpose and standing of school-based professional certifying exams.

11.2.1   Current status, functions and standards

By long tradition, training in the leading conference interpreting schools culminates in a professional examination (sometimes known as a diploma exam, or certificate exam). This rite of passage is intended to test trainees at the end of the course to determine if they have achieved a fully professional level of competence as conference interpreters in a given language combination. Only those who pass the exam graduate with a diploma in conference interpreting certifying them to be qualified for practice, and are welcomed into the community of professional conference interpreters. Those who do not pass do not graduate[1] but are entitled to retake the exam later, after an interval of either a few months in schools that organize special make-up exams, or a full year in schools that don't. Pass rates have been observed to vary commonly from 25% to 85% (Donovan 2003), and cases have been known in which all candidates passed or all failed.

In essence, professional examinations in conference interpreting can be viewed not only as a ('summative') end-of course achievement test but also as a form of **credentialling exam**, as their "general purpose [...] is to assure the public

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1.   Some schools allow students who fail the professional examination to graduate with a degree (typically an MA, usually requiring a dissertation) but not the professional qualification (Diploma). This lowers the risk to students of non-graduation, but if the MA awarded is in 'Conference Interpreting', it may cause confusion in the market and undermine the value of the Diploma. See TG-13.2.5/13.3.5 for discussion.

that individuals in a field are qualified to practice in a profession" (Johnson et al. 2009: 29). The existence of a credible system for ensuring that only qualified practitioners are granted access to practice is generally seen as being in the interests of users, the profession and society.[2] Indeed, a system of licensure can even be viewed as a defining characteristic of a *profession*, as opposed to a mere occupation (CC-10.1.2). This dual nature of the diploma exam is therefore important as a vindication of (and a constant check on) the realism and relevance of the course, as well as reflecting recognized best practice in vocational testing: "Matching end-of-course tests or certification exams and the objectives that guide instruction to real workplace activities is the best strategy for test design" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 119).

Effective, credible credentialling exams are arguably even more critical in interpreting than in other professions, as the interpreter's work output is **nonrevisable**: it cannot be checked and corrected before its consumption by the end user. In most other professions, like medicine, law, or even written translation, it is possible, desirable and indeed routine to institute internships and articling arrangements under which graduates work for a period (from several months up to several years) under the supervision and guidance of senior practitioners who routinely check their work product (be it a preliminary diagnosis, a draft legal brief or contract, or a first-pass translation) prior to its finalization and delivery. In stark contrast, from the very first day that a new conference interpreter enters the booth to work, her work product will be transmitted live, in real-time, to her customers, who must rely on it but typically lack either the means to judge its reliability or a fallback option if its reliability is suspect.

For this reason, in leading schools the customary standard applied at professional examinations for graduating conference interpreters is 'immediate operationality': candidates are judged not in terms of whether they may have the *potential* to reach a fully operational performance standard from where they are today through on-the-job experience, personal upgrading, further skills training, or further language and knowledge enhancement, but in terms of whether they have *already* demonstrated a fully operational performance standard and can work reliably *now* at meetings of typical difficulty and complexity for which high-fidelity conference interpretation is required.

If the rationale for credible credentialling exams in the field of conference interpreting is clear and compelling, what is less clear is who should organize them, under what authority. In particular, why should they be organized by individual

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2.   Cf. the New York Lawyer's Code of Professional Responsibility: "The public should be protected from those who are not qualified to be lawyers by reason of a deficiency in education or moral standards or of other relevant factors but who nevertheless seek to practice law." http://www.law.cornell.edu/ethics/ny/code/NY_CODE.HTM

training programs? Licensure exams in large, mature professions like medicine or law are created and administered centrally by authoritative professional bodies with the official sanction of the state and considerable resources at their disposal. As a best practice, they are designed by multidisciplinary teams, including both subject matter experts and psychometricians, to meet rigorous technical standards and withstand legal challenge, with ongoing scrutiny of their validity and reliability. Crucially, this process will involve an authoritative **standard-setting** exercise, using a panel of experts, to define the exact **performance standard** required to pass the test (Cizek & Bunch 2007: 35–64). In contrast, professional examinations in conference interpreting are organized by individual training institutions on their own initiative, working with limited resources, homespun testing practices, and potentially unstable, poorly defined standards. This raises legitimate questions as to whether interpreting programs *should* play a dual role as quasi-licensing bodies and *how well* they can exercise this function. Let's look at each of these questions in turn.

11.2.2 Should schools act as credentialling authorities?

On the first question, the real issue is the ongoing absence of a viable alternative. Conference interpreting remains an unregulated profession. In the vast majority of jurisdictions, including the most highly professionalized markets of Western Europe, there is no state-sanctioned standardized test for certifying conference interpreters, although some jurisdictions elsewhere have instituted such exams for sign language interpreters (e.g. the USA[3]), court interpreters (the FCICE, see 11.5 below), and community interpreters (e.g. Australia: NAATI [see CC-2.5.2] offers test-based accreditation for interpreters at the 'paraprofessional' and 'professional' levels, but not at the higher levels of 'conference interpreter' and 'senior conference interpreter'). This is so probably because conference interpreting is both a very small, niche profession and one that, unlike medicine or law, or even court or community interpreting, is not seen as having a significant bearing on the wellbeing of the public at large. As such, the state perceives no compelling interest in devoting resources to a certification system.

   Moreover, at the international level, where much conference interpreting is actually performed, there is also no standardized credentialling examination. The international professional association, AIIC, does not organize examinations or test applicants for admission. Instead, it explicitly recommends school-based professional exams, offers some guidance on how these should be organized (see

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3.   NIC: National Interpreter Certification http://www.rid.org/rid-certification-overview/nic-certification/ (Accessed November 22, 2015).

below), and may facilitate, upon request, the participation of Training Committee members as external examiners on school juries. (Individual AIIC members are regularly invited directly by schools to sit on exam juries as well.) The importance that AIIC attaches to school-based professional examinations is attested to by the fact that four out of the thirteen Best Practice Recommendations issued by the AIIC Training Committee (AIIC 2010[4]) relate directly to their administration:

- The final diploma in Conference Interpretation is only awarded if the candidate's competence in both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting in all working language combinations has been assessed and judged consistent with professional entry requirements.
- Final examinations are conducted in an open and transparent fashion. Candidates should understand the assessment criteria.
- Final examination juries are composed of teachers from the academic programme and external assessors who are also practising conference interpreters.[5] The latter's assessment of each examinee's performance should count towards the final mark awarded.
- Representatives from international organizations and other bodies that recruit interpreters are invited to attend final exams as observers if they are not already present as external assessors.

Successful graduates who later apply to join AIIC will do so not by taking another exam, but by submitting documented proof of their credentials. Such proof typically[6] *may* include a diploma certifying that they have completed a recognized conference interpreter training programme and have passed a school-based professional exam, but this is not required. More importantly, they *must* supply documentation of the number of days of working experience they have as conference interpreters, plus, crucially, signed **sponsorship forms** from senior colleagues who vouch not only for their competence as interpreters and the quality of their work in the relevant language combination but also for their professionalism and ethics.[7] AIIC's practice therefore is to recommend and facilitate school-based professional

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4.   http://aiic.net/page/60 (Accessed August 20, 2015).

5.   It has been observed that freelance interpreters in some language combinations may have an interest in restricting access of new students to a crowded market, just as instructors who are also raters may be subject to bias. In both cases, exam administrators are responsible for selecting panel members, reminding them of their obligations and the rules of conflict of interest. IRR will act as an added control. It is difficult to do better than this given the small pool of experienced and qualified examiners available. (See TG-9.6.5 on rater training and qualification).

6.   In 2010, 94% of AIIC members under the age of 41 (age 40 or less) had formal training in conference interpreting. (With thanks to AIIC statistician Jacky Neff, p.c.).

7.   http://aiic.net/page/206 (Accessed August 20, 2015).

exams, but not to organize centralized credentialling exams, relying instead on documented working experience and peer sponsorship in considering applications for membership.

Finally, the major institutional employers of conference interpreters, such as the European Union and the United Nations, do not organize open credentialling exams for conference interpreters either. Both organizations *do* conduct internal interpreting tests to accredit freelance interpreters for their own use and to recruit permanent staff interpreters (only, of course, in the language combinations they need). Though they do not turn away 'self-taught' candidates[8] *a priori,* again, in practice, one must usually first pass a school-based professional exam before attempting an employer-organized test. Like AIIC, both the EU and the UN also support school-based professional examinations by making their senior interpreters available to schools to serve as external examiners.

In the absence of a central, official credentialling system, then, two options remain: (a) to graduate all students and let the market decide – but this is anathema to the goal of contributing to professionalization through the maintenance of high quality standards that is rightly shared by all serious schools and trainers – or (b) to organize school-based exams.

Credentialling examinations in conference interpreting are therefore left to individual training programs to organize for their about-to-graduate students, both by tradition and necessity. The situation is analogous to a manufacturer of mission-critical components instituting in-house quality control inspections to ensure that all parts shipped out for use in the field meet or exceed all relevant safety and quality standards, in a marketplace where there is no authoritative third-party testing agency, or clear-cut authoritative standards, and where other manufacturers of like components may, despite their marketing claims, have quite different standards.

11.2.3 How well do training programs fulfil the credentialling function?

On this second question, the realistic answer is that there is probably a lot of room for improvement in the quality (reliability, validity) of many school-based professional examinations in conference interpreting. In fairness, this is probably no less true of the freelance accreditation tests and staff recruitment exams organized by the major institutional users, although there is no published information available on their test specifications, scoring systems, validity and reliability.

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8.   For example, candidates with a BA and/or some experience in language-intensive occupations: see accreditation exam test-taking prerequisites for the UN (http://www.unlanguage. org/LE/Overview/Interpreters/default.aspx) and EU (http://europa.eu/interpretation/accreditation_en.htm). (Accessed August 20, 2015).

The first major problem is that in six decades of school-based professional examinations and institutional accreditation examinations, no formal **standard-setting** process has ever been conducted by AIIC or anyone else to establish explicit performance standards for professional conference interpreters. Not surprisingly, standards therefore seem to vary quite widely in terms of relative strictness or laxness across schools, institutions, juries, different language combinations, and even from year to year.

A review of the AIIC Schools Directory[9] shows that schools today basically fall in two categories, one stricter with average PECI pass rates of less than 60% (and this possibly after strict midpoints upstream, on which pass/fail rates not reported) and one laxer with pass rates of 80% or higher (data on midpoint assessment is not reported). A school that administers a final exam that is summative, rather than designed to test immediate readiness for real-world conditions, is likely to be able to boast a higher pass rate than a stricter school, but its exam will not credibly fulfil a credentialling function.

Within the European Masters in Conference Interpreting (EMCI) consortium, for example, a minority of schools appears to be significantly stricter than the majority. Moreover, the performance standard required to pass EMCI professional exams appears to be significantly lower than that required to pass the freelance accreditation tests organized by the EMCI's own institutional sponsors, the European Commission and the European Parliament: in 2011, the success rate at the EU's own freelance accreditation tests, where a large majority of candidates could be assumed to be graduates of EMCI schools, was only 23.6% (DG-Interpretation 2012: 32).[10]

After the absence of clearly-defined and harmonised performance standards, the second major problem is the lack of awareness, capacity and resources at the level of those implementing these exams with respect to **best practices in testing and assessment**. The key players who organize and conduct conference interpreting exams – in schools, course leaders, instructors and external exam jurors; in organizations, chief interpreters and their staff – are professional conference interpreters who, not surprisingly, typically have no specific training in assessment. There is also a certain traditional tendency to insularity or exceptionalism: an abiding belief in the uniqueness of conference interpreting that makes us reluctant to consult theory and experience on testing from outside our field (especially if it originates in language testing, from which the profession demarcated itself as part of its foundational project), or to expose our testing and certification methodology to criticism and open debate. With this goes the assumption that much

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9. Data from http://aiic.net/directories/schools/search/ (Accessed August 20, 2015).

10. See also CC/TG-9.1.1.

of the test framework (indeed nearly all of what testing experts recommend be explicitly spelled out in test specifications and scoring guides) is internalized in the experience and instincts of the administrators and examiners. There is still very little research literature on professional examinations, and there has not yet been any movement toward inviting external testing and assessment specialists into the world of conference interpreting to help.

Finally, to implement a more rigorous and fully controlled testing procedure in their PECIs, schools would need to find resources to address practical constraints:

i.   **Budget**: interpreting exams are much more expensive to stage than traditional pencil-and-paper and even computer-based exams; and facilities (number of booths);

ii. The **pool of available professionals** within reach of the school who are potential competent and willing examiners. Some schools may get help from a large potential employer (such as the EU or UN) in the form of staff interpreters who are made available to serve on the panel of examiners; they may not always get concomitant financial support, unless the employer has sponsored training of the candidates (but such support may in turn raise other issues: see 11.4.2 (ix) below and 13.3.5–6);

iii. In some schools, the large number of **language combinations** and directions to be tested, some of which may only concern one or two students and relatively rare languages.

As a result, despite a growing awareness of the need for greater rigour in test construction and for more consistent, transparent and accountable assessment, current procedures are still some way from meeting recognized best practices in high-stakes tests in general and professional credentialling exams in particular. Perhaps the best way to overcome these resource issues would be to upgrade the exam to a centralized one, with tests developed centrally, administered to candidates at multiple testing sites, and scored centrally (11.7.6).

In the traditional and classic exam procedure, materials (speeches) are usually chosen or generated by instructors or examiners, and candidates' interpreting performances are judged live by a jury of professionals. All jury members are practising conference interpreters with the appropriate language combinations, including both course instructors and external examiners who represent the major institutions' conference interpretation services. Usually the overall target level of competence sought is assumed to be internalized by these jurors. C. Donovan (ESIT, p.c.[11]) describes the decision-making process as follows:

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11. Email, July 4, 2011.

Scoring is based on the examiners' overall impression and is finalized by consensus following collective discussion. The pass/fail standard is most usually defined in terms of holistic questions that jurors are asked to consider, such as:

- ▶ 'Would you recruit this candidate for this language combination?'
- ▶ 'Would you ask him/her to replace you?'
- ▶ 'Would you be able to take this candidate on relay?'
- ▶ 'Would you consider him/her to be a professional colleague?'
- ▶ (for external examiners representing the UN, EU or other institutional employer) 'Would you expect this candidate to pass your freelance accreditation test?'

Some host institutions do provide examiners with their own breakdown of criteria, usually in the form of a grading sheet for each test and candidate with boxes for scoring fidelity, language, presentation and so on. But no institutions we are aware of provide structured rater training and prequalify raters by testing their ability to score performances consistently and reliably against explicit scoring criteria, to ensure standardization, fairness and quality of ratings (11.6.5.5); nor are there any published studies on the reliability achieved (intra-rater, inter-rater, test-retest). In practice, juries almost inevitably revert to impressionistic judgment of each candidate's overall job-worthiness in making the final pass/fail decision, which is taken by consensus on the basis of interactive group discussion.

The traditional supremacy of intuitive, impressionistic and negotiated peer assessment for certifying conference interpreters' proficiency may be due in part to the small, select nature of the profession, but also to the perceived difficulty of developing reliable, consistent, 'objective' means of judging fitness for service in the demanding and unpredictable business of mediating human cross-linguistic communication, with its wide variety of meeting types, market demands and user expectations (Kurz 1993; Moser 1997). However, in some jurisdictions, today or in the near future, the difficulty of demonstrating compliance with standards of fairness in assessment may leave exams open to legal challenge, or to damaging protests and complaints on public media. Hatim and Mason (1997: 198) thus report the "unease felt by many at the unsystematic, hit-and-miss methods of performance evaluation which, it is assumed, are still in operation in many institutions". For example:

- ▶ One survey of professional examination practices across eleven different conference interpreting programs in the United Kingdom, United States and China (covering both the mainland and Taiwan) identified as general issues a lack of "specific criteria to judge or control the difficulty of tests", heavy reliance on "holistic judgment" both in the selection of input speeches and in scoring, failure to follow evaluation criteria, and the known risks of collective scoring through discussion, which may be skewed by strong-willed jury members (Liu et al. 2008), while less confident jurors may give average, neutral scores which they know will be pulled up or down by more confident members of the group.

▶ Students may justifiably complain of the lack of transparency of a performance standard stated simply as "*sufficient competence*".[12]

▶ An in-depth case study at one large, well-established conference interpreting school found that assessment practices in place at the time "were not sufficiently valid and reliable" (Sawyer 2004: 211). This study concluded with the suggestion that "a combination of more highly standardized examinations with clearly elaborated purposes, test facets and assessment criteria would be a starting point" to improve the situation (ibid.: 212).

Despite these problems, this model of school-based professional exams is firmly entrenched in the conference interpreting ecosystem, and is endorsed and supported, directly or indirectly, by both the professional association, AIIC, and the major institutional employers of conference interpreters. School-based credentialling has several functions:

1. A *'gate-keeping' function*, arguably even more important today given the rising importance of the private market, which now provides more work than international organizations (AIIC 2011). In some regions with emerging markets for conference interpreting, such as Asia, school-based credentialling is often the *only* point of reference for employers and users.

2. *Pedagogical and self-regulatory functions*: professional examinations can potentially provide the training institution with feedback on the quality and effectiveness of its selection procedures and instructional design, contributing to ongoing course improvement, and can help keep it accountable.

3. A *'social' function* for both the training institutions and their graduates. The PECI is a means of showcasing the programme to the profession, 'putting itself on the map', and, if it becomes known for maintaining high standards, raising its prestige and thus attracting high-quality applicants.

For trainees, passing the diploma is a ritual of professional enculturation that also brings them into contact with the larger profession outside their school, through the participation of external jurors who are themselves senior professional interpreters and recruiters and may be in a position to offer successful graduates their personal and professional recommendation, perhaps even offers of work and eventually AIIC sponsorship. The professional examination thus serves not only a 'gatekeeping' but also a 'welcoming' function.

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12. See, for example, these comments on a student interpreter blog: http://theinterpreterdiaries. com/tag/evaluating-interpreter-performance/

In the next sections we will attempt to unravel some of the most common problems we have observed in conference interpreting examinations and, drawing on testing theory and our own experience, try to offer some practical recommendations for improvement in the short and longer term (11.8). Our primary target audience is course leaders, instructors and jury members without background in testing who are engaged in the sticky business of organizing and implementing professional examinations and who wish to better understand potential pitfalls and possible better practices.

We begin with a brief overview of some of the most basic concepts in testing and key considerations in criterion-referenced performance testing in particular. For a more comprehensive and academic treatment of performance assessment, readers are referred to the primary sources cited; for a useful review in the context of interpreter education in particular, to Chapter 4 of Sawyer (2004); and for authoritative testing standards generally, to the most recent version of the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* developed jointly by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), and National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999).

11.3   Basic requirements in testing

11.3.1 Essential attributes of a good test

Let us begin with a very brief review of the essential attributes of a good test in general, and of a 'criterion-referenced performance test' in particular, then use these concepts to analyse and discuss some typical problems in conference interpreter testing.

> A good test is one that tests in a consistent fashion ('reliability') the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) it claims to test ('validity'), and is practical to implement ('feasibility').

11.3.1.1   *Reliability*

The first characteristic of a good test is sufficient '**reliability**', which refers to the consistency and dependability of the test results, or, put differently, the absence of measurement error in the scores produced by the test. Classical test theory posits that any observed score (X) reflects two components: a 'true score' (T), which is a hypothetical score reflecting a candidate's true ability, and a 'measurement error' (E); this is expressed in the equation $X = T + E$. Since any individual's true score is unknowable, any test score must be seen as a point within a range. Measurement

error can be minimized through careful test construction, but can never be entirely eliminated (Gregory 2007: 98; Kaplan & Saccuzzo 2007: 101–103). This is so even when sophisticated instrumentation is used to measure physical properties – and measurements "in the behavioural and social sciences […] are much more prone to error due to the elusive nature of the constructs that are assessed and to the fact the behavioural data through which they are assessed can be affected by many more intractable factors" (Urbina 2004: 117).

Although there is no way to measure the true score directly, there are quantitative methods for establishing the probability that a test taker's true score falls within a specific interval, and for assessing test reliability: intra-rater reliability, to check the consistency of a single rater; inter-rater reliability, for consistency between different raters; and test-retest reliability checks, for consistency across different test administrations, the last of which, at least, has never been done in Conference Interpreting to our knowledge.

The reliability of a test is always a matter of degree and can be expressed as a coefficient. A **reliability coefficient** in the range of 0.70 to 0.80 may be adequate for general research purposes, but for a test whose outcome will have a significant impact on an individual's future, i.e. a 'high-stakes' test, a reliability coefficient of 0.95 would be an appropriate goal (Kaplan & Saccuzzo 2007: 124). A **standard error of measurement (SEM)** can be calculated to estimate the chance that a test taker's true score is contained within a certain interval above or below the observed score. This notion of a confidence interval is particularly important in the case of high-stakes tests that assign test-takers to pass/fail categories: see 11.6.6 below on reaching final decisions in a PECI.

11.3.1.2 *Validity*

Adequate reliability is considered to be a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for a good test (Gregory 2007: 96–118; Urbina 2004: 117–150; Kaplan & Saccuzzo 2007: 101–131). The primary attribute, subject to sufficient reliability, is **validity.**

Validity refers to the degree to which test scores can be considered a true reflection of the underlying ability, or 'construct', that the test purports to measure; it can be described as "the answer to the question, 'Does the test measure what it is supposed to measure?'" (Kaplan & Saccuzzo 2005: 134). A test that is valid supports appropriate, meaningful and useful inferences (decisions) based on the scores it produces (Gregory 2007: 120).

Note that validity is a unitary concept, but with different facets, of which the three classic ones are

- *content* validity: does the test adequately cover the domain and sample all the kinds of knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) it is supposed to test, in suitable proportions?

- *criterion* validity: is the performance standard required to pass the test well-matched to real-world professional performance requirements? Do the test's outcomes match those from other known tests or measures, either right now ('concurrent validity') or, as with an aptitude test, in the future ('predictive validity')?
- *construct validity*: is the test an adequate measure of the *construct*, i.e. the underlying quality being assessed?

Another term often used is *face* validity (see 4.4.1), but this means little more than that the test 'looks' as if it tests what it is supposed to test.

A test can be *reliable* (consistent) without being *valid* if it doesn't measure the right thing: think of a weigh scale that measures with great precision not weight but height, blood pressure, or IQ. But no test can be valid without being reliable. Reliability is, therefore, "a necessary but not a sufficient precursor to validity" (Gregory 2007: 141), and "the merit of a psychological test is determined first by its reliability but then ultimately by its validity" (ibid.: 119). Reliability and validity together are thus generally recognized as the two basic requirements of a good test. The fundamental concern in testing is to maximize a test's validity and reliability, in order to ensure that the reported score is a sufficiently accurate and consistent reflection of a test-taker's true proficiency in the domain of interest.

In *credentialling exams*, the major validity concern is how adequately the test samples the most important job behaviours and/or the most important aspects of the work product, and how well the evaluation criteria applied reflect the requirements of successful job performance.

Figure 11.1 shows how consistency of measurement and accurate targeting of the domain to be tested are both necessary for a test to be both reliable and valid.

| Reliable | Valid | Neither Reliable | Both Reliable |
| Not Valid | Not Reliable | Nor Valid | And Valid |
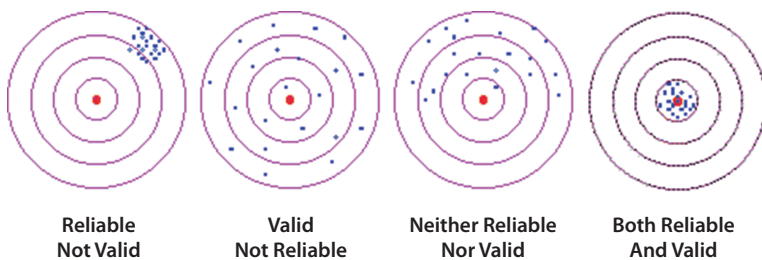
Figure 11.1 Validity and reliability

Source: Trochim (2006)

11.3.1.3 *Accountability, transparency, feasibility*

Apart from validity and reliability, a number of additional characteristics of good tests have been identified, including **fairness** and **accountability**, which presuppose validity and reliability but also require **transparency**.

Last but not least, **feasibility** (or **practicality** [Baker 1989]) – administrative, budgetary and otherwise – will be a key factor for most institutions in deciding what test design is ultimately chosen and implemented.

11.3.2 Criterion-referenced performance tests

Conference interpreting exams, including Midpoint Exams, professional exams and institutional accreditation tests, are examples of performance tests – but they should have the added feature of being, in testing parlance, 'criterion-referenced'. We begin by briefly defining these terms before focusing on the key considerations in ensuring validity and reliability of this kind of test.

A performance test is one in which "the ability of candidates to perform particular tasks, usually associated with a job or study requirements, is assessed" (Davies et al. 1999: 144). A performance test requires candidates to "demonstrate their knowledge and skills by engaging in a process or constructing a product" (Johnson et al. 2009: 2) and "reveal[s] whether a trainee can deal with the stress and pressure of task performance under actual or closely simulated work conditions" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 184). Typical examples include music auditions, behind-the-wheel driver tests, high-fidelity simulation tests for nuclear power plant operators and aircraft pilots, standardized patient tests for physicians, and licensure exams for lawyers in which candidates are asked to review documents, produce a proposal for the settlement of a case, or prepare closing arguments. In contrast to a pencil-and-paper test that seeks to determine how much a candidate *knows*, a performance test seeks to determine how well a candidate can *perform* on a criterion task under specified conditions that closely approximate real life.

A *criterion-referenced test* (CRT) is intended to "produce scores that describe an individual's performance compared with specified standards, which are usually defined in a process that is external to the test's development" (Johnson et al. 2009: 257). In contrast, in a norm-referenced test (NRT), "the examination score of an individual is evaluated in the context of the scores of others on the exam [....] Such scoring is useful in situations where the ranking of individuals is considered more important than the determination of an individual's standing on a trait" (ibid.).

A criterion-referenced test is therefore the type of test to be "used whenever you are concerned with assessing a person's ability to demonstrate a specific skill" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 29). Mastery decisions, i.e. the judgment as to whether each test taker has met a sufficient level of competence or not, are made in reference

"not [to] the standing of test takers relative to each other […, but…] their absolute standing (pass/fail) with regard to target behaviors within the specified domain" (Davies et al. 1999: 117).

A variant of CRT is known as a *standards-referenced test* (SRT), which assesses performance not just as pass vs. fail (master/non-master), but at different performance levels, with explicit descriptions of what each performance level means (Cizek & Bunch 2007: 338). An example of a set of performance levels that have been developed to describe interpreting competence is the US Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) Skill Level Descriptions for Interpretation Performance.[13] To our knowledge, all PECIs today are either pass/fail or 'distinction'/pass/fail schemes; in the latter, test-takers with particularly high scores receive their diploma 'with distinction'.

Are conference interpreting exams currently criterion- or norm-referenced? Most examiners would probably say they are assessing candidates against a minimum standard required to do the job (well), not against each other; but this is hard to demonstrate convincingly when that standard is impressionistic and assumed to be internalized (similarly) by all assessors, rather than explicitly and externally specified. In fact the classic description of the performance standard to be met – i.e. 'sufficient competence to be able to join a team of professional conference interpreters'[14] – is arguably a norm-referenced standard that compares candidate performance to that of existing professionals as conceptualized by the jury. Moreover, a very common practice in our observation is for the jury at the end of the exam to rank all candidates from overall best to overall worst; having negotiated a ranking of the candidates, the jury will then negotiate a cut-off point on the list above which candidates pass and below which candidates fail the test (see 11.4.1 below).

Criterion-referenced not norm-referenced testing is appropriate for any kind of credentialling exam. After all, it is wholly irrelevant whether a pilot, surgeon or conference interpreter tested as being better than 80% of the others in their class, because this provides no assurance that they can competently perform critical job skills, be it landing a plane safely in a storm, performing a tricky surgical procedure, or reliably interpreting a challenging speech. Indeed, "merely knowing more than the others in the class doesn't guarantee that your surgeon can perform the operation; maybe nobody in the class mastered the operation" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 29).

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13. http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/interpretationSLDsapproved.htm (Accessed November 22, 2015).

14. EMCI: "Candidates will be assessed on the mastery of their target language(s), comprehension of their source language(s) and on their interpreting skills, using the criteria defined in the Curriculum. They must demonstrate sufficient competence to be able to join a team of professional conference interpreters." http://www.emcinterpreting.org/?q=node/84 Accessed November 22, 2015.

11.3.2.1 *Validity in criterion-referenced performance tests*

The paramount validity-related concern in criterion-referenced performance testing is *content validity*, which refers to "the degree to which the questions, tasks, or items on a test are representative of the universe of behavior the test was designed to sample" (Gregory 2007: 121). Content validity is established by making sure the test content includes an adequate sample of the target domain (based on a needs analysis) covering all the aspects of the task in suitable proportions (Davies et al. 1999: 34). According to experts in criterion-referenced test development (CRTD),

> The most important part of the CRTD process is establishing *content validity*, ensuring that the test items match the job [….To this end,] there should be a *job analysis* [performed] which includes an analysis of the important work behavior(s) required for successful performance and their relative importance and, if the behavior results in work product(s), an analysis of the work product(s) [….] In addition, performance tests typically require a *competency analysis* that establishes "how well" the sample of tasks comprising a job sample needs to be performed to distinguish between masters and non-masters or competent and incompetent performers.   (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 46, 76, 186)

Validation of a professional credentialling test therefore rests on "content-related evidence…[showing] that the test adequately represents the content domain of the occupation" and on evidence that "the standard for passing makes a valid distinction between adequate and inadequate performance" (AERA, APA, NCME 1999: 157).

The validity of a test is not achieved once and for all. A test design must be constantly validated and refined in an ongoing iterative cycle. This will involve "collecting sound collateral information both to assist in understanding the factors that contributed to test results and to provide corroborating evidence that supports the inferences based on test results" (AERA, APA & NCME 1999: 140).

11.3.2.2 *Reliability in criterion-referenced performance tests*

The paramount reliability-related concern in criterion-referenced performance tests is how to minimize arbitrariness in scoring due to the heavy reliance on examiner judgment. Scoring a performance, unlike scoring a multiple-choice test or other 'cognitive items', always involves human judgment, which by definition is always prone to human error. It is therefore critical to "incorporate procedures to detect, minimize, and correct human error. Variability, or lack of consistency in the raters' application of scoring criteria, is a major concern" (Johnson et al. 2009: 156).

Two of the most important measures for enhancing the reliability of scoring on performance tests are the development of clear and detailed **scoring guides**, and the implementation of **rater training and qualification** procedures (Johnson et al.

2009: 156). Also, a longer test with **more tasks** is associated with greater reliability; and because there will always be an area of uncertainty around the borderline, it is important to have clear, reliable procedures for dealing with **borderline** cases, and with **retakers.**[15]

11.3.2.3 *'Open' and 'closed' skills*

Within the universe of performance tasks, the easiest to assess reliably are '**closed' skills**, i.e. ones that are straightforward, with clear-cut steps and procedures that can be assessed against a checklist. At the other end of the spectrum are **open skills**: complex, open-ended performance tasks involving a "range of possible responses that should be made based on some stimulus external to the performer" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 193). In the testing of an open skill like interpreting,

> Evaluators […] must measure a trainee's ability to generalize and adapt the training to a complex array of situational, environmental, medical, legal, physical, temporal, and dynamic variables. The skills required in performing open job tasks may be of a relatively high order; that is, they are externally initiated, externally paced, and involve personal risk of varying degree from possible embarrassment to injury. (Singer 1975[16])

Testing open skills "require[s] some of the most complex thinking about how to assess performance" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 193). Assessing the presence of these skills is a key part of the predictive function of an exam that, however carefully designed, is only a small sample of conditions that will be met in the future.

Conference interpreting is a prime example of an 'open skill': interpreters are very much aware of the diversity and unpredictability of the speakers and situations they may face from one meeting to the next, and indeed of the different styles and strategies of different competent interpreters, the resulting wide range of possible interpreted renditions of speech passages, and the many ways meaning can be subtly distorted. This means that any credible scoring system will necessarily rely heavily on expert judgment, and may to some extent explain the tendency to preserve an open, holistic quality to testing. However, if unconstrained by measures to ensure reliability, this may be overdone and result in slipshod and ultimately invalid tests. Let us take a look at a mash-up of typical problems we have observed in real-life exams.

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15. AERA-APA-NCME Standards 3.14, 3.22, 3.23 and 3.24.

16. As cited in Desmedt & Yelon (1991: 26), as cited in Shrock & Coscarelli (2007: 193).

11.4 Current PECI practices and problems

11.4.1 Problems with PECI procedures

The description that follows is entirely fictional,[17] and is of course a caricature insofar as we can hardly imagine all the less-than-best practices described concentrated in a single institution or exam. However, each and every feature is one that the authors have personally witnessed (or even been responsible for!) on at least one occasion at a real-life professional examination.

How not to do it: a fictional mash-up

Dramatis personae:

▶ The Course Director, a university administrator who is not an interpreter.

▶ The Examination Panel: three invited examiners, one from the Federation (of Planets), one from the Global Union (Earth), and one an AIIC* veteran (private market) consultant interpreter; plus two in-house examiners (course instructors). All examiners are Klingon A except the Global Union examiner, who is English A.

▶ The Students: eight test-takers (of whom two are re-taking the test) in Klingon-English.

*Association interplanétaire des interprètes de conférence.

A conference interpreter training school on Planet Klingon is organizing a professional examination for a group of six students who have just completed their second year of training, plus a couple of retakers who took the exam last year but failed. All eight candidates are being tested in a Klingon/English bilingual combination, with six Klingons claiming Klingon A, English B, and two Earthlings claiming English A, Klingon B.

The Course Director assembles a **panel of examiners** consisting of five professional conference interpreters. The panel includes four Klingon/English interpreters with Klingon A, English B (though one of them seems a bit rough in English, having just upgraded it from a C as there wasn't enough work between Klingon and Ferengi), and one English-booth interpreter invited over from the interpretation service of Planet Earth's Global Union, where he works from multiple European languages, but not Klingon, into English. Two of the Klingon A examiners are instructors on the course; the third is an external examiner, a veteran private market consultant interpreter and the first AIIC member with Klingon in her combination; and the fourth, also external, is officially representing the Federation's conference interpretation service, where he is head of the Klingon booth.

The Course Director asks each examiner to **prepare a few speeches** in their own A language, to be delivered live to candidates from an outline. The Klingon-A external examiner (the consultant) has a strong English B, so she will also pull some double duty, making a few speeches in English to share the load with the single English A. The plan is for each candidate to be given a different live speech, to 'keep things real' and ensure that the jury members are 'encountering each speech for the first time, in the same way that the candidates are'. Each candidate will be asked to do four interpreting performances for the jury:

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17. With apologies to Gene Roddenberry and the Star Trek community.

consecutive interpreting from English into Klingon and from Klingon into English; and SI from English into Klingon and from Klingon into English. According to the plan, after each candidate completes one performance, the panel will discuss the merits of that performance and collectively decide whether it is a 'pass' or a 'fail' based on their professional judgment. A candidate who passes all the subjects is to be certified by the jury as fully operational and ready to start working at real-world meetings that require dependable, high-quality interpretation.

During the exam, it becomes apparent that the input **speeches vary quite widely** in terms of difficulty. The earthling examiner from the Global Union takes great relish in the art of communicative extemporaneous presentation, serving up perfectly constructed oratories from outline notes, delivered at artificially slow speed and with perfectly communicative intonation and impeccably signaled logic and structure, on a range of subjects ranging from trivial ('What I did for my summer vacation') to cliché ('The history and impacts of globalization on Planet Earth in the 21st and 22nd centuries'), and from highly familiar to the candidates ('Major issues in Klingon-Earth relations') to the arcane ('Shamanism in Central America', 'The lifecycle of the Vulcan dung beetle') – but with **built-in explanation of the background** and the terms where necessary to avoid throwing off the candidates. Curiously, this examiner seems to eschew the major topics and types of speeches that real-life interpreters in the Klingon/English combination tend to encounter. He is such a practised communicator that when making English speeches for the Klingon A candidates to interpret into their mother tongue, he maintains eye contact with the candidates and (consciously or unconsciously) monitors their comprehension, kindly rephrasing things at times when he detects a hapless or confused look.

The external examiner with Klingon, however, seems to have an entirely different philosophy on speechmaking for exams. Desiring to make things **as authentic as possible**, she has brought with her a number of **texts from some recent meetings** she has organized interpretation for, and she reads them at normal-to-fast speed (140–160 wpm), making no special allowance for simultaneous interpretation. The topics and text types are more or less **typical of real-life** in the Klingon/English market, but at **different levels of difficulty**. The ones on political and economic topics are rendered quite well by some of the better candidates but are too challenging for the majority. Some topics seem too technical and would require preparation in order to understand completely. Luckily, one of the candidates had majored in bioengineering as an undergraduate and believed she aced a tough speech on nanotechnology-based medical implants; unfortunately, the other examiners had difficulty following along and checking the interpretation, and the examiner who had done that meeting in the real world was playing the role of speaker, and hence was not listening to the interpretation. On the morning of day one of the exam, this examiner tries to oralise her delivery a bit while reading, to make it sound more spontaneous, but as fatigue sets in she starts to read verbatim, at times racing through dense and difficult passages.

In terms of **scoring**, the jury attempts in good faith to discuss each candidate's performance in each subject as fairly as possible in the light of their collective professional judgment. They take turns 'going first', telling the group what they thought of each performance, then inviting others to share their impressions. The Federation examiner has a **strong personality** and, being head of booth, has a tendency to dominate the discussion. The in-house examiners in particular are reluctant to contradict him, in the interests of maintaining harmony in the relationship between the school and the Federation, but also because they

don't want to jeopardise their chances of getting recruited by him for Federation meetings. Sometimes the group quickly agrees that a performance is a pass, especially on the perfectly constructed artificial speeches, but the AIIC external examiner begins vocally questioning whether these speeches are appropriate for a professional examination in conference interpreting. Tension rises when after one particularly banal structured, oral speech, she suggests to the speaker that that kind of input would have been too easy even for the *entrance exam* two years ago.

On the more difficult speeches, the **distribution of scores** is often **highly divergent**. For example, on one performance one of the examiners gives a score of 'good minus', another votes 'pass', yet another gives a score of 'borderline plus', and the final examiner votes 'fail' but then tempers this vote with the observation that the speech was probably too difficult and he wouldn't object if he were outvoted (which would seem to be the case) and the candidate were passed. In the course of the ongoing discussion of performances, it becomes apparent that how to factor in the varying difficulty level of the speeches is a major challenge. It also becomes clear that the jurors have quite different personal philosophies about how difficult a speech a candidate should be expected to handle, how well they should be able to perform in general, how many misunderstandings, mistakes and omissions are acceptable, as well as on the required quality of a B language and the relative importance of accuracy/completeness vs. intelligibility. Performances on which there is considerable disagreement are set aside to be revisited at the final deliberations at the end of the exam.

The English A examiner, of course, does not understand any of the Klingon speeches and therefore is playing the role of '**pure listener**', attempting to evaluate the clarity and coherence of the message conveyed to him in English. Of the six Klingon A students, he feels that only two of them can consistently convey a clear and coherent message in convincing English B, but the other four he finds more difficult to judge. Most of their output is *understandable*, but a bit rough, simplistic and at times uncomfortable to follow. Sometimes they do fail to make clear sense at certain points in a speech, but then manage to convey other points quite well. If the standard is a solid, consistent and convincing command of English, only two would pass; but if the standard is 'can follow with some effort' and 'non-trivial problems with grammar and usage and even occasional incoherence allowed, just not too much' then these four would also pass – although he might not recruit them for a meeting he was personally responsible for.

He therefore asks for a second opinion, and one of the school's in-house Klingon instructors helpfully explains that Klingon/English is more difficult than European/English and that **the B language standard on Planet Earth must therefore be lowered for this combination**. The external Klingon examiner, who has a very strong B in English, feels insulted and insists that the **same standard for a B language should be applied to all** language combinations, be they intraterrestrial or interplanetary. The other Klingon examiner pitches in, saying that on that logic, both the English As should fail on their shaky command of Klingon. This makes the English A examiner nervous, since his organization back on Earth, in view of their growing need for Klingon/English interpretation, had actually sponsored these candidates as trainees and has already sent one a provisional job offer, subject to his passing this exam. This leads the discussion into a comparison of the B language output of the Klingon As vs. the English As, with political overtones.

At the time of the **final deliberations,** there are quite **a lot of outstanding decisions** to be taken on borderline and controversial cases. Some of the recordings can't be reviewed because of a technical malfunction, and there wouldn't be time anyway to relisten to them all. The jury decides to try ranking the candidates from best to worst by consensus, then to try to identify an appropriate cut-off point on the list to separate those who will pass from those who will fail. But the ranking process proves difficult, as different jurors have different views on the borderline candidates.

For example, the Federation examiner places a premium on word-for-word 'accuracy and completeness'; *penalizes* for optimization (e.g. explanation, enhanced cohesive marking, restructuring, etc.); and treats communicativity, momentum and eye contact in consecutive as 'bonus score only' criteria. In contrast, the Global Union examiner places a premium on receiving a clear, intelligible message (even at the expense of some detail); appreciates audience-friendly optimization; and treats communicativity, momentum and eye contact as equally important as fidelity.

These differences are highlighted in one case where the Global Union examiner votes to fail a candidate who was particularly uncommunicative and difficult to listen to, but whose rendition was accurate and complete. The Federation examiner is shocked that a full and faithful rendition should be failed, and retaliates by lowering his score to 'borderline minus' on a different candidate favoured by the Global Union examiner for her clear and easy-to-follow style but who missed quite a bit of detail. The two try working out their differences 'theoretically', by debating the difference between an airplane that crashes on take-off or on landing. When that doesn't solve the problem, a horse-trading session ensues, with each examiner strongly implying to the other, "I'll pass your favoured candidate if you pass mine".

In order to provide an additional source of data for reference and hopefully break the deadlock, one of the **in-house instructors** helpfully runs through the list of borderliners and **offers his insights into their usual in-class performance**, strengths and weaknesses relative to other students, personality and suitability for conference interpreting, etc. But the other in-house instructor differs markedly in his judgment in quite a few cases, and, moreover, objects to this entire line of discussion, arguing that usual class performance should not enter into consideration in a professional exam. The tension between the two is palpable, and the picture becomes murkier and murkier.

During a break, the earthling examiner discreetly inquires with the Course Director about the expected overall pass rate on the exam. The Course Director replies that all decisions are of course in the able hands of the jury, but since this is a new course it would be nice if more than just two or three could pass, as **failing large numbers of students is a tough sell within the university**. After all, in Klingon culture failure is major **loss of honour**. What's more, he says, most of the graduates won't end up on the conference interpreting market anyway, as they have already found in-house jobs: past statistics show that over 80% of the graduates take in-house jobs with companies and government agencies and do not go on to become professional conference interpreters anyway.

When final deliberations reconvene, one of the on-staff instructors lets it slip that two of the candidates are *retakers*, a fact not known to the external jury members before this. As retakers, they will have no further chances to take this exam if they do not pass it this

second time around; they will therefore receive no diploma or credential for the two years they spent doing this full-time training. The externals mull this new information over, and respond by thinking out loud that although the performances of these two candidates were on the whole borderline, they would feel bad about failing them outright since they only made one or two egregious meaning errors and they *did* show evidence of having *some* skills. Given the opportunity to work in the right environment, they *might* end up improving over time. The group then realizes that if it does let the two retakers pass, it must let everyone pass, since the borderline first-time test takers were no worse than the two retakers. After considerable soul-searching and as time runs out (it is now almost 8:00 p.m., the jury has been working non-stop for three full days, and the university's vice president is waiting to take the jury out to dinner), **in the end the jury decides simply to pass all the candidates**. They are treated to a lavish seafood banquet.

The external Klingon examiner, who is a successful consultant interpreter with a large practice in the Klingon/English combination, makes a careful note of the names of two candidates who were good, as she intends to offer them work, but not the others.

The two external examiners representing the Federation of Planets and the Global Union respectively are not particularly bothered by the exam outcome since any of the candidates who want to work for their institutions will need to travel to their headquarters and sit a separate exam anyway. The Federation examiner thinks to himself that he might waive that exam for the top two performers, but he wouldn't expect the others to pass.

Of the two in-house examiners, the one who works actively on the local freelance market (and relies on his interpreting income to raise a family, as his teaching salary is only a small fraction of his professional earnings) is privately worried about the impact on his own professional practice of underqualified 'graduates' who now have diplomas officially signed by the Federation of Planets and Global Union, and will probably market themselves aggressively and undercut market rates to get assignments from the limited pool of interpretation users in the local market.

In turn, the Course Director takes careful note of which examiners were generous with their scoring, so as to invite them back next time. He privately puts the external Klingon examiner on his black list; she won't be invited back because her scoring was more stringent, and there is no advantage to including her since she doesn't represent a prestigious institution anyway. He is contemplating doubling enrolment in the next few years and can ensure an acceptable pass rate, even with lower standards, by choosing the right external examiners.

11.4.2 Discussion of main issues

As explained, the above is a caricature that deliberately and somewhat artificially concentrates *all the most serious potential flaws* in current practice into a single drama. However, each of these less-than-best practices has been observed in real life, and it is important to show how each can compromise the validity and reliability of an exam. Here are the most egregious ones:

i. *Different speeches for each candidate:* The candidates are tested on different speeches, in different genres, at different levels of speed, difficulty and complexity. Some speeches are trivial while others are very challenging. A mechanism robust enough to reliably allow for such variation has never been devised, and is probably not feasible. This is a serious problem for **fairness.** Even if difficulty could be controlled at a uniform level (a very big 'if'), the use of different, 'fresh' speeches throughout the exam would still pose major problems to **reliability,** since the evaluation task the raters are being asked to perform is too complex (and unnecessarily so). The arguments that (i) jurors who are themselves professionals can make allowances for variations and difficulty, or (ii) that 'only the product counts', are not tenable on close inspection. As Gile (2005: 137) has pointed out, in SI in particular "it is virtually impossible to listen carefully to the source speech and to the student's target speech at the same time and detect all the problems. Familiarizing oneself with the source speech prior to the exercise or following the student's target speech while checking it against a transcript of the source speech are the only ways to be able to make a comprehensive [i.e. reliable] assessment of the student's performance." (In our own experience and observation, it is often necessary to listen *twice* to the interpretation.)

ii. *Artificial and unrepresentative discourse genres*: Many speeches, in particular the artificial ones made by the English A examiner from the Global Union, are not at all representative of the typical discourse that conference interpreters meet in the course of their work, and indeed hardly differ in difficulty from the speeches made at the entrance exam. They therefore do not test the domain knowledge, language registers, terminology, and processing skills (such as ability to understand accents) that are essential to the actual work of conference interpreters in the real world. This is a serious problem in terms of **content validity** and **authenticity**.

iii. *Important mode not tested*: The candidates are not tested on Simultaneous-with-Text ('SI-text'), which involves quite distinct technique, checking against delivery, etc. (CC-8.5.5, 9.2.3.2). This mode is prevalent in all major conference interpreting settings. Its exclusion is a problem for authenticity and validity.

iv. *No preparation*: The candidates have been given no opportunity to prepare the topics in advance for content and terminology. Given that preparation is an important part of the conference interpreter's job, and has a huge bearing on the quality of interpretation, its exclusion violates authenticity and validity.

v. *Lack of scoring guidelines, orientation and calibration:* What exactly are the criteria against which candidates are being scored? Precisely what standard must they meet on each of these criteria in order to pass? Can the raters score fairly and consistently? What level of inter-rater reliability has been achieved?

There are no explicit scoring guidelines or clearly defined performance standards, nor has there been any effort to conduct rater training or to establish or document adequate inter-rater reliability. This is a very, very serious **reliability** problem for a high-stakes exam. Indeed, it turns out that the distribution of scores tends to be scattered, especially on the more difficult speeches, clearly indicating inadequate reliability.

vi.   *Varying holistic scales:* The raters are assumed to share the same basis for holistic evaluation, but it is clear that each is applying different criteria, and that these criteria are in fact both componential and weighted, though implicit. For example, one examiner puts more weight on accuracy and completeness, less weight on communicativity, and even penalizes optimization; another examiner puts maximum weight on clarity and coherence of the general sense of the speaker's message, tolerates loss of detail, and appreciates optimization. This is a well-understood problem in performance testing when global scales are used: "raters may tend to develop their own internal componential rating criteria" (Bachman & Palmer 1996: 221; Yeh and Liu 2006[18]), and "different raters (or the same rater on different occasions) may either consciously or unconsciously weigh the hidden components differently in arriving at their single rating" (Bachman and Palmer 1996: 210). This is a problem for both **construct validity** and **reliability**.

vii. *Collective discussion prior to scoring:* Scoring takes place through collective discussion, with one examiner taking the lead in sharing his or her thoughts out loud first. This is liable to introduce **bias**, prejudicing the reliability of scoring, as the other examiners may reconsider and modify their scores in the light of the discussion (also making it impossible to calculate and monitor IRR). This risk is amplified by the 'dominant group member' problem (here, the fact that other members of the jury can't afford to offend the Federation examiner, since they depend on him for freelance work and/or they don't wish to damage their school's precious relationship with the Federation). Another consequence, also impacting on reliability, is that examiners may not listen as carefully as they should, and may even doze off in the afternoon hours, since they know they can rely on the collective discussion to 'calibrate' their score.

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18. "Descriptions for each of the criteria […] are often lacking or unclear, and thus up to individual raters to determine. As many interpretation evaluations are done on site under time constraints, raters may make hasty decisions based largely on subjective personal preferences, which can easily lead to large variance, affecting the test's fairness and objectivity." (Yeh and Liu 2006, cited in Gile, D. [2007] CIRIN Bulletin No. 34, June 2007).

viii. *Introduction of bias from on-course instructor(s):* In a criterion-referenced performance test, the test-taker's performance on the test is the sole object of evaluation. The test-taker's past performance in the classroom or elsewhere is irrelevant. Including on the jury instructors who know the test-takers well increases the risk of **rater bias**: they are likely to allow their prior personal opinions of the candidates to colour their scoring.

Worse, here one of the examiners who is also an instructor on the course attempts to influence the entire jury's evaluation by sharing his personal observations on the candidates' performance, personality, and suitability for conference interpreting made over the previous two years. This is deeply problematic for validity and reliability.

If school policy mandates some element of alternative (continuous or portfolio-based) assessment as a separate requirement, independent of the criterion-referenced professional examination, then this should be documented through a formal, validated process, not served up slapdash, and should not impact on the scoring of the performance tasks on the professional examination.[19] (Also, the other in-course instructor seems to disagree with many of the observations, suggesting serious reliability problems even *within* the 'alternative assessment'.)

ix. *Introduction of bias from external examiner*: The Global Union sponsored the English-A candidates and has even provisionally offered one of them a job. The Global Union examiner therefore has a **conflict of interest** and should, at minimum, be recused with respect to those two candidates; one might even argue that he should not be present on the jury.

x. *Language representation among the jury members:* Only one examiner has English as his A language. While examiners with a strong English B can certainly give qualified input, this arguably gives rise to **reliability** problems when it comes to assessing whether the candidates' English is of 'A' quality,[20] since there is no second English A to score independently and to check inter-rater reliability against.

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19. If an institution requires a pass in a continuous assessment, portfolio or other element for graduation, this should be assessed separately from the PECI. In 13.3.5.4 we discuss a possible regime in which a ProfDip is issued only to candidates who (a) pass the PECI, AND (b) meet any other continuous assessment/coursework or institutional requirements (such as a pass in 'knowledge' or theory modules – but no weighting or substitutability between (a) and (b)).

20. Notably if the performance standards in terms of linguistic quality are benchmarked to AIIC requirements (though again, these are admittedly not well specified), possibly for the purpose of future sponsorship of successful candidates by examiners.

xi. *Political influence:* The Course Director exerts a political influence on the jury by suggesting a hoped-for pass rate, jeopardising both validity and reliability, and the integrity of the exam process.

xii. *Consideration of market demand and candidate prospects*: "The level of performance required to pass a credentialling test should be dependent on the knowledge and skills necessary for acceptable performance in the occupation or profession and should not be adjusted to regulate the number or proportion of persons passing the test." (AERA, APA, NCME 1999: 162, Standard 14.17). The market demand factor should have been addressed at several stages upstream: information to prospective applicants to the course, then the school's policy in admitting particular combinations for training, for which it should now take full responsibility. To consider *at this stage* how much market demand there may be for a given language combination, or whether graduates will likely work as in-house interpreters, move on to other careers, etc. is clearly grossly inappropriate. All that is relevant now is whether each candidate demonstrates the required level of performance to qualify as a professional conference interpreter.

xiii. *Exposure of retakers*: When one of the in-house examiners lets it be known that two candidates are retakers who will not have another chance to take the exam, this seriously compromises validity and reliability, as the jury takes pity and applies more lenient scoring, not just to the two retakers but, out of 'fairness', to the entire batch of test-takers. Retakers should take the entire exam (all subjects) just as first-time test takers, and should certainly be assessed no less stringently than first-time test takers; in fact, as explained below (11.6.7) there may even be a case for evaluating retakers *more* stringently in a credentialling exam.

xiv. *Examiner arbitrage*: Some examiners are stricter than others. The programme Director exploits the opportunity to make observations about their relative stringency, with the intention of inviting back only the more lenient examiners in future. In his mind, the ideal examiner is an official representative of a large institution, thus bringing prestige to the school, who scores leniently; the worst kind of examiner is a private practitioner who scores strictly.

As we can see, the relatively uncontrolled procedures often seen in current PECI practice are likely to give rise to serious problems of validity and reliability. The (content) validity problems seem to be more isolated and easier to resolve than the reliability issues, however: as Shrock & Coscarelli (2007) observe, "creating performance tests and establishing their validity are often […] straightforward […]; however, establishing the scoring and the reliability of the raters who will use the instruments is usually the real challenge" (2007: 184).

11.4.3 Some expedients adopted in schools

So far we have focused on issues of validity and reliability; there remains the practical constraint of **feasibility**. As we have seen, resource and institutional constraints (see also TG-13.3.5.4) limit the options for a comprehensive reform of procedures in present conditions.

Under the current 'self-regulated' PECI model, some leading interpreter schools have developed heuristic measures to avoid the worst abuses in our mash-up, in an effort to preserve validity (authenticity, credibility) and some reliability (consistency, grading systems etc.) under severe constraints of feasibility (including convenience, affordability). In our observation and assessment, however, these do not quite go far enough to yield a consistent, fair and reliable test.

Basic (content) validity is sought by inviting instructors or assessors (all conference interpreters) to choose authentic speeches, usually from real conferences, which are checked and/or adjusted for appropriateness, difficulty, level of technicality and length. However, the speeches used for the exam are still nearly always simulated, i.e. presented by jury members who are also instructors and either read or oralise, or prepare and deliver their own speech.

This procedure leaves gaps in the representative coverage of real-world tasks, domains and difficulties. Schools often lag behind current market realities, notably in testing SI into B, or SI-text, and key KSAs – ability to deal with numbers, accents, fast delivery, reading from text, and mastery of mainstream domain knowledge and terminology – are missed or inadequately sampled. The choice of an overall semi-technical theme for the PECI (e.g. 'Water', 'Energy Efficiency', 'Climate Change' or 'the fight against AIDS') may be both authentic and practical, but does not automatically solve this problem of domain coverage. Text selection and guidance to speakers may keep difficulty within bounds, but conversely, may make them too lenient when 'play-acting' real delegates, or their speeches too artificial, to adequately sample real-world conference input, while also failing to eliminate more subtle *variations* in difficulty between texts. Checking difficulty 'on delivery' by having a single auxiliary examiner doing the test at the same time as the candidates and providing a 'difficulty coefficient' seems too rough-and-ready a measure for reliability.

Some schools require a fresh speech to be delivered spontaneously for each candidate, on the grounds that if the assessors 'discover' each new speech at the same time as the candidate, they are 'on the same footing'. This may be the case if the speaker does not then join the others in rating the performance, but the risk of variations in difficulty between speeches is too high. A more common method is for the speaker to deliver slightly varying versions of the same speech (from the same notes) for each of two or three candidates, then change to another speech, for test security

reasons. These practices seem to be a superficial attempt at face validity, but at too high a price in fairness and reliability. It is unlikely that speakers can spontaneously balance all the complex factors in delivery to produce a speech of equal difficulty for each candidate, or that other jury members can accurately make allowances for the variations. With variants of the same speech, the jury is still much more familiar with the content at the *n*th iteration than at the first, even with variations.

If the same, pre-recorded speech is used, after being tested by the jurors themselves and discussed by them in depth ahead of the exam, this problem is neutralized to the extent that jurors are thoroughly familiar with the speech and its difficulties from the very first candidate. The only issue remaining is one of routine test security.

In terms of *rating procedures*, most established schools now provide simple scoring guides with analytic rubrics and guidelines for examiners on performance criteria (though none have been published), and some require examiners to submit scores before discussion. However, as explained in 11.2.3, no schools that we are aware of train or pre-qualify raters, or test interrater reliability. Submitting scores before discussion is sound, but only if it is systematically enforced.

Procedures for *reaching overall pass/fail decisions* are often impressionistic (11.4), sometimes complemented by a system for averaging and weighting grades across multiple judges or tests, and for dealing with borderline cases by collective deliberation and adjustment, sometimes taking into account extraneous factors like class performance records, or even 'market potential'. However, averaging scores across raters is not a cure for unacceptable reliability. The solution is in developing more explicit scoring guides, with detailed guidance in particular on how to make decisions on borderline performances, and in training raters to achieve the necessary level of IRR for high-stakes objectives. (To our knowledge, no school monitors or reports IRR.) As for compensating grades *across tests*, this is ruled out for a PECI by AIIC recommendations, which require a separate pass in each performance.

In the best case, PECIs at interpreting schools are well-meaning trade-offs in which professionals try to preserve authenticity (validity) and fairness as they understand it, under constraints on practicality that would elsewhere not normally be considered acceptable for a high-stakes vocational exam. The basic parameters – a self-regulating ethos, unspecified pass/fail standards assumed to be internalized by jury members, and resource constraints – are shared; but among leading schools, it would be not be too far off the mark to say that the better funded they are, and the closer to international organizations and a pool of resident professionals, the more sophisticated is the test design they can implement.

The above sections have highlighted problems with current practices in respect of validity and reliability, practical constraints faced by schools and some expedients that leading programmes have adopted to work around them. But there is a large

body of research and practice on performance assessment generally, as well as examples of implementation in closely related domains (other branches of interpreting: see Further reading) that are rich in ideas, analyses of procedures and their consequences, and practical recommendations that might be applied to improve the testing and certification of conference interpreters. For reasons of space, we will examine only one example of such a project: the US Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination (FCICE), perhaps the earliest and best-known example of a standardized certification test for interpreters.

In court interpreting, initatives to formalize certification have been driven by the force of legislation and a powerful user community – the judiciary – neutralizing some of the (interacting) factors we have described as possible contributors to the stasis in conference interpreting: the protective attitude of the profession, reluctance to consult testing theory, and material or institutional constraints. The result, as seen in the US Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination (FCICE), is a test that in some respects is a model of rigour, explicitness and specification, but in others reflects significant differences of emphasis, and some rather severe compromises, that make it difficult to adopt as a model for certification in conference interpreting.

11.5   A case study in standardization: the FCICE

11.5.1 Background and description

The [US] Federal Court Interpreter Certification Examination (FCICE) was created in 1980 to implement the requirements of the Court Interpreters Act of 1978, and is currently offered in one combination, Spanish-English. The FCICE is a performance-based certification examination for federal court interpreters that purports to be "based on rigorous testing practices" (AOUSC[21] 2013: 1), to determine whether the test-taker "is minimally competent for immediate work in the federal courts. Consistent with this purpose, the Oral Examination assesses functional proficiency[22] during actual task performances required for court interpretation" (AOUSC 2013: 36).

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21. The FCICE is adminstered by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts (AOUSC).

22. Note: "Functional proficiency means that the interpreter can accurately conserve the meaning of a source language when rendering it into a target language, without embellishments, without omissions, and without altering the style or 'register' of speech" (AOUSC 2013: 36).

The FCICE offers an interesting model of attempted rigour in interpreter testing, with multiple features to ensure content validity and reliability, as reflected in the description of procedures in the FCICE Examinee Handbook (AOUSC 2013) and commentary in the professional literature (notably González et al. 1991/2012).

Test specifications were drawn up based on a needs assessment in consultation with federal judges, court interpreters, conference interpreters, linguists and psychometricians, to ensure that "all versions of the examination are valid, reliable, and similar to each other in structure and content" (AOUSC 2013: 38) and "reflect the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for court interpreting and the difficulty of the work" (AOUSC 2013: 1). Measures to ensure high content validity included:

a. *qualified item writers* (i.e. those who prepare input materials): test items for the exam were prepared by "expert interpreters with an extensive background in preparing and rating interpreter examinations for federal and state court systems" (AOUSC 2013: 37);

b. *authentically sourced input materials*: test items are based on actual court transcripts, edited to meet test specifications including overall length (number of words), length of utterances in consecutive, and types and distribution of scoring units (see below);

c. *preparation of materials* to meet detailed test specifications, including the type and frequency of common interpreting difficulties to be sampled;

d. *independent review of test materials*, prior to use in the test, to ensure their appropriateness and difficulty level. Drafts of the test items were distributed for review (i) to federal district court judges and lawyers, to check their substantive appropriateness (content validity) and (ii) to professional interpreters and Spanish language experts, for language and interpreting difficulty and cultural appropriateness (and amongst other things, to exclude arcane or region-specific linguistic usage).

Candidates are first screened for language proficiency in a multiple-choice written test, but the relevant part of the FCICE for our purposes is the Oral Examination, or interpreting performance test. This takes about 45 minutes and comprises:

1. **Sight Translation** from English to Spanish and Spanish to English (each approximately 230 words in length, with 5m to complete) of texts that "are typically based on [for English-Spanish] police reports, pre-sentence investigation reports, or affidavits of witnesses […,] include a wide range of language and generally involve factual descriptions of events or personalities"; and for Spanish-English, on "formal legal documents that are in fairly high register (formal) Spanish" (AOUSC 2013: 39–40).

2. **Simultaneous interpretation** (monologue, from recording, 7m at an average speed of 120 wpm; English-to-Spanish only) of lawyer's opening or closing arguments to a jury in a civil or criminal trial: "Texts in this section are typical of discourse delivered

to jurors who are average speakers of English. Language register will vary between higher and lower registers as the lawyer covers matters of law and fact in combinations of formal and casual persuasive speech patterns." (AOUSC 2013: 40).

3. Questioning of witnesses, in two modes:

    i. **[Short] bidirectional consecutive interpretation** ("approximately sixty words in length" between interruptions: González et al. 1991: 529) of questioning by an English-speaking lawyer of a Spanish-speaking witness. The test-taker interprets the lawyer's questions into Spanish, and then the witness's responses into English.

        Source texts are real transcripts of direct or cross-examination from real trials and "always include examples of lower-register speech, including profanity and idiomatic usage" (AOUSC 2013: 40). This part of the test takes 18 minutes, including time for the original and the interpretation.

    ii. **Simultaneous interpretation of witness testimony**. In this task, the test-taker simultaneously interprets into Spanish the English-language questioning of a witness and the witness's answers given in English. Usually the witness is a law enforcement professional or technical expert and speaks at "up to 160 words per minute" (AOUSC 2013: 40), using "specialized terminology […] but not highly unusual or technical vocabulary that would be unfamiliar to educated native speakers of English." (ibid.: 40) This task lasts about 5 minutes. (Spanish-to-English SI is not tested, as this is not performed in US federal courts.).

The *reliability* of the examination is addressed through

> a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures. Qualitative measures include standardized approaches to test writing and selection of the scoring units used for test rating, standardized guides for rating the scoring units, and intensive training of the raters who apply the guides. Especially important to reliability in scoring is the use of multiple raters; the opinions of three federally certified interpreters[23] who have received training as oral raters for the FCICE oral examination must converge in determining when interpretations of scoring units are correct or incorrect. Quantitative measures include the collection and analysis of item-level rating data and the application of standard statistical techniques for test evaluation, including multiple measures of examination reliability, overall internal validity, and the correlation of test part scores to overall test scores.   (ibid.: 38)

The *scoring system* includes two parts, one 'objective' and one 'subjective'. The 'objective', or quantitative part of the scoring system takes the form of 220 'scoring units' identified in the SL input. These are "pre-selected words and phrases that appear in the text" and are "accompanied by documentation of examples of correct and incorrect interpreted renderings as a guide for the raters" (AOUSC 2013: 39).

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23. The original plan provided for a federally certified court interpreter, a conference interpreter, and a language expert. (González et al. 1991: 528).

> Scoring units are particular words and phrases that are selected because they represent various features of language that interpreters encounter in their work and must render accurately and completely without altering any of the meaning or style of speech. The raters determine as a group whether each of the scoring units is interpreted correctly or incorrectly.   (AOUSC 2013: 41)

González et al. (1991: 529) describe these scoring units as discrete items chosen in the SL speeches to represent "important interpreting pitfalls" that may include commonly used legal phrases, specialized terminology, grammatical items, idiomatic expressions, jargon, rhetorically charged argumentative language, purposefully ambiguous or extremely precise language, dates, addresses, quantities, and numbers, among others.[24]

These items are "discrete points that are externally established and can be measured uniformly and reliably. Once […] identified, they are not susceptible to mutation of any kind […and] are not subject to the discretion of the individual rater." (ibid.: 527).

In terms of the *performance standard* a test-taker must meet on the scoring units in order to pass the exam and be certified as a federal court interpreter,

> The criterion for minimal competency was determined by the original architects of the examination to be accuracy at the 80% level in a testing situation. Therefore, the passing score on the examination is 80%, measured by preselected words or phrases that are embedded in the examination text for use as objective scoring units.   (AOUSC 2002/2013: 36)

This means that raters do not need to debate and agree on whether the candidate has exhibited skills or passed the test; they merely need to score the test-taker's TL rendition of each of the 220 pre-identified SL words and phrases. Whether the performance as a whole is a pass or a fail is determined by the number of scoring units rendered correctly. For each unit, "an appropriate and inappropriate range of translation equivalents is pre-determined […] Also, raters are instructed to accept any rendition that conserves meaning which may not appear on the equivalent list." (ibid.: 536)

This 'objective' quantitative scoring is (in principle, but see below) supplemented by 'subjective'[25] (qualitative) scoring of two categories of criteria: (1) fluency and delivery, including "the candidate's pacing, coherence, composure, and stamina"; (2) adaptability, referring to "how resourceful the examinee is in

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24. The 2013 edition of the Handbook gives a much longer list of these, grouped into three general categories and nine types.

25. In the 2013 edition the term used here is 'holistic'.

responding to variations in the content, register, or style of the passage" (González et al. 1991: 527). These categories are uniform across all tasks:

> As a supplement to the objective scoring procedure, raters also complete a structured holistic evaluation. This holistic evaluation assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate's performance that day with respect to qualities that do not compute directly into the objective score, such as language skills. In rare cases, the holistic evaluation may also promote a candidate with an objective score that is below but very near the pass point into the "pass" category. **The holistic evaluation has never[26] been used to lower a candidate's score or to demote a candidate from pass to fail status.** (AOUSC 2010: 40, emphasis added)

New versions of the test are field-tested by administering them to a group similar to the actual expected candidates, evaluating the results statistically and qualitatively to check that the test content and instruments – especially the scoring units and scoring guides – are working as intended, then making adjustments accordingly (AOUSC 2013: 38).

11.5.2 Discussion and review

The FCICE is certainly the most meticulously specified test that we know of for spoken-language interpreting. Developed by a multidisciplinary team with expertise in court and conference interpreting and language testing, it embodies rigorous processes of design, documentation and implementation, from a careful analysis of task requirements through detailed test specifications, assessment criteria and procedures, careful item writing and piloting, rater training, and not least, validation of its content by users. The test seems particularly good in terms of *content validity*, as is appropriate for a professional credentialling exam.

However, in our analysis there are significant validity problems in the scoring system. The first concerns *construct validity* (is the test measuring the right things?); the second concerns *criterion validity* (does a pass on this test adequately predict successful performance, to the standard actually sought by users?).

First, in terms of *construct validity,* the FCICE's scoring system fails to assess **fidelity**, the primary determinant of the usefulness and quality of an interpretation. It is easy to imagine situations in which a candidate could render most or even *all* the scoring units in a passage correctly, but still betray the speaker's intended meaning, or be incoherent, incomplete, or otherwise unreliable. For this reason, scoring on isolated meaning units cannot possibly be a valid measure of the accuracy and faithfulness of the interpretation. (The only valid method we can conceive

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26. In the 2013 edition, 'never' has been changed to 'rarely'.

of is careful qualitative assessment of message fidelity by qualified raters, perhaps scored on a paragraph-by-paragraph basis.)

The other problem in terms of construct validity is that assessment of the 'subjective criteria' (fluency/delivery and resourcefulness) seems to play little or no role in practice, only rarely pulling up a borderline candidate and never pushing one down. Thus, a test-taker cannot fail the exam, for example, due to poor pronunciation and intonation, strong accent, disfluency, hesitation, inaudible voice, etc. Yet parameters of expression and delivery are widely recognized as critical to interpretation quality and effectiveness, not only in conference interpreting but also in court interpreting: Berk-Seligson [1990/2002] has shown how the court interpreter's delivery and tone can have a significant impact on how jurors perceive witness testimony, and hence potentially on the outcome of a a criminal trial. To be valid, any interpreter certification exam must in our view give sufficient weight to expression (language quality), delivery, fluency and communicativity (involving voice projection, demeanour and body language).

In sum, the FCICE seeks to achieve a standardized, 'objective' assessment by placing essentially exclusive emphasis on the *quantitative* scoring of how *discrete units of meaning* have been rendered in the interpretation, and in so doing sacrifices too much validity, at least from our perspective as conference interpreters. The test can be said to suffer from serious 'construct under-representation'[27] – a common shortcoming of standardized language tests:

> […] the attention to reliability may not be matched by a similar consideration of issues of validity. For example, […] the emphasis on reliability in standardized tests often leads to a reliance on **objectively scored test items**, which may not represent a valid method of judging communicative ability.   (Davies et al. 1999: 187)

Indeed, even with respect to the scoring units, simple binary scoring (correct/ incorrect) could be problematic in identifying as 'wrong' or 'missing' certain renditions that might very well work fine *in context*, relying on reduced reference, meaning-conserving paraphrase, or very strong and justifiable assumption of automatic contextual inference by listeners, which is an inseparable part of the normal comprehension process (TG-12.2), and are indications of the interpreter's strategic and communicative competence being used to cope with the lack of a specific term or 'correct' solution.

Why does the FCICE adopt such a scoring system? In her account of the FCICE design process, Arjona (1985) explains that "for our purposes, an objective scoring system was necessary – if for no other reason [than] that the certification

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27. "In construct under-representation, the test does not include important aspects of the construct […]" (Davies et al. 1999: 33).

program was ground-breaking and it was felt that it would have to be defended in court". She suggests that qualitative scoring of delivery and resourcefulness was added on to the 'objective' scoring of isolated meaning units to meet the consensus of experts – with which we concur – that "an interpretation act is greater than the sum of its parts". But in its implementation it is given so little weight as to be almost meaningless: "subjective rating is not an integral part of the passing score but it can be a determining factor in borderline cases" (ibid.: 195). A significant reason for this policy may have been the desire to avoid the 'guild-oriented interests' mentioned by González et al. (1991: 523) that the designers felt might come into play with more subjective kinds of scoring.

Note that both the AOUSC and the literature refer to the discrete scoring units as 'objective' criteria. But even scoring these units cannot be considered 'objective', because of the impossibility of binary correct/incorrect answers wherever a judgment on rendering of meaning in context is concerned, be it on a single word.

Finally, in terms of *criterion validity*, another issue arises in connection with the *performance standard* required to pass the test. The FCICE's cut score was set at 80% (i.e. permitting 45–47 errors on 220 scoring units) by "court interpreting experts, federally certified interpreters, conference interpreters, and language and linguistic specialists", based on an examination of the maximum "number of errors that could be committed before the level of interpretation becomes so unacceptable that it affects the fairness of the hearing" (González et al. 1991: 530).

The exact process through which this cut score was determined is not described in the literature we have available to review. But clearly, 80% accuracy falls far short of the first judicial requisite identified by three federal judges as part of the FCICE's own design process: "interpreters must be able to interpret every word of the original testimony of the witness, not omitting a single element; for that one element, as inconsequential as it may seem, could be an important factor in discovering the truth" (ibid.: 525). An interpreter who renders only 80% of the scoring units correctly, while omitting or distorting the remaining 20%, is clearly not meeting the standard demanded by these federal judges, namely full accuracy and completeness. This disparity would seem to suggest that the cut score is unjustifiably low. Yet even at that cut score, the pass rate on the FCICE has only been 4% (Hewitt et al. 1995). In short, the standard seems to be too strict on some rather literally-defined points, while neglecting other important qualitative features.

One other sub-optimal aspect of the FCICE oral exam is its failure to attempt simulation of real-life working conditions: according to the existing written specifications, speech is played from a CD player – i.e. audio only, no video – both for consecutive and simultaneous (and for SI, without a booth or standard SI equipment: the candidate is just given headphones, and speaks into another recording

device[28]) (AOUSC 2013: 40). This seems an unnecessary and easily remedied deficiency in authenticity, given the realism sought in regard to the test materials.

In sum, the FCICE remains a fascinating case study with both positive and negative lessons for conference interpreter testing. The FCICE is particularly successful in terms of ensuring *content validity*, with authentic tasks and inputs for court interpreting, carefully defined with detailed test specifications and validated by users. However, it achieves reliability of scoring with a system that lacks in *construct validity*, relying almost exclusively on a component (discrete scoring units) that cannot adequately cover the constructs – fidelity, language and expression, and communicativity, not to mention general behavioural qualities – that must be tested in a prospective interpreter.

A credible certification test for conference interpreters should emulate the FCICE's measures for ensuring high content validity, but should adopt current best practices in performance assessment to ensure valid *and* reliable scoring. This will require restoring expert judgment to the core of the scoring system, while taking measures to maximize reliability.

11.6 Applying best CRT practices to conference interpreter certification: a first attempt

Having reviewed some of the best and worst practices that the present state of the art of conference interpreter testing can produce (11.4), and a highly specified model in a neighbouring branch of the profession (11.5), we have concluded that conference (and indeed, probably all) interpreter proficiency testing must retain expert judgment as its core, but framed and channelled in a more standardized process, to improve validity and reliability. In this section we look at how this might be achieved in a school-based PECI, following best practices in assessment.

11.6.1 The test development process

Designing and developing a valid and reliable test that offers clarity of 'method, content, and construct' is both a creative art and a science, involving a meticulous procedure and an iterative process of feedback and refinement. Testing experts broadly agree on the sequence of steps that are necessary to develop, implement and improve a criterion-referenced performance test:

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28. Admittedly, this sub-optimal equipment for SI may reflect current reality in some or even a majority of federal or local courts.

1. Define the test's purpose;
2. Develop a 'test framework' that delineates the construct and domain that the test will assess, thus establishing the knowledge, skills and abilities that are (and are not) included on the test;
3. Draw up detailed 'test specifications' that clearly define all aspects of the test, including its materials, tasks, structure, procedures, and administration, so as to make the test as consistent and replicable as possible each time it is implemented;
4. Develop stimulus materials: assemble (edit, record or prepare) input speeches on video to fit the requirements of the test specifications;
5. Create and validate scoring rubrics (guides) with explicit scoring criteria;
6. Train/pre-qualify raters and establish reliability of scoring;
7. Administer the test and report scores;
8. Document the entire process, collect validity and reliability evidence, and conduct iterative reviews to improve validity and reliability.

The chronological sequence of these steps is not necessarily rigid, as a downstream development process may reveal issues that need to be revisited upstream. Details and guidance on all the above steps are available in the literature.[29]

To our knowledge, no structured process of test design and validation of this kind has yet been documented in either a school-administered PECI or an institutional accreditation test for conference interpreters. There is no doubt that this is a demanding and exacting process, but one that is highly desirable given the high stakes of the PECI for individual students, for schools, and for the profession. Ultimately, such a process could be more robustly undertaken by a group of schools working in concert, to share resources and to harmonise procedures and standards, advisably with the help of testing specialists, and ideally with funding and support from one or more major institutional users. In this test development process, a review of the well-documented designs of recent certification tests for community, sign-language, and court interpreters could certainly be instructive, though beyond the scope of the present chapter – but see Further reading.

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29. For a more complete list of typical steps in test development and reporting, see Cizek & Bunch (2007: 38); for elements of test specifications organized by stages in test development, see Johnson et al. (2009: 36–37); for CRT design specifically, see Shrock & Coscarelli (2007: 46–53); and for standards applicable to all aspects of test construction, evaluation and documentation, see AERA, APA & NCME 1999.

11.6.2 Defining the test's purpose

Defining the purpose of a test clearly and explicitly at the very outset is key, as it will have important consequences downstream at all phases of test design.

AIIC, the EMCI, and leading CITP administrators[30] all agree that the purpose of a PECI is to certify that the successful candidate has demonstrated mastery of the conference interpreter's skillset to a recognized professional standard, and is thus fit for independent practice as a fully-qualified professional conference interpreter. In short, the PECI, though school-based, is a **vocational credentialling exam**, and must therefore be **criterion-referenced**, with the following consequences in terms of validity and authenticity:

1. The test framework must be based on a *job analysis* that identifies all the critical and important kinds of knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required for successful job performance.
2. The performance tasks on the test, taken together, must *adequately sample* the candidate's performance on all critical and important work behaviours. The subject matter, level of difficulty and complexity, and setting and procedures must closely match the work situation.
3. Test-takers are to be assessed against defined criteria, not compared against each other. These *assessment criteria* must reflect clearly defined *performance standards* that state what level of proficiency is required to pass.
4. *No* consideration should be given to the *pass or fail rate*. Each candidate is to be assessed separately against the required performance standards.

As a credentialling exam, a PECI is not, except incidentally, a 'summative' assessment (which evaluates the test-taker's level of learning achieved in relation to the curriculum to determine whether learning goals have been met). The distinction is important, because confusion on this point may account for mismatches of objectives between partner schools, or between the PECI and the standards required at institutional accreditation tests, and for the potential acrimony between examiners that we saw in the mash-up.

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30. AIIC: "The final diploma in Conference Interpretation is only awarded if the candidate's competence in both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting in all working language combinations has been assessed and judged **consistent with professional entry requirements**" (emphasis added). (http://aiic.net/page/60 (Accessed February 16, 2016))

EMCI: 'The speeches will be prepared to a standard commonly encountered by professional interpreters […Candidates…] must demonstrate sufficient competence to be able to join a team of professional conference interpreters. (http://www.emcinterpreting.org/?q=node/84 Accessed November 22, 2015.)

Despite the recommendations of AIIC and the EMCI, it seems that not all schools today do target full job-readiness as their true objective. Instead, they conceive of their PECI as a summative test that – depending on their curriculum – may reflect a more limited skillset, for example assessing candidates on artificial trainer speeches, or testing into-B in consecutive mode only, but not in simultaneous, or only free SI but not SI with text; or avoiding formal and technical subject matter, or input that is fast, accented, and challenging; or applying assessment criteria and standards that are more lax than real-life performance requirements.

Such schools may produce higher pass rates, but with many false positives and few graduates able to pass recruitment tests with demanding user institutions.

In a well-designed course that stipulates full job-readiness as the target and builds in content validity at all levels of the curriculum, the final PECI can be seen as both summative and credentialling in nature. But understanding the PECI *primarily* as a credentialling exam implies a different approach. First, in a summative assessment, test items (speeches and interpreting tasks) can be chosen to target the mid-range of the test-takers' proficiency, so as to produce a spread of scores that distinguishes test-takers of different ability levels. In a criterion-referenced credentialling exam, in contrast, the difficulty of the tasks should reflect actual job requirements, and the resulting test scores may very well be clustered in a skewed distribution pattern. Second, in a summative assessment, it might make good sense to award 'partial marks' for performances and solutions that are unsuccessful, but do demonstrate partial mastery of the learning objectives; in a criterion-referenced assessment, unsuccessful performances fail the test.

Finally, the difference in purpose will also dictate different ways of dealing with uncertainty around the borderline. In a summative assessment, it is worse to fail someone who is in fact up to the standard than to graduate someone who is somewhat below it (especially if the PECI-based diploma is a prerequisite to graduate with a thesis-based MA degree; see TG-13.2.5.3, 13.3.5.4). But in a credentialling test that aims to protect the public from unqualified practitioners, passing a candidate who is below the standard has worse consequences than mistakenly failing one who is only slightly but truly above it, especially when there are opportunities to re-take the exam. This distinction will be important when it comes to making final pass/fail decisions (11.6.6.2–6.6.3), and for assessing retakers (11.6.7).

For all these reasons, the test's purpose must be clearly stated, documented and explicitly communicated from the start, and embraced by all stakeholders, providing a solid and uncontested basis for the subsequent phases of test development and implementation.

11.6.3 The test framework: delineating the domain

The domain, of course, is professional conference interpreting. But what exactly should be on the test – and what should not? Just as a test framework for grade three arithmetic states whether candidates must demonstrate mastery of long division (yes), the manual calculation of a square root to three decimal places (perhaps), and/or differential calculus (no), the test framework for a PECI must define exactly what kinds of knowledge, skills and abilities must be tested.

For the purposes of a PECI the test framework must clearly define and document:

a. the interpreting **tasks** to be performed, in terms of the *modes and language directions* of interpreting to be tested (11.6.3.1);
b. the kinds of **input speeches** to be used in or excluded from these tasks, in terms of:
    i.   *subject matter* and implied knowledge requirements (e.g. topic, genre, register, and level of specialized, terminological, and contextual knowledge) (11.6.3.2);
    ii. *parameters of delivery* that are potential factors in difficulty (e.g. speed, accent, preparedness/density, and opportunity for advance preparation) (11.6.3.3);
    iii. known interpreting *pitfalls and hazards*, that must be present in sufficient number in the speeches (11.6.3.4);
c. the environmental conditions under which these performance tasks will be conducted (11.6.3.5);
d. the **assessment criteria** on which performances are to be judged (11.6.3.6).

The basis for defining all these parameters should be a **job analysis** (AERA/APA/NCME 1991, Standard 14.14). Clearly, all of the above parameters can vary widely by market sector; for example, conference interpreters working in the United Nations and similar organizations might mainly interpret formal speech, frequently delivered from text, in a wide variety of accents, and only in simultaneous, never in consecutive. However, unless the school(s) organizing the PECI exclusively target one such sector, the test framework should be broad enough to cover conditions routinely found on both the private and institutional markets. Below we offer suggestions for 'default settings' based on our own job analysis.

11.6.3.1 *Tasks to be performed: modes and language directions*

The core modes of conference interpreting are (long) consecutive and simultaneous interpreting. Given that SI now probably accounts for over 80% of mainstream conference interpreters' work (CC-2.2.5; Neff 2014), a greater share of the exam tasks should test this mode, on a variety of discourse types and features to cover a wide range of realistic challenges (accent, speed, written texts read out, etc.; see 11.6.3.2 and 11.6.3.3 below). Both free SI and SI-text are found on all markets and should therefore both be tested.

The **tasks (modes)** to be included on the PECI in each language pair-direction, then, should be as follows (more detailed specifications for coverage of content, style, speed etc. are addressed in 11.6.4):

1. *Consecutive interpreting*: the interpreter listens to the input speech, taking notes. When the speaker pauses, the interpreter renders the previous passage.

    A key question for test designers will be passage length: in many markets today, much consecutive interpreting is done in passages of approximately 45s, with some longer passages of 2–3 minutes. Only rarely is very long consecutive (>5m) required in the real world (often when the speaker fails to realize there is to be consecutive interpretation…). However, a test-taker who can render a long passage of 6–7 minutes has almost certainly mastered the note-taking aspect of consecutive, so one such passage may be a sufficient test of that ability.[31] We therefore recommend testing at least one long passage (>5m), ideally preceded by 2–3 shorter passages.

    As a default setting, we propose devoting around 20–25% of interpreting performance time to consecutive, leaving 75–80% for free SI and SI-text.

2. *Free SI:* working in a standard SI booth[32] under professional conditions of sound and visibility (11.6.3.5), the interpreter listens to the original speech through light on-ear headphones and speaks the interpretation simultaneously into a microphone.

    As the prevalent mode in mainstream conference interpreting, free SI should account for at least 50% of the test, covering a wide enough range of inputs and challenges (11.6.3.2–6.3.4). In order to test booth stamina, ideally one continuous turn of 30 minutes should be tested, possibly including some SI-text – see below.

3. *SI with text:* the interpreter is given the speaker's text to prepare for a limited time. In general, we recommend stipulating 'speech time plus 50–100%' for preparation, depending on difficulty: i.e. for a 10-minute speech, the test-taker should have 15–20 minutes to prepare the text immediately before interpreting. When time is up, the speech is delivered in part verbatim but also with some deviations from the text: additions and elaborations, some skipping or re-ordering, some asides. The interpreter

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31. This abiliy may also be tested in the real-world in the case of official after-dinner speeches.

32. CC-10.2.2.

does SI as above, using the text for support as desired, but checking carefully against delivery, so as to render the speaker's remarks as actually spoken.

As a default setting, we would recommend devoting 20–25% of total interpreting time on the exam to SI-text.

We see the above as the three basic modes to be tested on any PECI. Additional modes may also be included in the test framework, for example, consecutive-with-text (CC-9.2.3.1), or SI with slides. Such additional variations will depend on an up-to-date job analysis of the target market, and on judgment about the added-value of more tests (it may be felt that the skills needed for SI from a slide presentation are adequately tested in a combination of free SI and SI-text). However, the inclusion of additional modes will result in a longer test.

Tests, tasks and passages

The model PECI described here is made up of nested components. Thus for each candidate, the exam will comprise several **tests,** one for each language pair-direction (for example, 'English into French' or 'Russian into English') in which s/he is applying for certification. Each such test comprises several **tasks** (consecutive, SI, SI-text). Within each task, the test-taker will interpret several **speeches**, by different speakers and on different topics.

In SI and SI-text, a speech may be further divided into several **passages** purely for scoring purposes. This is necessary to cover and target (in scoring) enough variations in style or register to sample market reality, as well as certain common interpreting 'pitfalls' or difficulties to be tested. However, the granularity of this division (the number and length of scoring passages, especially in SI) is one of several trade-offs between reliability, validity and feasibility that must be made in a school-based PECI.[33]

Table 11.1 gives an example of a complete test in the French-to-English language pair-direction. The test comprises three tasks for the three modes (Consecutive, SI-text, free SI), each of which requires interpretation of several *speeches.* Some longer SI samples are further divided into *passages* for scoring, yielding a total of 12 passages (3, 3 and 6) for the entire test, a reasonable compromise between validity/reliability and feasibility.

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33. For example, for scoring performance in a PECI test lasting 40–60 minutes, the length recommended by Liu as a rating unit – "segment of several sentences that cohesively forms an idea" (Liu 2013: 5), i.e. about 20–30s – would be much too small and granular for feasibility, hence the longer segments proposed here for this unit.

Table 11.1 Example test, tasks and scoring units

TEST 1	French into English (total 40 minutes)
Task 1	**Consecutive** (total 10 mins)
	Speech/passage 1–1.5m
	Speech/passage 2–2.5m
	Speech/passage 3–6m
Task 2	**SI-text** (total 10 minutes)
	Speech 1–7m (2 passages: 3.5m, 3.5m)
	Speech/passage 2–3m
Task 3	**Free SI** (total 20 minutes)
	Speech 1–7m (2 passages: 2m, 4m)
	Speech/passage 2–2m (e.g. Q&A)
	Speech/passage 3–3m (e.g. Q&A)
	Speech/passage 4–4m
	Speech/passage 5–4m

A separate pass is needed in each task (mode) to pass this complete test. There is no averaging or compensation across tasks within the test.

For each test-taker, the PECI as a whole will consist of a number of different tests like the above, one for each of the language pair-directions in the declared language combination. For example:

Table 11.2 Complete exam for a given language combination

Language combination			
ABsim	**Test 1: B-A**	**Test 2: A-Bsim**	
	Consec 10m	Consec 10m	
	SI 20m	SI 20m	
	SI-text 10m	SI-text 10m	
ACCC	**Test 1: C1-A**	**Test 2: C2-A**	**Test 3: C3-A**
	Consec 10m	Consec 10m	Consec 10m
	SI 20m	SI 20m	SI 20m
	SI-text 10m	SI-text 10m	SI-text 10m

To pass the PECI with a given language combination, the test-taker must separately pass each test (pair-direction), again without any averaging or compensation across tests.

In some markets, it is common for some interpreters to offer an ABC combination in which the B language is active for consecutive only (sometimes called Bcons as opposed to Bsim: CC-3.2.1.3; TG-4.2.1). The PECI framework can allow for this with a test solely in consecutive into that language, which must be long and

complete enough to cover the necessary range or registers, styles and topics (i.e. longer than the otherwise standard short 10m consecutive task).

An ABC candidate who passed the B-A test and C-A test but then failed the A-B test would have their claimed B language downgraded to C, and could be awarded a diploma with the ACC combination. Likewise, a candidate who failed one test could still be granted a diploma without that language pair-direction, if the remaining combination is considered viable (to be specified in advance). All of this should of course be specified upstream and made public well in advance on the school website.

Any of these candidates might also be allowed to return later to **retake** the relevant test(s), in a bid to upgrade their certified language combination. The school may also allow alumni to return in future to add and have certified a new language pair-direction.

11.6.3.2 *Input speeches: genres, subject matter and delivery*

After defining the interpreting tasks included, the test framework must establish what kinds of input speeches test-takers will and will not be asked to interpret on these tasks. As we saw in the mash-up (11.4.1), this is one of the most controversial issues among current PECI examiners, with a clear split between those who favour artificial interpreter-delivered speeches (similar to what we have called 'trainer speeches' [TG-2, Appendix]) and those who favour realism and sampling all the challenges and difficulties of the real world.

If the purpose of the PECI is vocational credentialling, then ensuring realism, authenticity, and a fully representative level of difficulty is necessary for content validity. This means using authentic, current input speeches carefully selected to be representative of the content and challenges routinely met by professional conference interpreters. In this light, the test framework should delineate the parameters of appropriate input speeches in terms of both

i. *genre,* subject matter and implied knowledge requirements (e.g. topic, setting, register, and level of specialized, terminological, and contextual knowledge), and

ii. parameters of *delivery* that are potential factors in difficulty (e.g. speed, accent, register, preparedness/density, and opportunity for advance preparation).

Conference interpreters encounter a wide range of subject matter, but with differences in emphasis according to target market. Adequately covering the content domain is therefore probably a greater challenge in conference interpreter testing than in court interpreter testing, and is a major reason for the longer examination we are recommending here.

In prototypical terms, conference interpreters interpret for international meetings and events on political, economic, business and technical topics, and the speeches they interpret are **oral communications** made in **formal settings** that target (or include) an **international audience of peers**. While this does not begin to cover the wider range of speech inputs that conference interpreters on the private market will encounter, the following categories of subject matter should in our view, be included within any PECI's test framework, regardless of market sector emphasis:

i.   *Prototypical subject matter for conference interpreting*: speeches on contemporary political and economic issues of concern at international level, including

- Formal addresses to international audiences by national leaders, ministers, and heads of international organizations on contemporary world and regional affairs (both political and economic);
- Presentations by experts and analysts to their peers on current policy issues and options relevant at the international level, in areas such as international trade, the environment, security, public health, social welfare systems, human rights, regional conflicts and territorial disputes, arms control, etc.;
- General statements and interventions by national delegations in intergovernmental meetings;
- Presentations by economists on policy and market issues that rely on specialized concepts and technical terminology in economics and reference specific international and local institutions, events, and quantitative data.

Given the prevalence of specialized economics discourse in meetings today, we see this last genre as indispensable in a valid PECI.

ii.   *Material linked to a target market and/or course emphasis*

Each training programme will have, to some degree, an emphasis in terms of target market and may additionally target one or more specialized domains in its curriculum. For example, a course that targets the EU would put special focus on the European institutions and current European issues, while a course located in Canada would naturally expect students to be familiar with national institutions and topical issues. A course in a major business centre or generally targeting the private market might give more attention to financial markets and/or information and communications technology.

In international organizations (IOs), debate will routinely address issues in international law and the substance and language of international treaties, frequently including detailed drafting negotiations. Schools that target IOs should specify in their PECI framework the knowledge of international law that is expected of test-takers in addition to political and economic discourse.

Any 'local' emphasis of this kind will be built into the curriculum, reflected in the choice of classroom materials in addition to the 'generic' materials above, and probably supported by special subject matter courses. It should of course also be explicitly included in the PECI's test framework, so that relevant content is included on the test.

iii. *General and unexpected subject matter*

In addition to competence in the main 'genres' and domains of international discourse, whether general (as above) or technical (below), conference interpreters need overall generalist competence to be able to deal with a wide variety of topics, even unfamiliar ones, with minimal if any preparation. The exam cannot adequately sample this variety, which may span history, science and technology, health, culture, social trends…; but the exam must check the range of the test-takers' general knowledge and see how they perform on **unexpected content**.

In style terms, too, speeches should not all be overlearned, boilerplate material from mainstream target domains, but should also include a 'wild card' factor. The test framework should specifically include less familiar and unexpected material requiring more processing and creativity, even humour, and as a means to check general knowledge as well as comprehension and expression in B and C languages of more rarely-encountered language.

iv. *Technical subject matter requiring special preparation*

Finally, conference interpreters should be able to *prepare for* more technical meetings in domains such as science, engineering, technology, and medicine.

Testing the ability to handle *highly technical* material would in principle be possible on condition that the topic is announced well in advance of the exam for in-depth preparation, but as a matter of feasibility we advise limiting the PECI to semi-technical input only, for several reasons.

First, authenticity and fairness: it is very difficult to simulate a technical meeting fairly; realism would entail providing extensive conference materials in both or several languages well in advance (and possibly also existing glossaries), and might also require organizing a briefing session for the interpreters.

Second, the raters themselves will more than likely be unfamiliar with that technical domain and would need to prepare for it as though they were going to interpret it themselves – and even then they might not be fully capable of judging the effectiveness of the interpretations, reducing reliability. Bringing in outside technical experts to help assess could be beneficial, but they would need careful selection and training to be reliable raters for a high-stakes credentialling exam.

Third, in the real world, conference interpreters have their own subject affinities and comfort zones, and can choose not to accept assignments that they feel uncomfortable about taking on (e.g. highly specialized medical material).

On balance, then, it seems reasonable to include within the PECI's test framework '*semi-technical*' topics, such as clean energy or rural health policy, pitched at the level of a briefing by a technical expert or planner to an informed policymaker or investor, involving perhaps 50–75 abstruse technical terms in a predetermined domain to be learned and used correctly in the test – but not to include expert-level technical exchanges between engineers, scientists or medical specialists potentially involving many hundreds of difficult and unfamiliar technical terms.

Semi-technical topics of this kind can be announced one or two weeks in advance for preparation, as a test of the candidates' ability to prepare for and to interpret effectively on unfamiliar topics involving specialized knowledge and terminology. If more challenging kinds of preparation are to be tested, for schools with a major specialized target market (e.g. semiconductors in Taiwan) it will probably have to be outside the test framework of the PECI – for example in continuous assessment or a separate test (11.7.2).

In summary, although each school may have its own particular emphasis in terms of targeted market sector(s), there is a common set of universal genres that should be included in a PECI's test framework, including:

▶ international political discourse
▶ specialized economic discourse
▶ market-targeted subject matter, e.g. finance, ICT, etc.
▶ unexpected topics testing range and quick thinking
▶ semi-technical topics requiring advance preparation.

Carefully defining *subject matter* (topic, genre) and implied knowledge requirements in the test framework is only the first part of defining the characteristics of input speeches to ensure content validity.

11.6.3.3 *Parameters of delivery*

It is particularly important for the PECI test framework to define the difficulty of the speech input in terms of parameters of delivery, i.e. speed, accent, register, preparedness, density, etc. Prospective professionals must be tested on realistic material, including trickier input that adequately samples what is encountered in real life. This means explicitly including:

• speakers with moderately strong accents
• reading from written text not supplied to the interpreter
• faster speeds that are routinely encountered in the real world (i.e. >160 wpm[34])
• a range of registers from very formal through standard to very relaxed, idiomatic and colloquial language.

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34. Monti et al. (2005) reported that informationally-dense speeches in the European Parliament routinely exceed160 wpm (see also TG-9.6.2.1).

In the real world, an interpreter who can only reliably handle clear, structured native speech, delivered extemporaneously and with intelligent, communicative prosody at around 100–120 wpm, is not qualified for professional practice – just as a pilot who can only fly in clear weather but not in a storm is not ready to be put in charge of an aircraft.

The PECI test framework must therefore specifically include these hazards in the interests of content validity. However, there must be a reasonable and explicit definition of how severe the challenges should be and the level of performance expected. Our proposal is to *exclude* clusters of features that push the task into a zone where it is not reasonably possible for professionals to interpret well (TG-9.1.3; 11.4), but explicitly *include* input features that conference interpreters routinely encounter and are expected to be able to handle effectively if not perfectly. Including these factors to an extent that is representative of the real world and reasonable expectations is crucial for content validity.

In terms of our own (experimental) 4-parameter **speech difficulty index** (TG-2, Appendix), the PECI should test

a. a range of authentic speech across all tasks (column 1 in Table 11.3);
b. some passages of more challenging but commonly encountered types of input, but with no change in assessment criteria (column 2);
c. optionally (see discussion in 11.7), one or two short samples of extremely difficult input, to be judged on explicitly different criteria, i.e. the minimal ability to 'survive', make sense and catch some key points (column 3):

Table 11.3 Speech input for a PECI: parameters of difficulty and assessment criteria (See Speech Difficulty Index in TG-2, Appendix)

Standard range (Speech Difficulty Index)	Difficult, but include in some passages (25–30% of total)	Exclude
Subject Matter: (3–)4	Level 5 for one topic announced in advance, with opportunity for preparation	Highly technical or abstruse material (Level 6)
Speed of delivery: 3–4	Some passages at level 5 (>160 wpm)	Level 6, or one sample only to test coping
Density/Style: 2–5, covering the main registers encountered by conference interpreters	Both formal and colloquial passages. Some passages at 5 in free SI, 5+ in SI-text	Level 6, or one sample only to test coping
Accent/Prosody: 1–4	Some at level 5, especially in lingua franca languages.	Level 6
Total SDI score for any passage no lower than 12, overall target 14–16, keep under 18/19 except to test coping		5 on three or more parameters

11.6.3.4 *Covering interpreting pitfalls: known local hazards*

One interesting idea from the designers of the FCICE is that in addition to the 'macro' difficulty of a speech, candidates should be tested on their ability to deal with the most common and well-known interpreting hazards and pitfalls. For instance, we must ensure that the speeches in each language pair-direction contain an adequate number of fast passages with multiple numbers, as in this passage:

> Credit and debit card payments represent the most significant growth segment of electronic payments. The share of U.S. consumer expenditures paid for with cards has increased from about 3 percent in 1986 to 25 percent in 2000. Debit and credit cards represented less than 20 percent of noncash payment transactions in 1995; by 2003, they exceeded 40 percent of noncash transaction volume. According to recent estimates, 92 percent of households with incomes over $30,000 hold at least one credit card, with an average for all households of 6.3 cards…

The test framework should make explicit what kinds of common interpreting hazards of this kind are to be covered. Given authentic input speeches and a sufficiently long test, the usual range of known hazards will naturally occur, but it may be necessary to check that there are enough instances of each across the selection of speeches for reliable testing. A higher number of test items per target ability is associated with a higher level of accuracy in the assessment of that ability. In general, four to six items per objective may be sufficient, but for *critical objectives*, assessment should be based on "more than six items, possibly as many as twenty items" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 170). Thus, if 'ability to interpret segments with high density of numbers' is considered a critical objective, there should be well over six segments like the above in *each* test (i.e., pair-direction) on the PECI; only one or two such segments will not elicit enough data to make reliable inferences about the test-taker's mastery of that ability.

Interpreting pitfalls: examples of known local difficulties[35]

A. *Hard information*
  - Numbers, including multiple numbers in lists or embedded in complex sentences
  - Unfamiliar names (of people, places, titles, institutions)
  - Technical terms, in lists at fast speeds
  - Long multi-part names of organizations, treaties, laws, regulations, etc. (e.g. 'Schedule of proposed amendments to Section 2, Art (c) subparagraph (i) of the Saskatchewan Province Land Bank Temporary Provisions Regulations'; 国务院办公厅关于集中开展安全生产领域"打非治违"专项行动的通知)

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35. which may also be 'problem triggers' (Gile 1995 and passim).

B. *Language*
  - Idioms, proverbs, culture-bound content and allusions
  - Technical terms, specialized language and terminology
  - Current buzz words and jargon; slang and colloquialisms

C. *Pragmatics*
  - Multiple degrees of implicitation; indirect speech acts, hints, subtle threats or innuendo, non-denial denials, and similar traps that often lure beginners into over-translation
  - Vague language (deliberate ambiguity, hedging, fine markings of degree of confidence in evidence offered, etc.) vs. definite, categorical language (not to be inappropriately hedged by the interpreter)

D. *Rhetoric and style*
  - Colourful or telling phrases, rhetorical special effects deliberately sought by the speaker
  - Jokes, quips, throw-away remarks, irony and sarcasm
  - Politically sensitive, contentious, loaded, rhetorically charged terminology and language
  - Rude, offensive or inappropriate language; below-the-belt or off-colour humour

E. *Language-pair specific*
  - Less common or obvious false cognates (*faux amis*),
  - Long embedded and verb-final sentences (e.g. in German or Chinese to English); long noun-phrases with adjectives (e.g. from English to French) or with dense and lengthy premodification (e.g. in Chinese) (examples in TG-8, Appendix A)
  - Known 'untranslatables'

11.6.3.5 *Working and environmental conditions*

Finally, the test framework should define the working conditions under which tasks are to be performed, in terms of working environment, equipment, sound quality, view of speaker, preparation, etc. As discussed in CC-10.2, working conditions in conference interpreting can impact significantly on interpreter performance.

   As a matter of validity and of fairness, PECIs should afford test-takers optimal recommended working conditions. This means in particular that SI tasks should be performed inside standard SI booths, using standard SI equipment and headphones, with an entirely clean sound feed of sufficient volume, a clear view of the speaker(s) and projection screen, and no extraneous noise or distractions. Under no circumstances should a PECI ever be conducted in a language lab or similar unprofessional environment.

   On grounds of both reliability and fairness, and after weighing all arguments (see 11.4.3), we recommend that the **same speeches** be used for all candidates working from that language, to be played in **high quality video** on a large screen (for SI, outside the booth, with direct view from the booth – this is better than in-booth monitors – and direct sound feed into candidates' headphones). A major

advantage of this solution is to obviate unreliable measures to assess or allow for variations in speech difficulty between candidates; it merely requires adequate security measures, as in any exam, to ensure the speech is not leaked.

To cover different speaker styles authentically (accent, register), it is best to use **authentic video recordings** (although some passages may have to be custom-recorded to specifications to ensure adequate coverage of all KSAs), with **multiple alternating speakers** to test candidates' speed of adaptation. Where recordings must be created, it is best to **avoid using interpreters**, who may tend to speak in an artificially 'interpreter-friendly' way, not representative of real-world speakers, and any other instructors on the course or speakers otherwise known to candidates.

Moreover, before each test or performance, the candidate should be **put in context** with advance information on the nature of the meeting or event, the identity of the speaker, the speaker's topic and addressees, as well as unusual technical terms outside the mainstream domains. This briefing should be given in writing to each test-taker in exactly the same form, and should not give away the actual content of the speech.

While the test should sample a range of real-world difficulties in terms of features of the speech input, we do not feel it necessary to sample negative aspects of real-world **technical conditions** such as a bad sound feed, no view of the speaker, a noisy environment outside the booth, etc. An exam is already stressful enough and these conditions are in fact actively resisted by professionals. By the same token, some *positive* aspects of real-world conditions are difficult to simulate, such as the in-situation 'warming up' effect of being in a real meeting, visual feedback from the TL audience, and the presence of a boothmate who could help to avoid minor errors or problems with names and numbers. Perhaps the best we can do in a standardized exam situation is make up for the absence of these positive factors by avoiding the negative ones.

11.6.3.6 *Assessment criteria*

For assessing performances, three sets of criteria are needed: general, mode-specific and behavioural.

1. All interpreting modes (consecutive, simultaneous, and SI-text) should be assessed on the fundamental general criteria of:

    i.   **Fidelity** of content – is the interpretation faithful, accurate, complete, reliable?
    ii. **Expression** (language quality) – is the interpretation of good linguistic quality (pronunciation, grammar, idiomatic usage, terminology, register)?
    iii. **Delivery** – is the interpretation fluent, fast, effective?

In regard to **fidelity, the** specifications should include a clear statement about the 'optimization' norm of interpreting to be tested, with examples. For conference interpreting, this will be based on the 'default' interpreting goal, which allows in particular for optimization of form, and in some cases even content (unlike, for example, in a court interpreting exam, cf. FCICE, see 11.5 above). For definitions and discussion, see CC-5.8.4 and CC/TG-10.4.

2. Additional criteria apply to specific modes. For example:
    In consecutive:
    ► *Time control*: does the interpretation start promptly, and is it completed within a reasonable time, e.g. (depending on redundancy[36]), 80–100% of the original for into-A interpreting, 100–110% for into-B?
    ► *Voice projection*: does the interpreter project his/her voice to the room, making herself clearly audible?
    ► *Eye contact and demeanour*: does the interpreter make sufficient eye contact with the audience and present an appropriate demeanour?
    In free SI and SI-text:
    ► *Booth behaviour and use of equipment***:** does the interpreter exhibit proper professional habits in relation to use of microphone, console, channels, cough button, etc.?
    ► *EVS (lag)*: does the interpreter maintain a safe, manageable (even if variable) lag – i.e. no serious falling behind or overhang, nor getting ahead of the speaker, especially in the case of SI-text?
    In SI-text:
    ► *Checking against delivery*: does the interpretation closely track the actual speech as delivered, reflecting all the speaker's departures, omissions, additions, and skipping?

3. Finally, test developers may specify overall *behavioural criteria* to be assessed across the exam as a whole, spanning all performances, such as stress management and unflappability. However, professional competence also includes ethics, relational and client-facing abilities (CC/TG-10 & CC-11), and some practical and concrete knowledge that cannot be elicited or tested in a PECI, but must be checked in other ways, such as continuous assessment, passes in the appropriate modules, pencil-and-paper tests, or practica, that should be made additional prerequisites, supplementing the PECI, for graduation. This is discussed in 11.6.8.

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36. To be decided by the test developers after they have piloted the test materials, and then stipulated in the test specifications (see below).

11.6.4 Writing detailed test specifications

After defining the test's purpose and then delineating its content domain in a test framework, the next phase in the test development process is to develop test specifications (Johnson et al. 2009: 35). Test specifications are a detailed blueprint that defines all aspects of the test, so as to make it as fully consistent and replicable as possible each time it is administered (AERA-APA-NCME 1999 Standard 3.3).

These detailed plans and requirements will include but not be limited to:

i.   *Tasks*: nature and number of tasks, time allotment for each task, conditions under which tasks will be performed, weighting of each task;

ii.   *Materials*: stimulus materials (input speeches, transcripts, briefing notes for test-takers), their format, subject matter, difficulty, and distribution over the different tasks;

iii. *Administration*: exam schedule, technology and logistics support required, directions for administrators, rules for test-takers;

iv.   *Scoring*: rater qualifications, rater training procedures, scoring criteria/guides, scoring and reporting procedures, explanation for test users of what scores (outcomes) mean;

v.   Measures to *review* test properties: calculation of inter-rater reliability, collection of validity evidence.

At present, no model test specifications exist for a certification examination in conference interpreting. A major challenge for PECI test designers will be deciding on the appropriate length of the test, in terms of the number and length of tasks and total minutes of interpreting to be sampled in each pair-direction. **There is serious tension between feasibility, which invites a shorter test, and adequate coverage of the large content domain, which requires a longer test.**

The test specifications must take the range of different *inputs* to be covered in each and every test administration – genres (11.6.3.2), delivery parameters (11.6.3.3), and pitfalls (11.6.3.4) – and map them onto the various *tasks* to be performed in each of the modes. This is the only way to ensure that each time PECI test materials are assembled and the test is administered, test-takers are required to perform substantially similar tasks at the same level of difficulty, testing the same abilities and covering the same challenges.

Let us consider the tasks to be tested within each pair-direction test – Consecutive, Simultaneous, and Simultaneous with text – and see how much interpreting time should be reasonably required in each mode in order to adequately test all relevant abilities.

Consecutive

As discussed in 11.6.3.1, the consecutive task should include at least one extended passage in the range of 5–7 minutes, but for reasons of reliability, it is probably insufficient to test just one performance: "…if an assessment uses only performance tasks, then multiple tasks are required for score reliability" (Johnson et al. 2009: 45). Also, for validity, the task should test technique on different types of speech, including both colloquial and more formal registers, and both discursive and dense, informative passages with multiple numbers, lists, names; and ideally, something in the 'after-dinner speech' or ceremonial genre. A thorough test of consecutive should therefore include several speeches of different lengths – for example, two interventions in the range of 2–3 minutes plus one longer speech of 5–6 minutes, making a total of 9–12 minutes of total performance time in consecutive mode[37] in each pair-direction. This should be a sufficient test of consecutive technique, provided the input speeches adequately sample known difficulties and speech genres.

Because time control is very important in professional consecutive, test designers should stipulate a maximum duration for the interpretation of each passage. In general, depending on the redundancy or density of the material, we would recommend 80–100% of the original time into A, and 100–110% into B.

Simultaneous with text

For SI-text, the test-taker receives the speaker's text for, say, an 8-minute speech and is given 'speech time plus 75–100%' to prepare it; i.e. for an 8-minute speech, 14 to 16m to prepare before interpreting. The speech as delivered will not correspond exactly to the prepared text; some passages will be read verbatim, but there will be omissions, additions, changes and departures. The interpreter must 'check against delivery', following the speaker when s/he deviates from the script. A total of 10 minutes of performance should suffice to judge technique in this mode, in each pair-direction, provided that (a) the texts sample at least two genres of formal written text, one more informative with institutional and/or semi-technical language, one of crafted (political) oratory or ritual/ceremonial speech; and (b) the delivery is sufficiently challenging, with enough departures from the text to test the candidate's ability to check against delivery.

Free SI

A test of SI should last at least 30 minutes (i.e., at least one continuous turn in the booth), of which 20 minutes should be in 'free SI' (without text), with several different passages delivered by different speakers in different genres, representing a variety of realistic accents, registers and difficulties as commonly encountered

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37. To be more precise, this is the length of total input speech. The interpreter might take less or more time to perform the consecutive interpretation.

on the job. (For thorough coverage of a wide enough range of input without over-abrupt, artificial leaps between different styles and contents, test developers might decide that *two* turns of 20–30 minutes are necessary for simultaneous in each language pair-direction.)

Building on our choice of genres in 11.6.3.2, for example, specifications for a test of SI and SI-text lasting a total of 40 minutes (say, two 20 minute turns) might stipulate the following to be included in each test (i.e. in each pair-direction):

- ▶ 'Prototypical' conference (e.g. political) discourse: 15m
- ▶ Specialized economics discourse: 10m
- ▶ 'Wild card' (original or quirky) discourse: 7m
- ▶ Technical discourse on pre-announced and prepared topic: 8m

At this length, the range of inputs would also have to include (per 11.6.3.3)

- ▶ at least two strong accents
- ▶ at least 10m at speeds of around 160wpm
- ▶ at least 10m of delivery from written text not supplied to the interpreter, etc.

This would almost certainly provide adequate sampling of the content domain; more than this might be beyond what any single school could implement. Conversely, if as a matter of feasibility a PECI can test only 15 minutes of total SI time per language-pair, that PECI will not achieve the domain coverage and content validity required for a professional credentialling exam. Clearly, more thorough coverage of the content domain, and the need for an adequate basis for reliable scoring (number of items, critical segments etc.), will require more or longer tests than in current PECI practice.

Messick (1994, cited in Johnson et al 2009: 45) indicates that domain coverage in performance assessment can be improved by "combining briefer, structured exercises with extended performance tasks". In principle, then, the overall test length might be reduced somewhat by using authentic recordings of some shorter interventions by different speakers, or by specially creating or editing some speeches for the PECI, based on authentic materials, but adjusted to include better coverage of key constructs.

An efficient arrangement that can shorten the test overall while still checking booth stamina is to combine free SI and SI-text into one booth session. Thus, the test-taker prepares a text (say, for 15m), enters the booth and interprets that text as delivered, checking against delivery (say, for 10m), and then continues to simultaneously interpret subsequent commentary and discussion for another 10 minutes, with multiple speakers each talking for 2–3 minutes, with different accents, styles, degrees of writtenness, etc. (11.6.3.1, Table 11.1). This could allow for more efficient and economical coverage of the content domain than extended monologues.

If such authentic materials are available, they could help cover more of the domain in a shorter test. Producing simulated materials of this kind may be too labour-intensive, and worse, result in unacceptable loss of authenticity. Choosing authentic input materials that adequately sample all input conditions and interpreting pitfalls will be a much better and usually a simpler option.

Depending on the choices made by the test developers, then, we would expect the PECI to involve some 40–60m of interpreting in each pair-direction, over all modes, to cover a sufficient variety of input materials:

Table 11.4 On-task interpreting time to be tested in each pair-direction

	Consecutive	Free SI	SI-text	Total interpreting time
Minimum	7–10m	20m	10m	37–40m
Recommended	10–12m	30m	15m	55–57m
Thorough	15m	40m	20m	75m

Clearly, in respect of **test length**, there is a trade-off between feasibility on the one hand, and domain coverage and reliability on the other. A shorter test requiring, say, just 25 minutes of total interpreting time (e.g. Consecutive 5m + SI 14m + SI-text 6m) in each pair-direction would be simpler to implement, but could not cover a wide enough range of inputs (see 11.6.3.2–3) for content validity, and would be less reliable due to the more limited evidence of the test-taker's knowledge, skills and abilities. Considering the importance of the PECI, we would therefore recommend *at least* 40m of interpreting time in each pair-direction (test).

For a candidate with an ABsimC or ACCC combination, this would result in a total in all modes of 120 minutes or more of interpreting time to be assessed over the exam as a whole (but not on the same day, and typically over several days).

Finally, to save time and cost, a test can be shortened for candidates whose performance clearly falls below the passing standard on even just one task (mode). For a candidate whose performance is clearly inadequate on just one task within one test, the test could be ended after that task (cf. in TG-4.3.3.6 for admission testing). For example, if a candidate with ABC clearly fails the C-A Consecutive task – say, with a mean passage score of 'low borderline' (3) over the three consecutive passages (see Table 11.1), the C-to-A test can be brought to a close without testing SI and SI-text.

To facilitate this, passages in each task could be at least roughly sequenced from easy to difficult: for example, the first three could be relatively straightforward, with harder tests later (see also 11.7.4).

As we have seen, ensuring validity in a PECI designed to CRT principles is itself a complex and labour-intensive work of preparation. The second half of the job is to ensure reliability.

11.6.5 Reliability: scoring system and rater qualification

Given that the PECI is a performance test that involves complex open skills (11.3.2.3), any valid scoring system must be centred on expert judgment. It is therefore imperative for the qualifications of raters to be carefully defined.

We recommend that all raters should be trained professional conference interpreters with at least 10 years of full-time experience, recognized credentials (AIIC membership, senior staff interpreter status, etc.), and real-world responsibility for evaluating interpreter performance (as head of booth in an IO, or consultant interpreter regularly recruiting for demanding meetings). For reasons of validity, the status of all raters as responsible, expert conference interpreters must be beyond reproach.

These raters must have the appropriate *language combinations* to cover the pair-direction being assessed. Ideally, there should be two raters with an A in the target language and at least passive competence in the source language, and two raters with an A in the source language and active competence in the target language, to form a panel of four.

In order to ensure standardization and quality of scoring, raters must be provided with clear scoring guides, be familiarized with the scoring system, and practise scoring a range of recorded benchmark performances prior to the PECI to establish the level of inter-rater reliability required for a high-stakes exam.

11.6.5.1 *Holistic and analytic scoring*
The first major decision that test developers must make in relation to the scoring system is whether to adopt holistic or analytic scoring. In **holistic scoring**, raters judge a passage of interpretation globally, according to its overall quality, assigning one single score to the passage as a whole. In **analytic scoring**, raters assign individual scores to different features of the performance, scoring each passage separately on, for example, the three criteria of Fidelity, Delivery, and Expression (language quality), and, as well as on mode-specific and behavioural criteria. Each method of scoring has pros and cons, summarized in Table 11.5.

On balance, in a PECI that is scored live, on site by a panel of expert interpreters we find the case for holistic scoring compelling, as a matter of both validity and practicality. Indeed, according to the authoritative *Standards*, "the holistic procedure may be preferable [to the analytic one] when an overall judgment is desired and when the skills being assessed are complex and highly interrelated" (AERA, APA & NCME 1999: 39), which perfectly describes a professional examination in conference interpreting. The high level of inter-rater **reliability** required for a high-stakes exam can be achieved in holistic scoring through the use of clear scoring guides, with benchmark recordings (anchors), and standard rater training procedures (11.6.5.3 to 11.6.5.5).

Table 11.5 Holistic vs. analytic scoring in a school-based PECI

	Holistic scoring	Analytic scoring
Practicality and feasibility	Faster and more efficient – more compatible with live, on-site scoring	Slower and more cumbersome – more suitable for off-site scoring from recordings
Validity authenticity	More authentic: in the real world, more interpretations are judged as a whole	Less authentic: unnatural for raters to focus on analytic components individually (unless one component is particularly bad, such as pronunciation or expression in a B language)
Validity construct validity	Potentially better construct validity, as criteria of fidelity, expression and delivery may not be entirely distinct	Potentially poorer construct validity: difficult to compute component scores into a valid overall score due to complex interactions[38]
Reliability	Risk of lower reliability, as different raters may weigh componential criteria differently in arriving at holistic score	Possibly higher reliability, but only if raters *really* score analytically rather than listening holistically and then assigning analytic scores based on impression ('halo effect')
Usefulness	Less useful as it does not produce detailed diagnostic feedback	More useful, as detailed diagnostic feedback can be used by narrowly failed candidates to make targeted improvement, and by school to improve training in general.

The main advantage of analytic scoring is that it produces feedback on the test-takers' strengths and weaknesses that can be (a) relayed to those who do not pass, so they know what to work on in preparing to re-take the exam, and (b) reviewed by the programme to see where its curriculum might need improvement, or where more emphasis might need to be laid in training. We would therefore recommend supplementing holistic scoring of all PECI performances with additional analytic scoring of borderline and failed performances, for diagnostic purposes (see discussion in 11.7.3).

With this supplement in place, holistic scoring on clear scoring guides with explicit criteria is, in our experience and judgment, superior to analytic scoring on a PECI, subject to establishing sufficient reliability. (In contrast, analytic scoring is recommended for admission exams, where we are looking for a finer diagnosis of still distinct abilities [see TG-4.3.4.1].)

The chief potential reliability issue in holistic scoring is that different raters may weigh componential criteria differently in arriving at an overall score. Raters

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38. Interpreter raters find it difficult and counter-intuitive to assess just Expression and Delivery, without considering Fidelity. Indeed, in our experience, they are likely actively to resist it and question the validity of the approach.

will therefore need clear guidance on how to assign an overall score in cases where component criteria vary widely. We take up this important point in the next sections (11.6.5.2–3), with a sample holistic rubric (Table 11.6).

Granularity of scoring

The second major decision to be taken in the design of the scoring system is at what level of *granularity* performances will be scored. Our model PECI *test* for one pair-direction (e.g. Chinese-into-English) lasts 40 minutes, and comprises three *tasks* (Consecutive, SI, SI-text), each on a number of *speeches* (continuous stretches of discourse by one speaker, ranging from 1–2 minutes up to 7–8 minutes each), which can be subdivided into shorter *passages* for scoring purposes.

As a matter of validity and authenticity, as well as of feasibility, the best choice is to score performances at this more granular level of *passage*. In the real world, most judgments about the success or failure of an interpretation are made at this level. Moreover, the passage level seems to be a good compromise between reliability and practicality: performance (in particular fidelity) may tend to fluctuate too much across different passages to allow for reliable scoring at the task level. Although greater reliability could possibly be achieved at the level of shorter segments, this may not be feasible in a PECI that tests 40 or more minutes of interpreting performance in each pair-direction (except possibly for one or two segments which may need to be as short as 20–30s to sample an important KSA such as the ability to render sequences of large numbers).

When scoring at the passage level, the greatest potential problem for *reliability* arises in cases where there are big internal variations within the passage; for example, in a 2-minute passage, if there is a 20-second segment with very poor fidelity but the remaining 1m40s shows acceptable fidelity, what overall score should be given to that passage? Again, as an important part of the scoring system, raters must be given clear and explicit guidelines. Our recommendation is that if a passage contains a major meaning error with serious consequences for the speaker or the communication, that meaning error should determine the overall score assigned to that passage, irrespective of the merits of other parts of the same passage. This is another reason not to make passages too long: in our judgment, a good compromise for live scoring would be passages of up to 2–3 minutes, but not 4–5 minutes (except possibly for a single longer self-contained speech for consecutive).

In sum, then, we would recommend **holistic scoring at the passage level** as the basic scoring system for a PECI, with robust measures to ensure reliability. These measures will include the development of clear scoring guides – with explicit guidance on how to assign an overall score when componential criteria vary, or when there are wide internal variations in fidelity within a passage – and rater training and qualification procedures to ensure consistent application of the scoring system. In the next sections, we will look at these procedures in detail.

Subject to feasibility (resources), holistic scoring could be supplemented by additional analytic scoring (which can zoom in on shorter segments to target specific KSAs) for reviewing borderline performances, and importantly, generating precise diagnostic feedback for those who narrowly fail the test.

11.6.5.2 *Assessment criteria: A closer look at Fidelity, Expression and Delivery*
Many professional interpreting schools practise scoring on the three main criteria of **Fidelity, Expression** (language), and **Delivery**. These three criteria have a venerable pedigree that can be traced back, under somewhat varying labels, to the earliest proposals on evaluating translation quality in different cultures (e.g. Tytler 1790/1907, Yan Fu[39][see Shen 1998]). In the context of conference interpreting, we can define these constructs as follows:

> *Fidelity*: the extent to which the **content** of the interpretation is accurate, complete and faithful, and is free from errors, omissions and distortions (over- or under-translation, shifts in emphasis, precision, etc.), providing access to the speaker's communicative and informative intentions – i.e. gets 'the point' across, at the level of macrostructure ('basic fidelity'), while also preserving information, logic, details and tone.

> *Expression*: the extent to which the **language** of the interpretation is natural and appropriate to the message, content, setting and situation, but also to the conventions of that language in regard to pronunciation, grammar, usage, register, terminology, etc., meeting the required linguistic standard for a professional conference interpreter's A or B language.

> *Delivery*: the extent to which the delivery and presentation (paralanguage, kinesics) are polished, communicative and professional, instilling confidence and minimizing the effort needed by listeners to gain access to the message (see TG-12.2.2.2 (i)). Parameters of good delivery include appropriate and cooperative prosody, clear enunciation, fluency (avoidance of unnatural pauses, hesitations, false starts, as well as control of fillers), highlighting key/new in contrast with old/given information; pausing at topic shifts, etc.; and generally holding the audience's attention, including with eye contact and appropriate body language in visible/shared presence modes (consecutive, sight translation).

Intuitively, of course, these three criteria are not completely distinct and separate. All three clearly interact in contributing to successful communication, defined as an optimal trade-off between the richness of the cognitive effects (message) to which the speaker/interpreter gives access and the effort needed by an addressee to recover it (TG-12.2.2). Thus, at satisfactory levels of performance, i.e. in a *good* interpretation, it is neither necessary nor desirable to score them analytically. This is a major argument in favour of holistic scoring.

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39. "There are three difficulties in translation: faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance" (译事三难：信达雅).

Furthermore, at unsatisfactory levels of performance, i.e. in a *poor* interpretation, problem attribution can be tricky, as a problem on one criterion could impact another: for example, poor *expression* (the wrong use of a term, or faulty grammar or usage in a B language) might cause a problem of *fidelity* (when the addressees fail to understand, or misunderstand). It is therefore not surprising that research on the evaluation of translation quality has indicated a moderate correlation between assessed Accuracy (Fidelity) and Expression as assessed, both in written translation (Stansfield et al. 1992), and in interpreting (Clifford 2005; Liu 2013).

Nevertheless, despite this interaction, the three are sometimes sufficiently distinct to warrant judging each separately. These are the cases that potentially pose reliability problems for holistic scoring. Consider the following typical examples:

a. The interpreter badly misunderstands the speaker and delivers an unfaithful version in beautiful language with engaging, professional delivery. (Poor Fidelity, good Expression, good Delivery.)
b. The interpreter understands the speaker perfectly and delivers a faithful and complete version to the audience, but expressed in 'intermediate-learner' language with many basic grammar errors and mispronunciations, while nonetheless being fluent and communicative. (Acceptable Fidelity [provided language does not impede the audience's comprehension], poor Expression, acceptable Delivery).
c. The interpreter gets everything right, producing a fully complete, accurate and faithful rendition in standard, educated target language, but (in consecutive) takes 150% as long as the speaker did and hardly makes any eye contact with the audience. (Good Fidelity, good Expression, poor Delivery).

These are all fairly common problem patterns that interpreter trainers and examiners will be familiar with. They show that these three constructs *can* be distinct, and highlight one of the main challenges for the reliable scoring of interpretation performances: raters may focus on different aspects of the performance, and/or inconsistently weigh 'hidden' componential criteria in arriving at holistic scores. As we saw in the mash-up (11.4.1–2), this can result in very different overall scores, creating problems for reliability.

To avoid this problem and provide a solid basis for reliable scoring, we recommend a clear policy of considering **fidelity as primary, subject to sufficient clarity and correctness of Expression and acceptable Delivery**. That means that on a holistic scale, a serious deficiency in any one of the three main criteria should result in an overall score of 'Fail'; and provided that expression and delivery are acceptable, the overall score should primarily be determined by fidelity, then adjusted as appropriate for expression and delivery.

> **Much as validity is the most fundamental quality of a good test, subject to sufficient reliability, Fidelity is primary in interpreting, subject to sufficient clarity and correctness of Expression and acceptable Delivery.**

Ensuring that raters understand this policy and are applying it consistently should be a key part of rater training (11.6.5.5).

11.6.5.3 *Developing scoring guides*

The scoring system must operationalize the assessment criteria in scoring guides – **rubrics** and **checklists** – ideally accompanied by benchmark performances on recordings, to illustrate different performance levels. Scoring guides ensure consistent application of the criteria. A rubric provides descriptions of performance levels, each corresponding to a score on a scale. For improved accuracy, testing experts recommend that descriptions be not just vague value labels, but refer specifically to behaviours and/or characteristics of the product (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 47; 189); and that each level on the rubric be illustrated with benchmark performances ('anchors': see 11.6.5.4; Johnson et al. 2009: 156; 312).

Analytic rubrics provide detailed guidance on specific aspects of each criterion, setting out minimum standards – for example, a detailed description of language quality expected in B – and are therefore ideally suited to Admissions testing (see TG-4), or for formative and summative assessments (e.g. a Midpoint Exam, see TG-3.4.1). But they are not necessary for a criterion-referenced test with only two outcomes: pass or fail (or three: distinction, pass or fail).

More importantly, in our experience and observation at PECIs, raters strongly prefer to have a scale that includes a 'borderline' zone between 'clear pass' and 'inadequate'. This is certainly valid, since pass/fail distinctions at the level of a passage are not always clear-cut. However, adopting a five-point scale will, in our experience, cause problems for reliability (and for feasibility) when raters over-use the indeterminate in-between level, resulting in a large number of borderline cases that will need to be reviewed at the end of the test in order to reach an overall pass/fail decision (see 11.6.6).

For this reason, we recommend defining *six* overall performance levels. An even number of levels is preferable to avoid blurring at the middle of the scale: with six scale points, the in-between borderline zone can be divided into 'high-borderline' (close to, but quite at, the level of Clear Pass) and 'low-borderline' (close to, but not quite at, the level of Clear Fail). In our experience, six levels will allow for sufficient differentiation for reliable scoring. If raters so wish, they may augment scores on the six-point scale with a +/– for their own temporary guidance, but must submit one of the six grades.

Here is an example of a six-point holistic scale for scoring at the passage level, as in our recommended scoring approach:

Table 11.6 Holistic scale for scoring overall performance on each passage

6 – DISTINCTION	Superior interpreting performance that *exceeds* required professional standard, showing *most* of the following, the rest at clear pass level: ✓ Complete understanding of the SL passage ✓ Full, faithful and accurate rendering of all message elements in the passage, including all or nearly all details, nuances, mood and tone ✓ Strong interpreting technique, overcomes all difficulties and challenges in the passage ✓ Intelligent optimization choices for concision, clarity and effective communication ✓ Superior command of the target language, including register, terminology, word choice and style ✓ Polished and professional delivery
5 – GOOD (Clear pass)	Solid interpreting performance that clearly *meets* professional standard, with: ✓ Robust understanding of the SL passage ✓ Faithful and accurate rendering of all important message elements and most details in the passage, with no significant meaning errors ✓ Good interpreting technique that overcomes difficulties and challenges, or uses appropriate coping tactics to convey essential message, though with some occasional loss of non-critical detail ✓ Solid command of the target language at required standard for A or B, with appropriate register and terminology ✓ Fluent and effective delivery: minimum hesitation or voiced pausing (um-er), intelligent prosody
4 – FAIR (High borderline)	Interpreting performance *approaches* but does not fully meet professional standard, due to some glitches. Despite generally clear rendering of all important message elements and most details, there are: – One or more segments where the interpreter has resorted to excessive generalization or approximation, resulting in some message loss – One or more message elements that are not expressed with expected clarity (excessive wordiness, inefficiency) – Isolated and infrequent minor meaning errors on details (but NOT on key messages) that will not fundamentally mislead audience or embarrass speaker OR • In B, active competence close to but not solidly at the level required (cf. ILR-4 to 4+); occasional problems with register and idiomatic usage (but not with basic grammar and pronunciation) OR • some recurrent delivery problems, such as hesitation, back-tracking, voiced pausing (uh, um) – tolerable for audience but not quite as polished as expected in a professional interpreter

3 – WEAK (Low borderline)	Performance *falls short* of professional standard. Although much of the speaker's overall message is conveyed to the audience relatively clearly, the performance suggests still partial or developing competence. Problems observed may include any one or more of the following: • Insufficient understanding of some parts of the SL speech • A more serious isolated meaning error that might mislead listeners ('opaque'), or a pattern of minor distortions • Insufficient clarity of expression on important message element • Non-trivial omission or incompleteness and/or • Despite successful rendering of routine and moderately difficult speech segments, the interpreter cannot reliably handle the more challenging segments in the passage (e.g. speed, numbers) • Inadequate command of register, technical terms not rendered accurately, clumsy circumlocution • (B language) output is clearly understandable, but contains too many distracting errors of grammar, usage or pronunciation for professional conference interpreting • Delivery exhibits pattern of hesitation and backtracking
2 – POOR (Clear fail)	Interpreting performance that is *well below* the standard required of a professional conference interpreter, including one or more of the following: • Serious misinterpretation of important message element, resulting in major meaning error that would mislead audience or embarrass speaker • Serious omission of important message element • Inadequate technique: e.g. in SI, cannot keep up with speaker, falls behind, drops content; in consecutive, cannot read notes • Inadequate language skills: e.g. pattern of awkward, faulty expression, strong foreign accent, poor grammar and usage, inadequate vocabulary… • Stammering, halting delivery
1 – Incomplete	Gave up, turned off microphone. (Consecutive: failed to complete interpretation within maximum allotted time.) OR Behaviour and demeanour too inappropriate or distracting (e.g. in consecutive, candidate slouches, scowls, is inaudible; in SI, is heard commenting or giggling in booth, etc.)

Field testing of rubrics

Rubrics like the above must be piloted, field-tested, and constantly refined for maximum clarity and usability. This is an iterative process in which performance descriptions are calibrated against a large number of actual examinee performances to serve as a reality check, helping to clear up gaps and ambiguities (Johnson et al. 2009: 175). The 6-point holistic rubric above might provide a starting point for

field testing. Ultimately, standard, validated rubrics for professional conference interpreting could be published for harmonised use across schools and PECIs.

11.6.5.4 *Benchmark performances*

Obviously, interpreting is an example of a complex 'open skills' performance, in which there are numerous possible 'correct' responses. In this kind of test, "even the best scoring rubrics are abstractions" (Johnson et al. 2009: 180). Testing experts therefore recommend that the "complete scoring system would include examples of actual graded work, as well as annotations explaining why a particular score is given for a particular response" (Cizek & Bunch 2007: 338). Rubrics should therefore be accompanied by **benchmark performances** (also known as 'anchors') that provide raters with concrete examples of each proficiency level. These should show "a variety and range of responses across the scale" and constitute "solid, easily recognizable examples of score points […]" (Johnson et al. 2009: 180–1).

We would suggest collecting samples at the *passage* level for use as benchmarks. Recordings of test-takers from PECIs past are probably the best source material, but new programs without legacy recordings will have to look elsewhere. Ideally, there should be multiple benchmark recordings with different styles to correspond to each performance level on each rubric. Because the most critical distinction is around the borderline there should be enough benchmark recordings, with explanations, to clearly illustrate the difference between Clear Pass, High Borderline, and Low Borderline. The use of validated benchmarks is vital to rater training and ensuring high reliability of scoring.

11.6.5.5 *Rater training and IRR*

In any inter-subjective assessment process, as is the case when multiple raters are evaluating complex human performances, reliability is optimized by ensuring a sufficient number of raters (we recommend four) and ensuring that they score consistently. Since reliability is a prerequisite for the exam's overall validity, if the raters are inconsistent, their decisions cannot possibly be valid.

Experience across different domains has shown that "similarity of background is not sufficient to predict who will be willing and able to apply a scoring system" (Johnson et al. 2009: 190). Thus, even when all raters are expert conference interpreters with the correct language combinations and domain knowledge, rater training and qualification procedures are crucially important.

Traditionally, senior interpreters have been assumed to be competent and reliable judges of interpreting quality; but jurors invited from different backgrounds with different house-styles (UN, EU, private sector) have sometimes differed widely in their internalized criteria. It might be feared that a Chief Interpreter or Head of Booth would not take kindly to being 'trained' on his or her ability to rate performances, but after piloting rater training with a group of senior professionals,

Liu (2013: 7) reported that raters "unanimously agreed that the rater training sessions greatly helped them interpret the scores and link the descriptors on the scales to actual interpretation performance", and "expressed the need for more examples [benchmarks] representing a bigger variety of test-taker performances, as they still sometimes had difficulty in judging performances falling between two levels, particularly between levels 3 and 4 [i.e. around the borderline]."

For scoring 'complex, extended-response performances' as in a PECI, the following steps are recommended for rater training (adapted from Johnson et al. 2009: 195 and *passim*). This will take at least a full day:

1. *Orientation and overview*, covering the purpose of the PECI and the performance tasks included in the test.
2. *Guided tour of scoring rubric(s) and rating task*
3. *Review of benchmark performances*: raters review benchmark recordings that illustrate the different performance levels defined on the scoring rubric(s).
4. *Practise scoring 'solid performances'*, i.e. benchmark recordings that clearly correspond to a level on the rubric and whose scoring should be uncontroversial. These should cover the full range of score points and should oversample the most commonly encountered performance levels:
   i.   Raters score a new set of benchmarks individually.
   ii. Scores are tabulated and agreement between raters is displayed to the group, e.g. by showing what percentage of raters gave which score.
   iii. Raters then share their assessments, step-by-step, with the other raters in a group discussion. Points of contention between raters should be reviewed until all raters understand and agree on the correct assessment for each benchmark recording.
   iv. This cycle is continued until the judges have reached a high degree of consistency (90% agreement on a six-level rubric).
5. *Practice scoring 'borderline cases'*, which in our case must include interpretation passages exhibiting (a) starkly different performance levels on different componential criteria, (b) fluctuations in fidelity within the passage (both discussed in 11.6.5.1 above), and (c) borderline command of B language with different problems (pronunciation, grammar, usage…).
6. *Test for rater qualification*: after all practice trials, each rater independently scores a 'qualifying set' of at least 10 performances (with known and validated scores from previous exam administrations) to check the reliability and consistency of their scoring and determine if the rater qualifies.
7. *Overview of human error and self-monitoring practices*, to sensitize raters to types of bias and to best practices for maintaining reliable scoring.
8. *Transition to live scoring* of actual PECI tests.

Rater reliability testing is doubly productive, but complex, in that "you are establishing the reliability of the rater and the rating instrument in tandem" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 348). Apart from simple percent agreement, psychometrics offers a number of different approaches to calculate **inter-rater reliability (IRR)**, an indicator of the "level of consensus between […] independent raters in their judgments of candidates' performances" (Davies et al. 1999: 88). In the case of the mastery/nonmastery judgments ('dichotomous variables') made in the context of CRT, for example, the correlation coefficient *phi* can be employed and "can be extended to more than two judges by averaging the *phi* coefficients obtained for each possible pair of judges; […] in general, a *phi* score lower than [0].75 should be considered unacceptable" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 335–340).

Experts concur that for critical objectives (high-stakes exams, applied settings) a minimal inter-rater reliability (*phi* coefficient) of 0.90 or higher should be expected (Johnson et al. 2009: 292); Shrock & Coscarelli (ibid.: 340) recommend 0.95. We may therefore suggest target IRR *phi* scores for the overall pass/fail decision made by each rater with respect to each test-taker's performance, of 0.80 for Admission exams, 0.90 for the Midpoint, and 0.95 for the PECI, respectively.

Last but not least, in addition to establishing rater reliability, in a PECI 'rater training' means taking all measures to maximize raters' understanding of the tasks and their difficulty. For this purpose, and also, very importantly, to neutralize the difference in appreciation between the first and *n*th times the raters hear a candidate interpreting the same speech, PECI raters should **do the PECI tasks themselves**, under exam conditions, after they have familiarized themselves with the scoring system and practised scoring. The recordings of their own performance do not need to be shared, but raters will certainly find it instructive to experience the actual PECI tasks under the same test conditions as test-takers and to listen to their own recorded interpretation before scoring any candidate performances. This will also be a good opportunity for raters to identify 'look-fors' (Johnson et al. 2009: 185) in the input speeches, i.e. telling segments that are a good test of specific interpreting skills; and to check certain parameters, such as the maximum time allowed for renditions of the Consecutive passages and the preparation time to be allowed for the SI-text materials.

11.6.5.6 *Exam administration*

Once raters are qualified and have done the tests themselves, the time has come to administer the exam to the candidates. A number of organizational points should be noted:

i.   *Prepare transcripts of all input speeches* for raters to use. For SI-text, prepare transcripts in 'track-changes' style, to show where the speech will deviate from the text as given to test-takers.

ii.   *Appoint a Chair* to supervise all exam procedures, including welcoming candidates and ensuring they are briefed as prescribed, overseeing scoring (collecting and aggregating score sheets, etc.), and where necessary, moderating review procedures. The Chair, who will typically be a representative of the administering institution, must obviously be thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the test framework and specifications. The Chair will not participate in scoring and will not discuss performances with raters.

iii. *Leave enough time*. All too often, PECIs are squeezed into an unrealistic schedule, with too many test-takers and tasks each day. Tasks and tests should be spaced out to avoid rater, candidate and administrator fatigue.

iv.   *Make sure all relevant information is provided well in advance* to both test-takers and raters, including the timetable and organization of the exam and test specifications (11.6.3), including assessment criteria. For transparency and fairness, candidates must also be fully prepared in advance and on site by

- having access to sample tests from previous years;
- being given simulated exams (at least in a couple of subjects) in the weeks before the exam, and scored accordingly;
- being given tips for preparing for and taking the test (see CC, final Appendix);
- on site, being given full contextual information in writing on the background of each speech used, and where appropriate, proper names and any unusual technical or literary terms (11.6.3.5).

Finally, note that some jurisdictions and schools allow for students to appeal against exam decisions, sometimes leading to costly, extended and demoralising litigation – an additional motivation to get it right, check the legality of the test rules (for example, on the possibility of curtailing tests if candidates have no chance of success), and provide full and transparent information about them in advance and document everything.

11.6.6 Scoring and reaching a final decision

11.6.6.1 *Scoring test performances*
After a candidate completes a task, raters submit their scores on the individual passages to the Chair, who aggregates them into overall panel scores, first for each passage, then for the task as a whole.

The first step is to tabulate all the raters' individual scores for a candidate's performance on each passage and to compare them. If all raters have assigned the same score to a performance, than that is the panel score. If raters have assigned different but still *adjacent* scores, i.e. if all four scores are contained within two

adjacent scale levels, they are averaged and the mean becomes the panel score. This is the case for all five sets of scores of different passages or candidates (using our 6-point holistic rubric) shown in Table 11.7a, which could thus all be averaged to obtain an overall panel score.

Table 11.7a Reaching an overall panel score: examples for different passages/candidates

	Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Panel score
Passage 1	6-Distinction	5-Clear pass	5-Clear pass	5-Clear Pass	5.25
Passage 2	5-Clear pass	4-High borderline	5-Clear pass	4-High borderline	**4.5**
Passage 3	3-Low borderline	4-High borderline	4-High borderline	3-Low borderline	3.5
Passage 4	3-Low borderline	3-Low borderline	3-Low borderline	3-Low borderline	3
Passage 4	3-Low borderline	2-Fail	3-Low borderline	3-Low borderline	2.75

However, if the four raters assign *non-adjacent scores* to a passage – i.e. the highest and lowest of the four scores are separated by one level (or more than one level) on the rating scale, as in Table 11.7b – there is a problem with rater agreement. In this case the scores must not be averaged or otherwise aggregated into a panel score. Instead, the passage should be marked for **review** and score resolution (11.6.6.2).

Table 11.7b Divergent (non-adjacent) scores requiring score resolution procedure

Rater 1	Rater 2	Rater 3	Rater 4	Panel score
6-Distinction	5-Clear pass	4-High borderline	4-High borderline	->Review
3-Low borderline	4-High borderline	5-Clear Pass	3-High borderline	->Review

This system is easy to implement and should result in a minority of controversial performances requiring review. If the raters achieved 90% (exact and adjacent) agreement during the rater training sessions, for example, then one could expect that only 10% of passages would require review and score resolution.

11.6.6.2 *Score resolution and review procedure*

Procedures for resolving non-adjacent scores described in the literature are basically of two types (Johnson et al. 2009: 241–246):

a. *Adjudication* is typically used when there were only two original raters. A new rater is asked to score the performance, and this new score can either be merged with the original scores, or combined with the closest of the original scores, discarding the other; or it can replace the original scores altogether, if the adjudicator is recognized as more experienced and accurate ('expert' resolution).

b.   *Discussion:* the original raters rescore the passage on which their scores diverged, discuss, and seek consensus.

For our model school-based PECI, with on-site scoring, we recommend option (b). (For large-scale testing, such as a centrally administered PECI with off-site scoring from recordings, an adjudication-based resolution procedure might be more appropriate and feasible.)

However, discussion may not be necessary if re-scoring yields adjacent scores that can be averaged to give a new clear overall panel score. The review procedure would thus comprise either one or two steps:

1.   Individual re-listening and re-scoring without discussion

The raters re-listen to the recording of the passage where their scores were not in agreement, checking against their transcript of the source speech, and without discussion, individually rescore the passage. Each rater's new score is collected and if the scores are now in agreement or in adjacent agreement, they are aggregated to a panel score by the same rules as before. If the scores are still divergent, then the raters discuss their scores and try to reach the best possible consensus (or majority agreement, 3 out of 4 raters) on the appropriate score.

2.   Moderated discussion

A discussion can be prescibed whenever scores diverge widely (are non-adjacent), or only when rescoring yields no agreement. Discussion can potentially enhance validity, but carries a risk to reliability due to the possible influence of dominant personalities, possible introduction of extraneous information (if instructors are present), bias, etc. (see mash-up and commentary in 11.4.1–2 above).

The discussion should therefore be moderated and should be focused on the passage in question, seeking to apply the PECI's assessment criteria to it as carefully as possible.

We recommend the following procedure for discussion (cf. Johnson et al. 2009: 244): moderated by the Chair, the raters

i.   collectively review the language in the scoring guide for the relevant performance levels
ii.   consult their notes on features and problems of performance observed in the passage in question
iii.   mutually explain their scores, citing evidence in the performance that matches their score to the performance level description set out in the scoring guide (rubric)
iv.   mutually provide additional observations and evidence for one another that may have been overlooked (including counterexamples)

v.   review relevant benchmark recordings (and their annotations) to 'recalibrate' as necessary

vi. consult additional scoring guides as relevant, e.g. analytic rubrics with descriptions of performance levels on distinct criteria such as Fidelity, Expression (language) and Delivery, or detailed descriptions of minimum level of B language required (cf. ILR-4);

vii. seek consensus on a final score; or if still not agreed, reach a final decision by majority voting.

The moderator must ensure that

▶   the discussion is kept strictly focused on evidence for and against mastery of key interpreting skills in the passage at hand. The same candidate's performance on other passages should not be considered, as each passage is to be scored separately on its own merits.

▶   if instructors are allowed to be present as observers during this discussion, they must remain silent and refrain from any attempt to influence the scoring. The raters should under no circumstances be told about the candidate's 'regular classroom performance', 'good evaluation in mock conferences', 'exam nerves', etc.

▶   there is no comparison of one test-taker to another, since this is not a normative test and the goal is not to rank the test-takers.

▶   raters are conscious of the test purpose as a credentialling exam and that consequently, in cases of real doubt and uncertainty, the policy is that it is better to err on the side of strictness, i.e. a 'false negative' is preferred to a 'false positive' result.

The moderator should record salient points from the review discussion, which will generate useful feedback for 'near-miss' test-takers and their instructors (see 11.6.7), but also valuable information on how to clarify any ambiguous points in the scoring rubrics, and/or to make sure that in future, similar tricky situations are adequately addressed in rater training.

11.6.6.3 *Determining PECI outcomes: applying a cut score*

The procedures outlined above will generate passage-level scores: what remains is to integrate these into overall scores for each candidate (by averaging the passage scores) and then to apply 'cut scores' to determine which candidates have passed the test. Overall panel scores will be needed both at task and test level, since as we will see, two separate and interacting cut scores may be necessary.

In criterion-referenced testing, the cut score is the score that is determined to separate masters from non-masters. It represents the "numerical operationalization

of a performance standard", and is usually defined via a standard-setting procedure (Cizek & Bunch 2007: 337). Setting a cut score, and thereby "defining the minimum level of knowledge and skill required for licensure or certification is one of the most important and difficult tasks facing those responsible for credentialing" (AERA, APA, NCME 1999: 157).

A variety of methods can be used to set a cut score, but whatever approach is taken should rely on performance data: it is "unwise to set a standard in the absence of hard data about how real test-takers perform on the test" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 269). Ideally, in order to generate such data, the model PECI we have sketched out above should be piloted on different groups – including proven, senior conference interpreters; solid junior conference interpreters, such as UN or EU staff interpreters with 3–5 years of full-time experience; and conference interpreting students who have just completed their training.

The three basic categories of methods for setting a cut score are (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 269–281):

1.   *Political* – make a *political decision* taking into account both performance data and the (conflicting) preferences of different stakeholders. In the case of conference interpreting, schools may wish to have the lowest possible cut score, to increase the pass rate; large client institutions (such as international organizations) may wish to have a higher cut score, but not too high, so as to be able widen their pool of interpreters, ease supply-side pressure, and dilute the bargaining power of incumbent constituencies; delegates who truly rely on interpreting, if asked, may wish to have an even higher cut score, to ensure strict quality control and the highest quality of service; and incumbent constituencies – interpreters whose livelihoods may be threatened by new market entrants – may wish to see very high cut scores, to limit competition… as long as they themselves are exempt from taking the test! In a political approach, standard-setters would try to find a balance among these competing interests and make an informed decision, based on known performance data.

> In the licensure arena, those responsible for conducting standard-setting activities and who have the authority to establish cut scores must take into account competing, and sometimes conflicting, interests. The setting of cut scores in these instances must delicately balance the commitment and ambitions of examinees in pursuit of a vocation of their choosing with the duty of the licensing authority to protect the public from harm attributable to less-than-adequately prepared practitioners.
> (Cizek & Bunch 2007: 11)

2.   *Conjectural*: generate a *professional estimate* of the score that represents minimally competent performance. Techniques in this category involve bringing together authoritative judges in a structured process to estimate the score of a hypothetical candidate who is just qualified enough to pass the test.

3.   *Performance-based* methods use *statistics* to analyse empirical performance data for different groups of test-takers, but "despite their veneer of scientific objectivity, […] still require human judgment" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 278) – as well as performance data, which we do not have in this case.

The cut score proposed here for our model PECI reflects our own *professional estimate (conjecture)* of an appropriate standard for this exam. Based on the levels in the six-point rubric we used for scoring at the passage level, **we suggest a cut score of 4.5/6** on each test. This score represents the midpoint between '5-Good (Clear pass)' and '4-High borderline'. Taking 4.5 as the cut score seems fairer to us than 5, which might be excessively strict given the difficulty of the input materials we have prescribed, but also more realistic than accepting a cut score of just 4, which by definition is 'high borderline' and therefore not quite up to the required standard.

Although we do not have actual performance data, we can use *conjecture* to test this cut score against some different score distributions, to assess whether it is fair and reasonable.

Importantly, it should be possible for a candidate to pass the test overall even with a couple of passages scored as 2-Fail or 3-Low Borderline. This is significant for two reasons.

First, in the absence of performance data we don't know but do suspect that over a 40-minute test on fast, varied and difficult material (sometimes read out without supplying the text), and outside a real meeting environment, even very good professionals may occasionally make one or even two significant errors – especially when they have to work alone, without a boothmate to assist.

Second, it is important for raters to be psychologically focused on assigning the most accurate possible passage-level scores, without worrying that scoring a passage or two as 'low borderline' or even 'fail' will automatically result in the candidate failing the text. In a test with 12 passages, this is in fact the case: a candidate who scored 5-Clear Pass on 10 passages and 2-Fail on 2 passages (though this is an unlikely distribution), or one who scored 5-Clear Pass on 9 passages and 3-Low Borderline on 3 passages, will have an overall mean score across all 12 passages of 4.5, the suggested cut score. Knowing this will help scorers stay focused on accurate and reliable scoring at the passage level, without extraneous worry about the *consequences* of their scoring at the test level.

However, it should not be possible for a candidate to pass the test if she has failed a task (mode). But this may conflict with the above requirement, so an additional rule is needed. For example, if the consecutive task consists of three passages, and the candidate achieves a score of 5-Clear pass on two of then and 2-Fail on the third one, then that candidate's mean passage score for the Consecutive task is 4 (which corresponds to 'High Borderline'). This performance would still earn

a pass on the test as a whole, provided that the candidate's overall mean score on the test (across 12 passages) is 4.5 or higher.

We would, however, make 4 the cut score for any *task* (mode). Thus, this candidate with scores of 5-Clear pass, 4-High Borderline, and 2-Fail on her three Consecutive passages would have a Consecutive task score of 3.67, below the cut score of 4 we are recommending for any one task. She would therefore fail the test, even if her overall test score were 4.5 or higher.

To summarize, as a starting point, based on our own professional judgment, we would suggest cut scores of:

- **4.5/6 overall for the test as a whole** (average of 12 passages covering Consecutive, SI, and SI-text);
- **4/6 for any one task**, on the average of three Consecutive passages, or of three SI-text passages. On free SI, however, which comprises six passages, no combination of any three passages should be below 4 to pass that task (to avoid, for example, obtaining a pass with scores of 5-3-5-3-5-3).

Finally, it would seem wise to systematically review candidates with an overall test score just below the cut score, in the range of 4.25–4.5/6, or possibly even 4.0–4.5/6. It is good testing practice to define a zone of uncertainty, or borderline, around the cut score, based on estimated measurement error, for review.

As discussed in 11.3.1.1, due to the existence of measurement error, any test score should "*always* be viewed as a point within a range – not a single, absolute point" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 283). Intuitively, two test-takers with overall test scores of 3/6 and 5.5/6 respectively *do* have different 'true' scores; but two test-takers with scores of 4.45 and 4.55 might not, as this small difference might be due entirely to measurement error.

This region of indecision should ideally be established statistically using the 'standard error of measurement', but in the absence of a technical measure, a reasonable starting point is to define its width as one-tenth of the total test range around the cut-off score (ibid.: 284).

In a high-stakes test, in order to reduce misclassification errors, Lathrop (1986, cited in Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 284–285) recommends systematically retesting all candidates whose scores fall within this region of indecision on *either* side of the cut score. Those whose observed scores are above the cut score on both testings are deemed 'masters'; those whose observed scores are below the cut score on both testings are deemed 'non-masters'. Those whose observed scores are above the cut score on one testing and below it on the other are dealt with in accordance with test policy based on the consequences of misclassification: in a professional certification or credentialing exam, since false negatives are preferred over false positives, the policy would be to classify such a candidate as a non-master.

Although we find this recommended procedure convincing in terms of validity and reliability, for reasons of feasibility it will not be practicable in our model PECI test. To do this, there would need to be an alternate form of the entire test ready to be administered to all test-takers whose overall test scores are in the borderline around the cut score, not to mention the cost in examiner time, facilities, etc. of administering and scoring the whole test over again.

As a compromise for our school-based PECI, we therefore suggest considering either of the following procedures for reviewing candidates with an overall test score of 4.25–4.50:

i.   *Partial retest:* If a candidate's overall test score appears to have been dragged down just below the cut score into the zone of indecision by one or two passages in a certain task, retest the candidate on that task, but using fresh and possibly *slightly more difficult* input materials. If this re-testing on that task yields a clear panel score that is over 4.5 (or alternatively, 4.75), then classify the candidate as a master (pass).

ii. *Summary judgment:* ask each rater to review the candidate's performance across all test tasks, and independently make an overall judgment as to whether the candidate is a master or non-master (pass or fail). If all four raters agree, then their judgment stands; if they fail to agree, then in accordance with test policy on the consequences of misclassification, the candidate is deemed a non-master.

As a matter of both fairness and practicality, in a school-based PECI we would probably not recommend retesting candidates with overall test scores just *above* the cut score (say, from 4.5–4.75) with a view to potentially classifying them as non-masters, even if technically speaking their scores also fall within the boundary of indecision. Advisable as this would be in terms of testing theory, this might only be practicable in a centrally administered certification test with the necessary resources.

11.6.7 Exam retakers

As a matter of fairness, candidates who do not pass the PECI the first time should be allowed to retake it (and to that end should receive detailed and constructive feedback).

Retakers must in any case retake the entire test – not an identical one to the one they failed, of course, but the new one set for this year's PECI – and do all tasks again,[40] even ones that they passed the first time, for more than one reason:

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40. This is an example of a recommended procedure that would have the advantage of reducing false positives, but might be ruled out by regulations for University-based testing (under the Bologna reforms, for example [see e.g. 13.3.5.2]).

(a) time has passed and their original skill level may well have deteriorated; and (b) subject matters, speech and delivery styles, and other challenges to be tested may be distributed differently across tasks and passages this time. For example, a candidate may have failed her SI B-to-A task last year due not to any problem with her simultaneous technique but to an insufficient grasp of economics. This year, she retakes SI B-to-A but gets a speech on a more congenial topic, since in this year's version of the exam, specialized economics discourse is tested on the SI-text task, which she passed last year. This retaker therefore 'passes' the exam and receives her diploma, even though she is still incapable of interpreting specialized economics discourse.

It is therefore of crucial importance to require retakers to redo the whole exam to demonstrate competence in all critical and important KSAs (or at minimum a whole test, if they are retaking or adding a language pair-direction to an already certified viable combination: see 11.6.3.1).

There is even a possible argument for assessing retakers differently from first-time test takers: "Millman (1989) has dramatically demonstrated the effect of multiple attempts on false positive decisions: the greater the number of attempts permitted, the greater the likelihood that an examinee truly lacking the level of knowledge or skill judged to be minimally necessary will pass the examination" (Cizek & Bunch 2007: 26): in one example, an examinee with only 65% mastery was shown to have a 40% chance of passing the test with as few as three attempts. Indeed, in our experience and observation, a majority of **false positives** on PECIs occur in the case of exam **retakers with borderline scores.**

In order to provide fair opportunity for candidates to retake the exam, while also guarding against this increased risk of a false positive decision, it may be advisable to apply a **higher cut score for retakers**. While the exact mechanism would be a matter to decide with the help of a testing specialist, we might tentatively suggest, for example, in the case of our model PECI, that the cut score of 4.5 could either be increased to 4.75, or applied exactly as it is for first-time test takers but with no review of retakers with scores in the range 4.25–4.5.

11.6.8 Testing professionalism

The PECI suite of performance tests presented above should be a reliable and valid test of the LKS components of conference interpreting competence. But no one should be certified as a professional conference interpreter unless they have also demonstrated [knowledge of] Professionalism. To complete the PECI, then, complementary assessment will be needed to check that candidates understand professional norms and ethics, are able to apply them in challenging situations, and are familiar with the organization of the profession (contracts, working

conditions, recruitment conventions, etc.). This could involve a pencil-and-paper test, an interview, a simulation, and/or continuous assessment with a portfolio. Since Professionalism is an indispensable part of the LKSP equation, *any* valid certification exam – school-based or otherwise – must adequately assess the candidate on related dimensions, with a pass required for graduation (certification) in addition to passing the PECI.

Table 11.8 shows some examples of constituent constructs of Professionalism and how they might be tested.

Table 11.8 Constructs for assessing generic skills and Professionalism (see CC/TG-10 and CC-11)

Professionalism	Skills, norms, behaviours and knowledge that are desirable to fulfil the task optimally	Test method
Optimization and (intercultural) mediation	Alert to possible misunderstandings and able to deal optimally with vagueness, ambiguity, face, etc. and avoid, discreetly resolve, or appropriately mediate miscommunication due to different cultural perspectives	Simulation (e.g in mini-mock conference format)
Resourcefulness	Unflappable, copes, handles crises and unexpected problems; is in control of stress and uses it constructively	PECI
Teamwork	Cooperates well with colleagues (preparation, booth)	Continuous assessment (mock conferences, etc.)
Demeanour	Appropriate to setting (Consecutive/ST)	PECI and/or separate simulation
Ethics	Knows code of ethics and makes appropriately ethical decisions	Simulation, pencil-and-paper exam, interview
Knowledge of profession	Knows and follows (role) norms, conventions or protocols of the setting	
Business/Service Professionalism	Understands contracts, recruitment conventions, 'co-opetition' relationship with colleagues, etc. (CC-11)	Simulation, pencil-and-paper, interview

One interesting model that conference interpreter certification might draw on for testing Professionalism is the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) scheme run by the [US] Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID),[41] in which the performance exam is complemented by a multiple-choice knowledge test and interview, with ethical 'vignettes' to assess professionalism (ibid.: 14–15, 21). The knowledge test consists of 150 questions, including inter alia knowledge of how to:

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41. http://www.rid.org/rid-certification-overview/nic-certification/ (Accessed November 22, 2015).

✓   Assess each interpreting situation to determine if qualified for the assignment;
✓   Prepare for assignment by determining logistics and purpose of interaction for all parties involved;
✓   Apply the Code of Professional Conduct for the interpreting profession;
✓   Provide interpreting services that reflect awareness and sensitivity to culturally and ethnically diverse groups.

In the interview, the first two vignettes assess candidates' knowledge of the [NAD-RID] Code of Professional Conduct, and their ability to evaluate ethical situations and apply the Code.

A test to check a conference interpreter's grasp of Professionalism, as a mandatory complement to the PECI for certification, should include both 'theoretical' and practical components, to check

i.   ('Theoretical') declarative knowledge of ethical tenets and professional practice, for example in a multiple-choice or short answer test ('What does the Code of Ethics/Professional Standards say about working without a booth? working alone in a booth? confidentiality/use of social media when on assignment? recording of the interpreter's performance?', etc.)

ii. ('Practical'): the ability to apply this knowledge to analyse tricky cases and find appropriate responses, to be tested in case studies or even, as in the NIC text, 'play-acting vignettes'; for example, how to respond when approached by users of the service with different requests – to arbitrate, to make tea, to translate a document, to quote on an assignment, etc. – when you have been recruited by an agency, a consultant interpreter, etc.

For reasons of feasibility, we would recommend that, as a default setting, a school-based PECI should incorporate a written test of Professionalism with short-answer questions to check declarative knowledge and some longer essay responses to test procedural knowledge.

If resources permit, as in a centralized certification test, the practical component could even be extended into fully contextualized simulations (typically, in consecutive) in which the speakers are rude, vague or rambling, make slips of the tongue or more or less obvious factual errors, or speak in a very culture-specific way, in order to test the interpreter's ability to rapidly choose an appropriate or at least acceptable strategy of 'optimized' or 'constrained' interpreting after weighing their potential risks or added value (CC-5.8.4 and CC/TG-10.4).

However, before implementing this solution it would be necessary to develop clear and comprehensive guidelines in this difficult area and train students accordingly. Candidates would be expected to show that they are aware of the relevant principles, and the risks and benefits of various options, and are able to analyse the situation and provide a reasoned and motivated response.

11.7 Discussion

An effective and useful test of proficiency in a skill must meet the criteria of validity, reliability and practicality (feasibility). This implies using tasks, materials and conditions that are as close to authentic as possible, yet offer a basis for assessing competence in a wider range of future situations, and a fair and consistent system for scoring performances and reaching pass/fail decisions in line with real-world performance requirements. This is particularly important to ensure transparency, accountability and credibility (the tests must be *seen* to be valid and reliable) in high-stakes exams that test for professional readiness and qualify candidates for access to a profession or a specific post.

Judging candidates' fitness and readiness for a vocation that provides a service to human communication and exchange in all its diversity, and that requires 'soft skills' like social and cultural sensitivity, judgment and adaptability as well as technical expertise, will never be an exact, infallible science (as indeed is the case with any performance assessment). It seems clear that assessment must be entrusted primarily to raters with expert knowledge and deep personal experience of the task and the domain – in other words, professional interpreters – but who are also willing and able to qualify as examiners, i.e. to undergo rater training and demonstrate the ability to score reliably and consistently on defined criteria, since neither relevant professional background nor experience as an examiner is a sufficient condition for consistent, reliable assessment. In a profession that requires assurance of fidelity and accuracy, purely impressionistic appraisal by such judges 'in committee' is inadequate and open to abuse. A holistic element in scoring is essential in assessing a complex 'open' skillset, but it must be placed within an explicit framework, with measures to define content domain, choose input speeches, specify and describe performance levels and cut-off points, and with procedures for deciding borderline cases, training raters and monitoring rater reliability, to ensure consistent and transparent application.

As we have seen, in applying good testing practices to a certifying examination for conference interpreters, some trade-offs have to be made between reliability, validity and feasibility. In this chapter, we have presented an outline model for a school-based PECI, taking into account feasibility constraints. We believe that the measures proposed here, though admittedly more cumbersome than a traditional school-based exam, represent the reasonable minimum effort that must be made in a high-stakes credentialing exam to avoid sacrificing too much reliability and validity in the name of feasibility, as is sometimes the case today. In this final section, we review some additional refinements that might be feasible in a centralized certification system, but probably not in exams administered by a single school,

and finally, discuss how a more robust interpreter credentialling system might be established in the longer term. One key challenge to fair and consistent testing is standard-setting, or defining the expected or required level of performance.

11.7.1 Standard-setting

As explained, conference interpreting certification could benefit from having a set of clear and authoritative performance standards that would state explicitly what is expected of professional interpreters (if desired, at different levels or for somewhat different skillsets: see CC-2.5 and discussion in 11.7.5 below), including for some *component* competencies. A good example would be the linguistic or expressive quality expected of a B language, which is currently only vaguely and variably defined. Such a description might distinguish between Bcons and Bsim, or perhaps more rationally – since users of consecutive and SI would presumably have the same expectations – between two levels of B competence, with 'B' as standard and B+ when proficiency is hardly distinguishable from an A language in most registers.

Defining such norms would require a formal standard-setting exercise drawing on performance data. No such exercise has ever been conducted, either by AIIC, the UN, EU, CIUTI, or anyone else, leaving each school[42] – or each assembled jury intersubjectively – to apply their own criteria. One input to the standard-setting process could be empirical research on current accepted standards in different languages and in different organizations – for example, through large corpus studies of actual professional performances under a range of real-life conditions (already feasible at the European Parliament).

If the profession has never grasped this nettle, it may be because such an exercise (i) would need to be both centralized and based on a high level of consensus; and (ii) might be painful in its consequences: even with an error allowance of 20%, the pass rate at the FCICE is only 4% (Hewitt et al. 1995). The process might yield the painful finding, for example, that the standard for fidelity (accuracy and completeness) independently set by demanding users is not met by a significant percentage of existing professionals under typical delivery conditions, or that these standards are not achievable by beginners, even with careful selection and two years of solid training. What if the empirical evidence suggests that it takes 3–5 years of full-time work experience *after* two years of full-time training to meet the defined performance standards? It is hard to imagine that the logical consequences

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42. and fellow professionals when sponsoring candidates to the professional association…

would be drawn: five-year postgraduate training programmes, perhaps, or new induction schemes in international organizations, in which graduates of two-year programs are hired but treated as articling trainees for three years…. Indeed, many conference interpreters do report that it takes 10 years of full-time work after graduation to reach a very satisfactory professional standard.

If operational definitions of expected performance could be developed, however, they could naturally serve as a reference for setting cut scores for certifying exams, with accompanying analytic descriptors and benchmark performances. For example, exactly how many major or minor errors can we tolerate in a professional credentialling exam? What percentage of numbers or names correctly rendered is required to pass? How complete is an SI interpretation expected to be at 120 wpm on a speech of standard genre and difficulty under standard conditions, and how much simplification is acceptable when dealing with a dense, prepared speech delivered at 160 wpm? How many wrong subject-verb agreements are enough to eliminate a candidate working into French B? And should the number be different for candidates with English A vs. Chinese A? etc.

How exactly to fix a cut score – an official statement of the 'allowable' number of errors and flaws – is a vexing problem for any interpreting exam, indeed for the profession. In the absence of explicit performance standards, test designers must set cut scores for a test on the basis of a systematic collection of human judgments. A standard might include the following statement: "to qualify as 'conference interpreter', a competent interpreter working alone without the assistance of a partner should be able (in a speech with defined characteristics of density, speed, etc.) to render 80% of all numbers precisely in the TL; of the remaining 20%, at least half should be expressed in terms of a correct approximation (order of magnitude, direction of change) and the other half should not be interpreted in a misleading way."

Defining a passing standard is the most important and difficult part of the test development process. The political complications of standard-setting, and the two-edged responsibility that it carries, are well recognized in the testing literature. And it is clear that there is unlikely to be one 'true and correct' cut score that will satisfy all stakeholders:

> A [cut score] solution satisfactory to all does not exist and […] the choice between alternatives is ultimately a political, not a scientific matter.
>
> (Hofstee 1983: 208, cited in Cizek & Bunch 2007: 208)

Upstream, the process of setting harmonised performance standards for conference interpreting would seem to require the convening of a body of authoritative experts (senior and respected expert interpreters, heads of service/chiefs,

IAMLADP[43]), all working together in a structured standard-setting process under the auspices of AIIC, and facilitated by specialists from the field of testing and standard-setting.

11.7.2 A role for continuous assessment?

As explained in TG-13.2.5, education regulators in some countries have been encouraging or requiring universities to replace exam-based graduation wholly or partly with continuous assessment (CA).[44] Although some CITPs have made limited moves to comply, continuous assessment is not really appropriate for **certification** in conference interpreting, which is quintessentially performance-based.

However, continuous assessment components can fulfil a useful function as **complements** or **prerequisites** for graduation, on condition of passing the PECI. One example might be to require a pass in the **knowledge modules** described in TG-7.4, some of which are more generic (e.g. International Law, Economics), some more specialized and market-specific:

1. *Compulsory* modules, in which a pass would be prerequisite to qualify for the PECI, or for final graduation, might include
    ▶ Lecture courses on Law, Economics, Parliamentary Procedure or International Organizations, and Theory and Practice (including Introduction to Professional Practice), either in continuous assessment, multiple partial tests, or a final pencil-and-paper exam;
    ▶ Preparation skills and teamwork, validated in continuous or portfolio-based assessment over multiple mock conferences and practice visits.
2. *Optional/specialized* modules (with a possible special mention on the diploma) might include e.g.
    ▶ Parliamentary Procedure or International Organizations only for those aiming at the institutional conference interpreting market;
    ▶ Language of Research (and of presentations), useful for multiple markets;
    ▶ Business and Finance, for the private conference interpreting market;
    ▶ Legal and Court Interpreting, Healthcare Interpreting, etc.

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43. IAMLADP (International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications) "is a forum and network of managers of international organizations employing conference and language services providers, mainly translators and interpreters. Its membership includes the United Nations, other organizations of the UN system and inter-governmental and supra-national organizations." http://www.iamladp.org/ (Accessed November 22, 2015).

44. "the assessment of a pupil's progress throughout a course of study, rather than exclusively by examination at the end of it" (Collins' English Dictionary).

Credits would need to be earned in one or more of these modules to graduate, either for all candidates or – particularly as regards the complementary knowledge modules – as an additional credential required for certain specializations, such as court or healthcare interpreting. In neither case, however, should performance on such modules be taken into account in the PECI (no weighting or compensation).

11.7.3 Analytic and holistic scoring: adapting method to purpose

While we have recommended holistic scoring at passage level for a school-based PECI with live scoring, test designers working on a centralized certification exam with off-site scoring from recordings might well pilot a system based on, or incorporating, more detailed analytic scoring. Even in an exam like ours with holistic scoring, analytic rubrics may come in useful when disagreement among raters (divergent scores) requires review and score resolution. Re-scoring the relevant passages using separate analytic rubrics for Fidelity, Language/Expression and Delivery could help to identify problems more closely, score more reliably, and provide better feedback to near-miss candidates. However, to avoid the validity issues associated with weighting these analytic scores for conversion into a holistic score, we would recommend the principle of *conjunctive scoring*. In this method, the overall score awarded to a passage is *not* the sum or (weighted) average of the analytic scores for fidelity, expression, and delivery; instead, it is the *lowest* of these three scores. This is valid insofar as the final quality of interpretation – the success of the communication – will be constrained by the quality of any of these three criteria, and therefore cannot be better than the lowest of these three. It is therefore unnecessary to make complex judgments about possible interactions among the three (e.g. whether to penalize fidelity, expression, or both) since problems of attribution become irrelevant.

While it makes sense to adopt primarily holistic scoring for the PECI, where we are assessing an all-round competence in which language, knowledge, skills and professionalism have merged, analytic scoring remains preferable for the Admission exam, where we are evaluating abilities that are still recognizably distinct (from an interpreting point of view). Accordingly, at a midpoint assessment test (TG-3.4.1), it might make sense to use holistic scoring for the summative part of the exam (essentially for Consecutive) with more analytic scoring for Sight Translation and C-language comprehension, which serve more specifically to predict readiness for SI in terms of speed, fluency, syntactic agility and resistance to interference.

11.7.4 Testing and task difficulty

In TG-9 we described some extremely difficult and even impossible conditions that interpreters frequently encounter, and offered some pedagogical approaches to preparing students for these contingencies as part of last-mile training. Logically, then, we should therefore test this readiness in the PECI, but this has not traditionally been done, for various reasons – some legitimate, such as the danger of destabilizing candidates unnecessarily, or the difficulty of evaluating responses. In our own model PECI as presented above, for reasons of content validity we have deliberately sampled some of the difficult input conditions commonly encountered in the real world (11.6.3.3, 11.6.3.4); and as a matter of criterion validity, we have also taken into account the difficulty of the input in the setting of the cut score (11.6.6.3).

It will probably be obvious to most practitioners that what constitutes an 'acceptable' performance cannot be entirely fixed and invariant from task to task. 'Basic' fidelity at the level of macrostructure – getting the point across – can always be taken as the general absolute *minimum* requirement, but beyond that, expectations must at least to some extent take into account the objective difficulty of the input as well as the interpreter's expected prior familiarity and opportunity to prepare.

A wider range of real-life conditions can be tested if we match them to reasonable real-life expectations. As Hönig (2002)[45] puts it,

> When assessing performances in tests and exams, the term 'correct' or 'right' will be replaced by 'acceptable' or 'adequate'. It is an important step forward to speak about adequacy rather than correctness, accuracy and completeness because the former term implies a change of paradigm. […]
>
> Since evaluation is relative to the objective grade of difficulty it is unrealistic to expect flawless interpretation of an objectively "hard" speech. This does not mean, however, that they should not be chosen. Examination boards will get a wider spectrum of performances and more differentiated results if speeches are objectively difficult to interpret. The speech given must pose challenges for the candidate in order to give him/her a chance to display a wide range of strategies and coping tactics. […] In these cases completeness and *verbatim* exactness must not be the only evaluation criteria employed. Adequacy implies that an interpretation is, by definition, *relatively* successful – relative to user expectation(s), access to preparatory material and quality of input.   (Hönig 2002: 47)

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45. On the same principle, in the more advanced stages of training (CC/TG-8 and 9), we described two parallel tracks with different performance goals for different materials: a polished, fluent and 'hi-fi' performance on standard speeches, but only 'survival', reliably conveying the essence of the speaker's message, for very difficult material.

We agree with Hönig, and therefore recommend the following:

▶ Choose materials so that 25%–30% of SL passages are objectively difficult, but still 'doable' by professionals: at SDI 16–17, a competent professional conference interpreter should be able to provide *at least* an 'adequate' rendition, allowing for use of compression and coping tactics (and expert interpreters may even provide an objectively 'good' rendition that is fully accurate and complete).
▶ Ask raters (in our sample rubric, Table 11.3) to accept intelligent gist on very difficult segments as a 'Clear Pass': "Good interpreting technique that overcomes difficulties and challenges, or uses appropriate coping tactics to convey essential message".

By the same token, however, raters should *not* accept as a 'Clear Pass' interpretations of eminently doable passages that resort to excessive coping tactics, even if the gist is conveyed effectively. We have therefore deliberately penalized this in the rubric when not justified by objective input difficulty: FAIR is awarded for passages with "one or more segments where the interpreter has resorted to excessive generalization or approximation, resulting in some message loss", and WEAK for "non-trivial omission or incompleteness".

In sum, the raters must use expert judgment to determine whether coping tactics that result in message loss or dilution are justified or not given the difficulty of the input. The same amount of generalization or gisting should result in a score of CLEAR PASS on very difficult input (SDI > 18), but a score of WEAK on eminently doable input (SDI 11–12), or even POOR on easy input (SDI 8–9).

While expert judgment will always be needed to gauge the adequacy of the performance against the challenges of the input, again we can help make this judgment more consistent and structured by using a Speech Difficulty Index to choose speeches and understand their level of difficulty; by including SL speech at different levels of difficulty in the rater training materials, with corresponding benchmark recordings; and by piloting the input speeches and having the raters experience them themselves under test conditions.

Finally, (near-) *impossible* speech input (e.g. SDI > 20) should be excluded from a PECI out of fairness. Professionals do encounter it (see CC/TG-9) but may have to resort to extreme tactics such as 'bullet-pointing', and may even be justified in turning off their microphone. (It could certainly stay in for a centralized exam that offers multiple levels of certification, and be used to differentiate journeymen from expert interpreters.[46])

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46. This approach would also need to be empirically validated with performance data. Leeson (2011), writing on SLI, suggests that we "explore how newly-qualified interpreters' skill-sets compare with interpreters with a certain level of experience, perhaps leading to a grounded scheme for certification at different levels of expertise" (2011: 163, 720).

11.7.5 Certification at different levels

In 11.6.4 above, we suggested sequencing the passages in each task from easy to difficult, in order to save time and costs by eliminating candidates who no longer had a chance of passing. A centralized, multi-level certification exam might be similarly structured, each task beginning with an easy passage suitable for beginners, followed by several passages at medium and increasing difficulty (commonly found in everyday interpreting), then several passages on difficult (e.g. fast, dense, stylized) material on which even some professionals might struggle.

Candidates who failed the first five minutes would be eliminated; those who passed the first two sections but failed the last could receive a journeyman interpreter's certificate, while those who passed all three parts might be awarded an expert-level interpreter's certificate, specifying in each case what kind of competence the candidate has demonstrated. A similar scheme is implied in some published scales of interpreting competence (NAATI), or the (more detailed) ILR interpreter competence scale[47] (CC-2.5). Such scales would become much more meaningful if performance could be linked to input difficulty, and to the standard of the rendition, in very specific terms.

11.7.6 Responsibility for credentialling

There are several areas in which better practices could be implemented immediately by many interpreting schools, requiring no special budget or research. But it seems reasonable to expect that a high-stakes CRT that serves a professional credentialling function deserves a higher commitment of resources and care in design and implementation than has hitherto been made in the context of school-based PECIs. Given the challenges to ensuring valid and reliable credentialling exams in schools, and the lack of harmonised standards, a centrally-administered certification exam, with centralized rater training (and periodic requalification required), might ultimately be preferable, though this would require time and substantial research and re-organization, driven by the community as a whole.

Politically and practically, this goal could most effectively be achieved in two stages. First, a small group of leading schools would work on tightening up their PECIs, develop standardized and validated scoring systems, conduct internal standard-setting to determine cut-offs (pass/fail) for their own PECI, ideally with the help of testing specialists, and publish the results. This could serve as a 'pilot scheme' for the profession. Eventually, on the basis of iterative review, fine-tuning,

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47. http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/interpretationSLDsapproved.htm (Accessed November 22, 2015).

experience gained, lessons learned and discussion within the profession and with stakeholders, the test could be 'upgraded' to a central, more official one, perhaps under the auspices of AIIC, with central standard-setting.

School-based exams could then be summative, so that a student could pass the summative exam but fail the central credentialling exam if not up to standard – much as a law student might pass all their courses but still fail the bar exam the first time. Schools could also be compared (by applicants and recruiters) on the pass rates achieved by their graduates on the central certification test – as indeed is the case in medicine, law and other regulated professions.

11.7.7 Consulting assessment experts, assessing test properties

As a high-stakes test, the PECI should be evaluated by assessment specialists to investigate test reliability, identify major sources of error, compile statistics bearing on the size of such errors, and assess "the degree of generalizability of scores across alternate forms, scorers, administrations, or other relevant dimensions." (AERA, APA, NCME 1999: 27, and Standard 3.14).

For example, one simple check that can be done after each exam administration is to calculate the mean and standard deviation of all the raw scores returned by each rater (i.e. prior to score resolution in the case of divergent scores), for all candidates and all passages. By comparing each rater's mean against the other three, it is possible to identify any significant difference in severity/laxness between raters, and to implement corrective rater training accordingly.

In our own analysis, variations in input difficulty between test forms are the main potential source of error[48] in the model PECI design we have presented here. Although we have recommended detailed test specifications with carefully defined input materials at calibrated levels of difficulty, it is quite likely that each time PECI materials are assembled, no matter how much care is taken, there will still be some differences in the difficulty of the input materials and in the distribution of difficulties across tasks and passages. However, 'equating' different test forms would require significant resources and, probably, a centralized certification regime.

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48. A 'test form' is a unique set of materials (speeches on video, texts, etc.) that is assembled according to the test specifications, and therefore different each time the test is administered (e.g. for a school PECI, every year). Ideally, all test forms should be equivalent on all relevant parameters – length, distribution of tasks, difficulty, etc.

11.8   Conclusion and recommendations

11.8.1 Short-term measures to improve school-based PECIs

1.   Before the actual exam (and externally to it[49]), define in a written test framework as closely as possible what should be on the test (kinds of input: genre, domain, speed, difficulty; modes of interpreting), and how well a candidate must perform to pass (*expected standard* of content rendering, language output, etc.). ("Performance tests typically require a *competency analysis* that establishes 'how well' the sample of tasks comprising a job sample needs to be performed to distinguish between masters and non-masters or competent and incompetent performers" (Shrock & Coscarelli 2007: 186)). *Develop test specifications* that set out clearly the purpose of the test, its structure, tasks, inputs and procedures. Seek assistance of testing specialists in the test development, review and improvement process.

2.   Develop *written assessment criteria*, spelled out in clear *scoring guides* (checklists and rubrics, anchored with benchmark recordings), with rubrics for interpretation quality (fidelity, expression, delivery), and additional checklists for mode-specific and behavioural skills like use of microphone and equipment.

3.   Carefully *select input speeches* that are *representative* of the target domain, and that sufficiently test all the usual difficulties encountered – speed, accents, reading, numbers, lists, specialized terminology, idioms, etc. – with (for SI) at least 30 minutes out of each passive language. Play them from video, *the same speech for all test-takers*. Prepare *transcripts* for the raters to follow.

4.   Appoint *raters who are all qualified, expert professional interpreters* with experience in the target domain, with the right language combinations and coverage, and willing and able to follow the prescribed exam procedures.[50]

5.   Where institutional rules allow, exclude course instructors from PECI juries.

6.   Hold *rater training* sessions before the exam, in which raters:

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49. A criterion-referenced test is intended to "produce scores that describe an individual's performance compared with specified standards, which are usually defined in a process that is *external to the test's development*" (Johnson et al. 2009: 257; our emphasis).

50. Cizek & Bunch (2007: 35–64) describe an upstream standard-setting procedure in which a representative panel of qualified experts is convened by the licensing authority to engage in a highly structured process – including experiencing the assessment themselves and receiving training in the standard-setting procedures – that is moderated by an assessment specialist.

a. are briefed on the exam's purpose, structure, difficulty, and required performance standard;
b. are familiarized with the scoring guides, and practise scoring a range of benchmark performances, with discussion as necessary to fine-tune;
c. independently score further sets of benchmark performances, to establish and document sufficient inter-rater reliability (IRR), targeting 75% absolute agreement, and 90% exact and adjacent agreement, on a six-level rubric;
d. finally, do the actual speeches on this year's test as test-takers, listen to their own recordings, comparing against the transcript, then discuss specific features and difficulties in the speeches.

7. Provide *transparency* by publishing the test specifications, assessment criteria, scoring system, sample tests from previous years, pass rates, and all other relevant information about the exam procedure, and ensure that candidates are fully briefed.

8. At the exam as in the rater training session, require *independent scoring by each rater*, without any discussion.

9. Consider scoring Fidelity (accuracy, completeness) not globally for an entire speech passage, but more granularly, in shorter cohesive segments (cf. Liu 2013; but see also footnote in 11.6.3.1).

10. Have a clear procedure for dealing with passages on which raters' scores disagree. If *discussion* is required among raters to reach agreement, moderate the discussion to keep it focused applying the assessment criteria to the passage at hand. Develop detailed minimum standards for components of language competence (pronunciation, grammar) and delivery (fluency, time control) to guide scoring decisions.

11. Require *retakers* to redo the entire exam (on fresh content, of course), not just the subjects or performances they failed the first time. Apply the same performance standard as for first-time test-takers. Beware the increased risk of false positives among retakers who are around the borderline.

12. Complement the PECI with a separate assessment of KSAs related to Professionalism, and to required areas of domain knowledge.

13. Provide alternative graduation pathways, such as in Translation Studies, translation-with-(liaison) interpreting, etc., for candidates who are unable to pass their PECI but earn credits through other coursework (TG-13.3.5.3).

14. *Document everything*, and collect feedback from raters, test-takers, instructors, as well as employers and recruiters of interpreters, and perhaps actual users. Systematically analyse exam outcomes and ensure constructive 'washback' into the curriculum and pedagogy.

15. Collect *collateral information to allow iterative review* and refinement of the test design, ideally with help from an assessment specialist. Such information might include the numbers of PECI-passers who later pass or fail accreditation tests in international organizations, or are successful on the freelance market three years on (both good tests of criterion validity), and more specific surveys to monitor market realities such as the frequency/demand for certain tasks or modes, factors in difficulty, expectations, etc.

16. Consider scheduling exams outside the peak annual season for professional conference interpreters.

11.8.2 Longer-term recommendations to improve interpreter testing

If sufficient resolve and resources can be found for research and development, in the longer term a more complete system could be developed, perhaps by a panel of professional trainers, recruiters and testing experts, who would:

✓   Develop standardized, validated scoring guides and rater training materials;
✓   Publish model test specifications;
✓   Implement a centralized rater training and qualification scheme, with a periodic requalification requirement (perhaps run by AIIC);
✓   Harmonise exam standards and pool resources across testing centres; work towards harmonisation of input difficulty, tasks, scoring, etc.; consider moving to a centrally-administered system, with possible off-site scoring;
✓   Promote an authoritative *standard-setting process* to determine cut-offs on key criteria, e.g.
  ▶   Exactly how good does a B language need to be in terms of pronunciation, intonation, lexical range, style, grammatical accuracy…?
  ▶   How many misunderstandings, mistakes and omissions are 'acceptable', on speech at different levels of difficulty?
  ▶   How many umms and errrs, how much backtracking, etc. should lead to a 'fail'?; etc.
✓   Consider providing differentiated certification at more than one level (11.7.5): not just pass/fail, but different levels of diploma issued depending on performance, with standards defined for each level of competence (using standards-referenced tests).

In the present situation, many obstacles to implementing these recommendations remain, notably institutional and financial. Schools can, however, conduct exams to adequate levels of fairness, validity and reliability with some effort and discipline in sticking firmly to some already recognized best practices, though these could

be much improved, even in the short term, by a better developed scoring system and more explicit performance standards (cut-offs) for all KSAs.

In conclusion, conference interpreting is – still in many settings – a critical high-stakes competency that deserves valid, reliable, fair, transparent and accountable procedures for in-course testing and certification. These must be driven, implemented and supervised by professionals, since as a distinct branch of Translation, conference interpreting has its own norms and specificities. No amount of 'going by the book' of testing procedure (modelled on language testing, for example) will compensate for a lack of professional interpreting expertise in raters. But the specificities of conference interpreting are not so mysterious or exceptional as to justify ignoring the available expertise in testing. In leading schools and accrediting institutions, confidence in the authenticity of materials and familiarity with the market cannot compensate for laxity in measures for ensuring reliability – such as rater training, consistent standards and accountable scoring – nor even for shortfalls in validity due to a failure to test the range of real-life tasks and conditions. Reconciling expertise and rigour in a robust testing and certification regime should be a priority for the last mile of professionalization in conference interpreting.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Testing and test design
Cizek and Bunch 2007 (on standard setting)
Johnson et al. 2009: *Assessing Performance*
Sawyer 2004: curriculum and assessment in interpreter training.
Shrock & Coscarelli 2007 (on criterion-referenced test development generally)

Designing certification processes in other branches of interpreting
Court interpreting (and the FCICE): González et al. 1991/2012
State-level court interpreter certification in the USA (such as the California Court Interpreter Program (CCIP), which gives a greater role to professional judgment on the part of raters than the FCICE model): see ALTA report at http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/altafinalreport.pdf (Accessed November 22, 2015).

General consecutive interpreting in Taiwan: Liu 2013
'*Social interpreters*' *in Belgium*: Vermerien, van Gucht & de Bontridder 2009
Medical and healthcare interpreters in the US: Angelelli 2007
Sign-language interpreters in Canada: Russell & Malcolm 2009.

Theory and research in interpreter training

12.1   Introduction

> A theoretical framework is crucial to help staff structure their pedagogical methods. If [interpreter] trainers and course organizers do not have an articulated analysis of the process involved, they will have difficulty conveying a consistent methodology to students.
>
> (Donovan 2006: 11)

Interpreter training is often said to be vocational not academic training; but interpreting is first and foremost understanding, and to train as an interpreter is to train the mind. 'Theory' is therefore at the centre of interpreter training – the question is, where and how should it come into teaching? Should we be content to let students form an implicit understanding of what they are doing, or should we show them models and describe processes? In the past, some trainers have been wary of or even allergic to any kind of theory, but today this has changed, and some may even favour introducing students to the entire new discipline of interpreting studies as part of the course.

In our view, there is a happy medium to be found in which theory and research inform and enrich teaching, but theory is applied in a form and dosage appropriate and effective to serve the primary mission of training expert interpreters.

When researchers track the performance of interpreters in transcripts, or propose models of cognitive processes, or of the dynamic interactions between meeting participants, they are showing how interpreters use cognition in the service of communication in context and under certain conditions (or constraints).[1] We have tried to ensure that theory is shown to be directly relevant to practice in at least two ways: by presenting a general theory that connects cognition, context and communication (12.2.2), and by conceiving the Theory module that is now standard in interpreter training in such a way as to connect explicitly with the subsequent introduction to professional ethics and practice, in a 'Theory and Practice' *track* that runs through the entire two-year curriculum (12.1.1 (ii) and 12.3 below).

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1.   We hope the reader will indulge us in this alliteration, as a modest counterpoint to Franz Pöchhacker's (2004) paradigmatic presentation of interpreting research in terms of Product and Performance, Practice and Profession and Pedagogy.

The chapter does not attempt to provide an overview of Interpreting Studies: that would be far beyond the scope of this book, is available elsewhere (see Further reading), and would be biting off much more than we could chew.[2] Our references to research, theories and models will therefore necessarily be selective.

In this chapter, we

► explain **how theory can support training**, both through seamless integration into classroom skills teaching and a complementary **Theory** module (12.1.1, 12.3);

► distinguish the **different doses** and depth of theory that will be useful to **students, instructors and researchers** (12.1.2–12.1.4);

► review promising **sources of theory** from established disciplines (such as the cognitive sciences), and how they can be adapted and made relevant to understanding interpreting (12.2);

► discuss appropriate topics and reasonable ambitions (in terms of scope) for an **MA thesis**, which may be either optional or compulsory for graduation depending on the institution (12.4.1);

► outline a syllabus for a **higher post-graduate degree (PhD)** in Interpreting Studies (typically, as a specialization within Translation Studies) (12.4.2).

12.1.1 Theory and practice in the curriculum

To protect the primary goal of an interpreter training course, administrators must neither dilute the core curriculum, nor overload it unrealistically (and stressfully) with compulsory credits in theory or history of translation, discourse analysis or comparative linguistics (see TG-13.3.4.2). The Theory module must not feel like an added load or imposed academic requirement, but a relevant and illuminating accompaniment to skills training (cf. Kiraly 2000; Sawyer 2001, 2004).

Theoretical explanations can benefit trainees directly and indirectly in several ways:

1. **Help students to understand and overcome the cognitive and linguistic challenges of each new technique**: a well-articulated theoretical framework is one that clarifies the learning process and can be directly related to practice. Such a framework can support skills acquisition, if it is clearly and entertainingly presented, with models, diagrams, metaphors or other pedagogical devices to illustrate the challenges associated with the current stage in the course.

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2. *Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint.*

2. **Demonstrate the interaction between 'three Cs' – cognition, communication, conditions**: in determining quality, gradually broadening students' perspective from their own mental operations and technical challenges to an increasing awareness of the goal of facilitating communication in the wider environment of the interpreted event, thus laying the basis for an integrated, professional view of interpreting, to be completed in the final semester with practical information on the organization and conventions of the market, working conditions and professional ethics.

3. **Establish a shared terminology** or 'metalanguage' for clarity and consistency (also between instructors) when discussing problems and evaluating performance, whether in the classroom or for formal testing – for example, on the meaning of 'accuracy' as distinct from 'fidelity', free vs. literal translation, or the difference between concision, compression and summary (see TG-2.5.10).

4. Raise trainees' awareness to issues of **mediation** and the interpreter's **role**, with particular attention (especially in some language combinations) to cross-cultural issues. This will be further explored through case studies in the final (Professional Practice) module (CC/TG-10, CC-11).

'Theory and Practice' can also perform two additional functions that are less directly related to skills acquisition, but may be both attractive to students and useful or necessary to the institution:

5. To **stimulate interest in research or teaching**, where this potential is present. (This is an added bonus of a good Theory and Practice module, but any serious initiation to research methods should be a separate course for those doing either an academic MA and/or with plans to do a PhD (12.4)).

6. To **meet compulsory or optional degree requirements** in some institutions (usually an MA involving a thesis; see 12.4.1 below) and/or provide a basic introduction to research concerns and methods in preparation for postgraduate studies in general (MA or PhD).

Trainees may also enjoy learning more about interpreting in history and fiction (TG-10.1), or about how it illustrates or challenges traditional conceptions of mind and language. Including these wider perspectives can make a Theory module entertaining as well as useful.

Theory therefore has its place in interpreter training, but in different doses, packaging and presentation for students, their instructors, and future researchers and PhDs.

12.1.2 Theory for students

How much theory do students need? In a vocational course, trainees are concerned primarily with discovering 'how to' rather than 'what', i.e. procedural rather than declarative or encyclopaedic knowledge, technique rather than facts or terminology, which in this kind of course are conventionally left largely to their own private efforts. They have to understand:

i.   the general overall goal of interpreting (communication);
ii.   what is going wrong and how to correct it as they acquire techniques (cognitive challenges) – primarily by direct experience and self-awareness, or 'revelation', rather than in abstract terms which they cannot apply to their own actions; and
iii. how, even after technique has been mastered, successful performance will always require the management of communication situations (i.e. 'conditions'), and the exercise of judgment.

Another important function of this first, process-focused part of the Theory and Practice track (and its mirror module in teacher training, see TG-14.5.1) is to introduce a **common metalanguage** to discuss interpreting problems and evaluate interpreting performances, so that instructors and students can be sure of talking about the same thing – something that cannot be taken for granted when referring to 'accuracy', 'coherence', or 'fidelity' for example. This is adressed in TG-2.5.10, with a list of some key terms.

12.1.3 Theory for instructors and course designers

Most interpreters have traditionally been sceptical about theory, experiencing interpreting as a fast, holistic, immediate, highly context-dependent activity. Only a curious minority have tried to pry open the black box. But effective pedagogy takes more than a primitive form of apprenticeship in which masters just have students interpret then correct their mistakes. A theory or model of how something works helps to generalize and guide responses in future and similar instances: "in real interpreting, each speech is done only once, so corrections, however specific and detailed, may not help next time, since the exact same situation rarely recurs twice" (Lim 2000: 123).

Instructors therefore need to have at least an internalized model of how interpreting works – or better still, one that is explicit (but refinable) and can thus be consistent and shared among the faculty of the school, informing every aspect of teaching, from materials selection and exercise design through explanation, feedback and assessment – just as we have tried to weave 'theory' into this set of books.

Interpreter training was successful when it focused on practical needs: from the first urgent need to find teams for Nuremberg, then the UN and the other new international organizations, training meant attracting gifted, knowledgeable and international people who were trained in an 'apprenticeship' model (Pöchhacker 1994: 177–8) with intensive exercises, stern advice, and mentoring. But as the profession has stabilized and grown, it has had to take responsibility for training younger, less mature candidates without the 'natural' profile of the early pioneers, even as the demands on knowledge, language skills and mental agility have intensified.

Historically, some trainers have seen any intrusion of academic requirements (such as a mandatory MA thesis) as an unwelcome imposition; but it has become clear that for even purely vocational training to be both efficient and effective, careful thought must be given to classroom and teaching methods, feedback and realistic testing and evaluation (TG-2, 3 and 11). Practical exercises, encouraging students to read widely, and later, initiating them through simulations or internship to the social and ethical dimensions of their future working environment, are all necessary, but not sufficient. To guide students through the successive steps to expertise, identify the source of problems and propose remedies, and judge and test their progress, instructors and curriculum designers need models of the cognitive and linguistic operations their students are trying to master.

As mature professionals, the instructors will themselves have fully integrated the goals of interpreting, and be familiar with the parameters of professional practice in real life. But to be able to follow every student's tortuous path through the acquisition of technique, and actually *teach* through feedback, recommendations and the right choice of exercises, means not just noting problems with the product, but also *diagnosis* of the causes of failure and suggesting effective remedies. Instructors will be more confident in their diagnoses and recommendations if they have a wider knowledge of the workings and constraints of language comprehension and production, attention, memory, language acquisition and availability.

An example will illustrate these two levels. During the process of skills acquisition, when **students** are grappling with the constraints and possibilities of various mental operations and their interaction, an image or metaphor like Seleskovitch's 'baking the currant bun' (CC-4.3.1, 4.8.4; TG-2.5.9) or Gile's tightrope (Gile 1999) may help them make the connection to their own difficulties more effectively than pure theory. Among ESIT **instructors**, the two complementary processes in the baking of the bun (the 'physical' transfer of the raisins and the 'chemical' transformation of the dough) are known as 'transcoding' (of fixed terms) vs. 'deverbalization' (of the conceptual parts of the speech), and that has been good enough for their purposes.

This illustrates the different uses to be made of (and different demands to be placed on) the same theory or model for different purposes and audiences. Interpreter training at ESIT has been widely recognized as effective; doubts have been expressed about the scientific basis of its 'theory of sense' (e.g. Gile 1990), and its key constructs, but it has seemed to work well pedagogically. A theory is only ever a temporary crystallization of (provisional) knowledge, and in the case of interpreting, none of our current theories can be said to rest on robust empirical evidence. To be useful in scientific research, a theory or model must be articulated in enough detail to be tested, and falsified or refined. But for teaching – although it must of course be consistent with, or at least not *contradict* what evidence we have about cognitive or communicative processes – it must primarily speak to the imagination and help to relate the description of a process to personal experience.

Every interpreter trainer should be proficient in the core pedagogical skills of explanation, choosing materials, demonstration, providing feedback and adapting to variations in students' speeds and levels (TG-2.5). But the instructor responsible for the Theory module will need considerably more than this. Even if no hard-core theory is being taught or models explained in detail, s/he must have a good grounding in all aspects of interpreting theory, practice and training to be able to maintain credibility and reply effectively to specific and general questions.

12.1.4 Theory for (future) researchers

Finally, **researchers,** and theorists, including doctoral students, will need to be familiar with the source texts in cognitive science and the models which have been developed and proposed in interpreting studies by drawing on this primary research. For their part, they will recognize these processes – presented to the students in more or less 'cartoon' form, and remembered by instructors in terms of a basic theoretical terminology – as folk or simplified representations of concepts and processes that have been identified in respectable cognitive science. For example, the 'currant bun' image harks back to our different modes of memory and attentional processes, levels or depth of processing – more or less context-dependent – and to constraints on recall, and the availability of different kinds of linguistic elements (concepts or terms).

Some other metaphors and images presented in this book (see TG-2.5.9) also have their roots in cognitive science – the tree metaphor, for example, evokes known mechanisms in the recall of extended texts as modelled by such authors as van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) or Kintsch (1998). Similarly, while instructors will typically use terms like 'brainstorming', 'tuning in to (or identifying with) the speaker' and 'paying attention to links', researchers and teacher trainers should be able to relate these to the technical literature on, respectively, priming, affect, or procedural encoding.

12.2   What theory and where do we find it?

Throughout history interpreting seems to have been seen first as a practical service, performed by any gifted linguist who was available, but also often, by its monolingual users and observers (and even some practitioners), as a somewhat mysterious, hermeneutic art. Unlike translation, with its more permanent product and often sacred and literary functions, this practical, ad hoc ephemeral activity does not seem to have inspired theoretical reflection, only occasional and rather general comments by satisfied or disappointed users about what interpreting should or should not be (see e.g. Kurz 1997b). This situation prevailed through to the early days of conference interpreting.[3]

12.2.1 The discipline of Interpreting Studies

The notion of theorizing or analysing interpreting seems to have been triggered by the advent of SI, the conference interpreting boom and the sudden need for systematic training – and before too long, the requirement for research to secure academic recognition. The theorizing and modelling activity that followed has blossomed into a new discipline of Interpreting Studies (see e.g. Pöchhacker 2004), but some tension has remained[4] over the extent to which pedagogy should be driven more by models of the task extrapolated from research (in cognitive psychology, for example), or by the practitioner-trainer's personal experience and intuition.

This is not the place to present or review the entire field of Interpreting Studies, but the models of interpreting that have so far been proposed (see overview in TG-3.2.3.2) reflect a widespread recognition that this activity combines **cognitive, linguistic**, and **social** facets, and therefore needs a **multidisciplinary approach**: it is a social, communicative act (calling for a theory of communication in contexts), using languages (pragmatics, bilingualism) under special cognitive constraints (memory, attention, expertise).

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3.   Jean Herbert, one of the first interpreter trainers, is said to have introduced his course in Geneva in the 1950s as follows: "This course is in two parts: Part I, Theory. Part II, Practice. Part I: You should say exactly what the speaker said, but in the other language. Part II…."

4.   Two landmarks in this story were the clash at the Venice conference of 1977 (Gerver and Sinaiko 1978; Pöchhacker 2004: 69) where some practitioner-trainers clearly felt strongly that interpreting is *sui generis*, quintessentially human and social and thus resistant to 'machine-like' information-processing explanations; and the Trieste conference of 1989, which was dominated by a call for a more scientific basis for research on interpreting and interpreter training.

Sources and levels of theory

Research findings from each of these partially relevant academic disciplines cannot be promptly and straightforwardly deployed in support of interpreting pedagogy. None of these disciplines offers explanations or models specifically of interpreting, so any imported theory must be used judiciously and adapted to explain and illustrate this peculiar performance. Our theoretical foundation therefore has to be built up in layers. We will need:

1. A general framework **theory of (human verbal) communication** that situates interpreting within this wider context;
2. A description of **interpreting-specific constraints and freedoms of communication** – cognitive, linguistic and social ('mediation') – and a model of how they interact under the real-life conditions of the working environment;

and for teaching, of course,

3. A **pedagogical strategy** drawing on what we can find in education science, expertise theory, and our own experience of this specific activity.

In other words, we need a theory of communication, plus two levels of bridging theory – for application to interpreting, and then to interpreter training.

For the most general level or basic framework, we recommend Relevance Theory (RT, outlined in the next section), a general theory of cognition and communication that focuses on the pragmatics of human verbal communication. This helps us narrow down the field to human linguistic communication (the second level of the left branch in Figure 12.1 in the Appendix.)

The second 'bridge', to the concrete phenomena of interpreting, is more difficult. After explaining how the Relevance account of communication can be applied to the special cases of translation and interpreting, i.e. when communication is mediated, through a change of language (next two levels of branching in Figure 12.1), we explore various additional sources of theory that have helped researchers understand the linguistic, social and cognitive parameters of interpreting: descriptive linguistics, to capture the formal linguistic transformations that are required to preserve meaning (12.2.3); functionalism, which helps to see speeches and texts in terms of their social function and their reception by an audience (12.2.4); cognitive process models that help us to understand how memory, attention, analysis, knowledge and production interact in the skilled task (12.2.5); and the organization of the multilingual brain (12.2.6). The different modes and skillsets of interpreting in practice can be seen in terms of variations on these parameters (Figure 12.1 and Table 12.4).

The final and no less challenging step, from understanding and modelling the task to the elaboration of a pedagogical strategy, has been discussed at some length in TG-2 and TG-3 (especially TG-3.2).

Naturally, all these aspects are addressed in the growing academic discipline of Interpreting Studies (see Further reading). The highlights of this research (Table 12.1) should be presented to students in the Theory and Practice track of the curriculum (12.3).

12.2.2 A general theory of communication and cognition

> The confusions that occupy us arise when language is like
> an engine idling, not when it is doing work.
>
> (Wittgenstein 1953/2001: *Philosophical Investigations*, §132)

Interpreter trainers need not be academic linguists (and hardly any are), but they must understand how discourse works. Since the goal of interpreting is communication, and its skills are built on cognitive and linguistic abilities, an appropriate theoretical framework for capturing the process, guiding skills acquisition and evaluating the results must be focused on verbal communication, but able to relate it to cognitive processes and real-life contexts and exchanges.

This kind of account has emerged from linguistics and psychology only in the last thirty years as the culmination of a long process, from Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*, through the study of 'speech acts' (Searle 1969; Austin 1975) to Grice's Cooperative Maxims (1975, 1989) and its revision in a new, *cognitive* pragmatics which restores the dimension of inference in accessible contexts as a key complement to linguistic decoding in real-life utterance comprehension.

In CC-4.8, we observed that people may be divided by three barriers – different interests or purposes, different knowledge or beliefs, and sometimes, different language(s). The interpreter has no brief to bridge the first of these gaps (except if agreeing, exceptionally, to act as an arbiter), but in striving to bridge the third, cannot avoid bridging the second. (The challenge of sorting them out so as to fulfill but not overstep our role is addressed mainly in CC/TG-10). Communication must overcome cognitive barriers – mismatches of knowledge, beliefs or assumptions – as well as linguistic ones when interlocutors do not share a common language. Since cognitive states are expressed and reflected in language, these factors cannot easily be separated; but we can approach an understanding of the complexities of (inter-)linguistic communication by first modelling the cognitive processes involved in all verbal communication – how people seek to express themselves and understand others, and the factors in the success or failure of this enterprise.

12.2.2.1 *Origins and overview of Relevance Theory (RT)*

From Aristotle through telecommunications theory and even modern semiotics, human verbal communication has largely been seen as a process of linguistic encoding (by a speaker or writer) then decoding (by a listener or reader). Just before the dawn of modern cognitive science, an influential formulation of this classic 'code model' (also called the transmission or conduit model) was presented by a telecommunications engineer and a mathematician and father of machine translation (Shannon and Weaver 1949). In this scheme, Sender and Receiver share a common code, or correspondence table of sounds and forms to meanings; the Sender encodes a message and transmits the signal to a Receiver, who decodes it to obtain the communicated meaning. Applied to human verbal communication, the shared code would be a common language,[5] and the success of communication would be computable in terms of three functions: the accuracy and completeness of the tool (the language's grammar and lexicon), the degree of identity of the 'codebooks' available to both sides, and the quality of the channel.

Most people will intuitively see problems in applying this model to human communication. Human languages are not perfect codes, and the model fails to account either for context (the same sentence can mean different things in different situations), or for variation, speaker's choice, or 'style'. To encode, words and structures must be *chosen* (there is no unique one-to-one thought-word codebook for any human language). To decode, we must resolve the inherent (polysemic) and contextual ambiguities of words and their combinations. To quote a recent review: "The [mathematical] theory [of communication] provided a scientific foundation to the emerging discipline of communication, but is now recognized as addressing only parts of the field […] Shannon did not want to confound his theory by psychological issues and considered meanings irrelevant to the problem of using, analysing, and designing mediated communication." (Krippendorff 2009: 614).

Indeed, even as the classic code model was enjoying fresh influence through its new, technical formulation – and fuelling excitement in artificial intelligence (and machine translation) circles – the 'ordinary language philosophers' (Austin, Searle, the later Wittgenstein [1953] and others) were demonstrating its inadequacy, and that of logical positivism, to explain how language works in actual human conversation. Despite subsequent reappraisals of these rival schools, today all but a few scholars recognize that human communication relies to a significant degree on non-demonstrative (i.e. imperfect) inference, drawing on knowledge external to what is linguistically encoded in utterances.

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5.   Each language, considered as a code, comprises a set of significant sounds (phonology) that can be combined and recognized as words (morphology), which in turn are combined in phrases, clauses and sentences (syntax).

But how then does it work? Grice (1975/1989) famously suggested that the intended meaning of an utterance can be inferred when its literal meaning seems to violate any of a set of 'Cooperative Maxims' – such as truthfulness ('Quality'), concision ('Quantity') or clarity ('Manner') – that communicators can be assumed to share by default. For example, when John says 'Brian's a fine friend', after describing how Brian has betrayed him, or when Peter describes Susan as 'the cream in my coffee', the listener must conclude that the intended meaning was ironical or metaphorical. Grice's inferential account founded the new discipline of pragmatics, but problems remained. On the one hand, it was not clear *how* listeners arrived at the 'right' (and occasionally, wrong) non-literal meaning; on the other, it became increasingly clear from studies in the semantics and pragmatics of authentic discourse that the **under-determinacy of natural language** was far more radical and pervasive than at first believed.

The inevitable gap between what language can encode and what a speaker means to say is perhaps *the* key (counter-intuitive) observation that must first be confronted to understand why a pure code model is inadequate. It turns out that, for all the sophistication of human languages, even seemingly explicit utterances (not just irony and metaphors) are too vague, ambiguous and indeterminate to achieve relevance to a listener. This is not intuitively obvious, as many utterances appear to be perfectly clear and unambiguous; but this is an illusion, since even when presented with an isolated sentence, our minds automatically and unconsciously supply contexts that will make some sense of what we hear. Linguistic under-determinacy (the vagueness or ambiguity of the code alone) pervades all aspects of language:

- *Word or phrase meaning*: 'the banks will collapse' (in a conversation about flooding, or about the financial crisis); French *tout à l'heure* and Chinese 最近 [zuì jìn] can both mean either 'a short while ago', or 'in a short while';
- *Sentence meaning*: "I won't be the first President to lose a war"; "I won't vote for her because she's a woman";
- *'Scope' ambiguity*: "somewhere in the world, there's a car accident every second of every day";
- *Ellipsis*: "Lights, please!" (said before or after a slide-show); "Can you bring down the one-fifty?" (a delegate asking Greece if the current number of nationalized firms (150) can be reduced, as discussed earlier in the meeting); "try the 47" (my neighbour at the bus stop; or in the Chinese restaurant);
- *Indexicals and deictics* like 'here', 'today', 'then', 'soon', and pronouns;
- *Vagueness*: 'back in one hour' posted on an office door; and scalar expressions like a big box, a long piece of string, tall enough, too fast…[6]);

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6. Weber cites the example of a woman giving advice on a choice of tiles for a kitchen floor: "You want something porous, but not very" (Weber 2005: 52).

- *Metaphor, irony, idioms, proverbs* and other traditional 'tropes';
- *Indirect speech acts*: "Mr Brown is leaving"; or "Do you have the time?" (multiple ambiguity);
- *Linguistic creativity* on the part of speakers, who routinely stretch word meanings and even make up words. Listeners constantly make adjustments to understand a wide variety of imperfect ('ill-formed', accented, semi-coherent), creative and elliptic input, suggesting 'bridging' inference from an internal model of the speaker's communicative intentions.

Despite successive ingenious attempts to 'save' the code model, from theories of semantic deep structure to context-indexing procedures, it became clear that the shared knowledge of a grammar and lexicon alone could not account for actual human verbal communication, and that the application of a semantic code must be complemented by an inferential process. The study of this process has come to be known as pragmatics: "The central problem for pragmatics is that sentence meaning vastly underdetermines speaker's meaning. The goal of pragmatics is to explain how the gap between sentence meaning and speaker's meaning is bridged." (Sperber and Wilson 2002: 3).

The Gricean account did not explain exactly how listeners derive *one relevant* speaker's meaning rather than one of many other logically possible interpretations. Also, the procedure required a two-step process, in which inference kicks in only after a literal meaning is derived and rejected, whereas abundant psycholinguistic evidence shows that people derive non-literal meanings just as fast as literal ones[7] (Gibbs 2000) – a key finding for understanding how interpreting, and especially SI, is possible.

Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995; Blakemore 1987; Carston 2002) addressed these issues by postulating the search for *relevance* as a natural, evolved faculty that constrains the 'computational explosion' that would result from deriving all possible interpretations. To quote from the architects of the theory:

> Relevance Theory may be seen as an attempt to work out in detail one of Grice's central claims: that an essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions (Grice 1989 [...]). In developing this claim, Grice laid the foundations for an inferential model of communication, an alternative to the classical code model. According to the code model, a communicator encodes her intended message into a signal, which is decoded by the audience using an identical copy of the code. According to the

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7. Note that the 'literal' meaning is not necessarily the *first most relevant* meaning to be derived, since pragmatics (context) is involved in the derivation from the word go (the comprehension process does not consult a dictionary first): see 12.3.2.2 below.

> inferential model, a communicator provides evidence of her intention to convey a certain meaning, which is inferred by the audience on the basis of the evidence provided. An utterance is, of course, a linguistically coded piece of evidence, so that verbal comprehension involves an element of decoding. However, the linguistic meaning recovered by decoding is just one of the inputs to a non-demonstrative inference process which yields an interpretation of the speaker's meaning.
>
> (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 607)

RT views (speech) communication as 'ostensive-inferential': a speaker signals his communicative intent by an act of 'ostension' – speaking, for example – providing evidence that he intends the audience to arrive at certain conclusions (Wilson and Sperber 2004), while listeners make an inferential *effort* to derive some relevant meaning.

Comprehension combines decoding and inference (and both semantics and pragmatics). The speaker provides an optimal signal within the limits of his ability; the listener decodes and processes it in all available contexts (knowledge and beliefs accessible from memory and perceptions[8]), and derives 'cognitive effects', defined as some modification of her knowledge, beliefs or perceptions – whether informative, persuasive, entertaining, etc. (These 'cognitive effects' can be taken as a more careful formulation of what in translation studies has traditionally been called the 'message'). Cognitive effects 'reward' the listener for attending to and processing the speech (regardless of whether it is what s/he wants to hear).

Under the inbuilt cognitive constraint of the search for optimal relevance, the procedure for understanding utterances is described as follows:

a. Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: test interpretive hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility;[9]
b. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied (Wilson and Sperber 2004: 260).

With a view to applying RT to translation or interpreting, we should note that this account does not describe how people *ought* to process speech, but how they do so, automatically, insofar as they attend to it. In a world where multiple stimuli

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8. Relevance Theory is a psychological theory: 'contexts' are in the brain (or they could not enter into comprehension). Similarly, coherence is a function of relevance, not of a text (see Wilson 1998).

9. Note that (i) the 'instruction' form in which this is phrased does not imply a conscious procedure; and (ii) this does not contradict Gibbs' finding mentioned earlier: when the appropriate contexts are highly accessible, non-literal meanings may be accessed (inferred from context) faster than literal ones (decoded purely linguistically).

constantly compete for our attention, processing information requires a trade-off between effort and effects; and listeners may derive plausible meanings that were not intended by the speaker, known as 'accidental relevance'. Once again: perfect communication is never guaranteed.

12.2.2.2 *Key RT concepts for interpreting*

Several points in this account, and related research findings, are particularly important for our purposes:

i.   Effort vs. effects

Relevance to a comprehender is defined as a trade-off between the cognitive effects s/he can derive and the effort required to derive them. (This will contribute to a useful measure of the quality of interpretation: see 12.2.2.4.) This more technical sense of Relevance – 'effects for effort' – complements the everyday sense of the word, on the assumption that the listener is motivated to derive what meaning he can from the speaker, is paying attention, etc. and that each listener will attend to or expect different things from the speech according to interest. 'Cognitive effects' cover anything 'meaningful' to the listener, from new information, through any slight change in his worldview, to a wide range of effects like solace, reassurance, entertainment, etc.

On the production side, speakers are assumed to strive for the optimal formulation to guide listeners to the meaning they intend to communicate, and in doing so they can of course draw on all the sophisticated devices of language, including irony, metaphor and many others. An optimal formulation is one that allows listeners to derive maximum meaning ('cognitive effects') for minimum effort: in other words, 'optimal relevance'. However, what is critically important for interpreters (see TG/CC-9) is that they can only do so subject to their linguistic ability and cooperativeness (Sperber and Wilson 1995, Postface).

ii.   Incremental processing

Research within in the RT framework and elsewhere (e.g. Altmann and Steedman 1988) strongly suggests that in actual live utterance comprehension, retrieving contexts, decoding and processing speech input in them and arriving at a relevant interpretation merge in a very fast and fine-grained incremental process that is potentially sensitive to every aspect of input, both linguistic and contextual, from word meanings and syntax, through prosody and the speaker's body language to all aspects of the listener's knowledge, perceptions, beliefs, and of course, interest in attending to the speech.

Many people have consciously or unconsciously accepted pragmatics only half-way – a kind of 'Pragmatics 1.0' in which inference is seen as an add-on to

decoding that only consults context or 'deviant' interpretations like metaphor when the code fails. Instead, psycholinguistic and other evidence suggests that the *pragmatic processes are never switched off* and that meanings are derived by semantic and pragmatic processes working together. Both language and context contribute to interpreting *both* the speaker's communicative *intent* (for which there are many linguistic and paralinguistic clues and pointers) *and* the semantic or propositional *content* of utterances (Carston 2002).

The clues to meaning that speakers can build into the linguistic component of the input – the speech – are rich and various. In addition to the basic dimensions of syntax and lexicon, a speaker can use various pragmatic devices to guide the listener (these have been called 'procedural' elements, as distinct from 'conceptual', which encode content), including marked constructions, stylistic variations, connoted word choices, prosody and especially various connectors and signposting devices like 'well', 'anyway', etc. Hence the huge emphasis placed in interpreter training on honing linguistic comprehension to near-native levels.

iii. Explicit and implicit communication

Distinguishing 'what was said' from 'what was meant' is an ancient and vexed issue, and is obviously at the heart of translation theory and practice. Relevance Theory distinguishes *explicatures*, that are 'a development of the logical form of the utterance' and *implicatures*, that are meanings communicated by implication (in contexts) with different strengths. Pointing impatiently to the window and saying, "Hey, it's getting cold in here" conveys a single strong implicature; poetry typically gives access to a complex array of weak ones.

Recent work (especially Carston 2002) has shown more clearly how pragmatics (inference from contexts) are indispensable to deriving *both* explicatures and implicatures, since a bare linguistic utterance must be enriched in contexts to resolve referential and other ambiguities and vagueness merely to establish its semantic or propositional meaning, as well as deriving its implicatures.

Both explicatures and implicatures are part of what is *communicated*; but fidelity in translation requires the preservation of the distinction in the *way they are expressed*. By default, a translator or interpreter will aim to render explicatures explicitly, and provide the communicative clues necessary for her listeners to derive the implicatures at the same strengths. To do this in another language will take some adjustments, while in some cases a more pro-active, mediating stance may be justified to make what might be *implicitly* communicated *explicit* for the benefit of listeners who may not have access to the contexts that would enable them to derive these parts of the message (see CC-5.8.4 and TG-10.4 on optimization).

iv.   Metarepresentation and 'mind-reading'[10]

The pragmatic component of the comprehension process also relies on 'theory of mind' (the faculty which is selectively impaired in pathologies like autism), part of the general faculty of metarepresentation, which "interprets the behaviour of others by attributing to them intentional (world-representing) mental states" (Sperber 2000: 133; Carston 2002: 7–8; Carston, personal communication). The relevance-based pragmatics module that operates automatically when we seek to find meaning in utterances is seen as a specialization of a general ability to attribute underlying intentions, beliefs and desires to others, justifying the use of the term 'mind-reading' to describe part of what we are doing when we understand speech.

Just as speakers and listeners represent their own and each other's meanings to themselves as they communicate, interpreters, to understand and re-express these meanings, must form representations of these representations – in other words, metarepresentations. The human mind routinely handles third or fourth-order metarepresentations (Sperber 1994); but the act of translation itself, as an 'interpretive use' of language (Gutt 2000: 127), already entails first-order metarepresentation, so additional orders will saturate the interpreter's ability before the audience's. Bülow-Møller (1999) documented interpreting failure in the presence of multiple levels of attributed belief or quotation (*he said that they thought that…*), complex scope relations, and *irrealis* phenomena like counterfactuals, or irony, conditionals and certain types of negatives (see Setton 2002b for a metarepresentational reading of her results).

A complete exposition of Relevance Theory is clearly beyond the scope of this book (see Further reading), but the framework is increasingly being adopted by translation theorists to explore the processes and challenges of translation.

12.2.2.3 *Relevance and (written) translation*

According to Gutt (1991/2000), Relevance Theory allows for a unified account of translation by recognizing it as an 'interpretive use' of language, in which an utterance (such as a direct quotation) is relevant primarily by virtue of its 'interpretive resemblance' to another, original utterance. On this account, all kinds of productions that are considered translations, of varying degrees of faithfulness or elaboration, can be placed on a continuum of interpretive resemblance to a source text, from those which merely give the same information (in the same or a

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10. Metarepresentation: the representation of a representation – the ability to attribute to people beliefs other than your own (1st order), to recognize when they are doing so relative to a third party (2nd order), etc. "Thanks to [Grice], the idea that verbal comprehension is a form of mind-reading has been relatively uncontroversial for more than 30 years" (Wilson 2000: 412).

different language) through to those which purport to give access to all the same cognitive effects as the original. In translation, unlike same-language direct quotation, the change of language rules out reproducing the linguistic properties of the original; the translator can only aim to produce similar *cognitive* effects. Insofar as the translator uses any contextual (e.g. sociocultural) knowledge to improve the adequacy of the product to a communicative purpose, translation must be called 'indirect', but this spans a very wide and flexible range of translation stances, and Gutt still feels the need to keep some distinction between "translations where the translator is free to elaborate or summarize, and those where he has to somehow stick to the explicit contents of the original" (2000: 129).

Although "it is often possible to reach a fairly good degree of *semantic* resemblance across languages" (2000: 127–8, our emphasis), preserving the stylistic properties that point listeners to equivalent effects – the *communicative clues* – is more challenging for the translator.

Translations are thus seen as lying along a continuum in which "the maximal endpoint, complete interpretive resemblance, […] defines […] the notion of direct translation", while *indirect translations* vary along a scale of interpretive resemblance.

Gutt believes in the real possibility of 'direct translation' in which the translator succeeds in preserving both what was said and how it was said – information content and communicative clues – thus giving access to the same effects as the original. But the requirement to qualify as 'direct translation' is very strict: "a [TL] utterance is a direct translation of an SL utterance if and only if it purports to interpretively resemble the original completely in the context envisaged for the original" (2000: 171). Most crucially, "direct translation presumes to do this only in the context envisaged by the original communicator, and not in any context the receptor audience may happen to bring to the translation" (ibid.).

Direct translation would exclude any explicitation of implicatures, which requires contextual information (2000: 166–7); indeed, understanding the context "would make explication of implicatures both unnecessary and undesirable […], because the reason for such explication was mismatches in contextual information in the cognitive environment of the receptors"; and "since in direct translation it is the audience's responsibility to make up for such differences, the translator need not be concerned with them" (2000: 175).

In this book we have repeatedly stressed the duty of the professional interpreter (or translator) to familiarize herself as much as possible with the context of reception. But even then, and even when the translator is co-present with the speaker and audience and interpreting live, the Relevance definition of context includes any knowledge accessible to the minds of the audience, which would seem to rule out the possibility of this 'limiting case' in practice.

More realistically, all translation must surely be 'indirect' according to this defi-nition: certainly perfectible in proportion to the comprehension, skill, knowledge and linguistic proficiency that are brought to bear, but inevitably always requiring some degree of coping and/or optimization.

Gutt's relevance-theoretic analysis is focused on written translation, an activity where time offers more opportunity for research into the author, text and audience, and the (historical) intentions and contexts of senders and receivers. Accordingly, the focus here is more on the translator's choices and their consequences for the positioning of the product in the very wide gamut and norms of what can be considered translation, and their justification in terms of user expectations. In interpreting, these norms and possibilities are more circumscribed, so our focus (especially for interpreter training) must shift to process.

12.2.2.4 *Relevance and quality in interpreting*

Since the late 1990s (Setton 1998), Relevance Theory has been applied to under-standing features and specificities of interpreting, which involves oral/aural and/or visual interaction between speaker, Translator and listener in *real time* – in particular:

i.   the heightened reliance *on pragmatic processing and extracting clues from live input* and the environment, to overcome the forced 'linearity' of SI;
ii. the possibility (and necessity) of taking into account the *listener's* inferential processes in real time;
iii. the importance of producing comfortable, accessible speech to enhance rel-evance by *reducing the listeners' processing effort*: the relevance achieved by an utterance through interpretation is a good partial proxy for its quality; and
iv. key factors in the *difficulty* of speeches for interpretation, notably contextual clues as provided (or withheld) by features of the delivered speech, such as coherence and signalling by prosody or other pragmatic pointers.

In Relevance Theory, communication is successful when speaker's utterances are 'optimally relevant', i.e. when they give listeners access to maximum cognitive effects for minimum effort (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 152–163). On this basis, **quality in interpreting** can be defined as **fidelity plus relevance** – in other words, making it as easy as possible for listeners to receive a message that is as close as pos-sible to what the speaker intended to communicate. In a direct exchange, relevance will essentially depend on the Speaker's expressive ability, the Listener's 'passive' linguistic ability, their accessible contexts,[11] and their motivation to communicate.

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11. We recall that in the RT framework, 'context' is a psychological construct that includes knowledge, beliefs, perceptions, and therefore also culture.

If interpreters are interposed, they must bring each of these prerequisite conditions up to a similar level in themselves to achieve a similar quality of communication: comprehension (as Listener), expression (as Speaker), accessible contexts (through knowledge, preparation and presence), and in this case, professional motivation.

12.2.2.5 *The goal of interpreting*

How can an interpreter optimize his/her service in this framework? First we need a realistic definition of the **interpreter's goal**.

The interpreter cannot guarantee listeners 'the same cognitive effects', 'the same relevance (effects against effort)', or even (leaving aside the listeners' unknown access to contexts) exactly the same evidence for his communicative intent as they could have got from the original linguistic signal. The speaker, interpreter and listener (and the hypothetical speaker who might have made the same speech in the listener's language) are different people with different linguistic competences, different accessible contexts, and different inferential processes.

All the interpreter can do is to *maximize* the evidence s/he can provide for the speaker's meaning from the source(s) that are inaccessible to the listener – essentially, the linguistic signal, although as we saw, there may be a case for additional cultural and other explanation. The professional does this by maximizing her own passive SL competence, available contexts, inferential effort, and active TL competence (and of course technical and delivery skills) to deliver maximum evidence to her listeners, usable for minimum effort.

Although we have no control over the first three factors listed in the last section – speakers' and listeners' linguistic competence, and the contexts accessible to them – this effort on our part may very well result in relevance for listeners (cognitive effects over effort) that is satisfactory, and perhaps even greater than the SL utterance's relevance to direct listeners (CC-2.1.5).

Relevance Theory provides a plausible explanation for several aspects of interpreting that are otherwise difficult to explain. The constant accessing of contexts to find a sense in utterances – with the pragmatic module always on – explains how interpreters construct an ongoing mental model of speaker meaning that helps to make appropriate (if at first tentative) word choices that are not constrained solely by their first 'code' (dictionary) equivalents, under conditions of low or null look-ahead where such a literal, linear strategy would often fail. In some contexts, the most relevant equivalent for a term *is* indeed a standard one (as in much legal and scientific discourse); in others, we may not even have enough context to say anything safe immediately, and can only *provisionally* select a neutral, generic term to be adjusted, clarified or fleshed out downstream (cf. CC-8.4.3, 'framing and filling'); and/or to leave further inference to listeners in the additional contexts accessible to them.

As we can see, we are a long way from a decoding-encoding-decoding model of communication and translation. But if the above account seems complex, the simpler explanation is clearly inadequate. Primitive definitions of the goal of translation requiring that the translator convey 'what was said', or 'the meaning' of the original must fail on two counts.

First, on the question of 'what was said' versus what was 'meant': pragmatics has shown that meanings are communicated both explicitly and implicitly. Since the meanings derived (both explicit and implicit) also depend on the variable contexts available to listeners, we can only aim to achieve **interpretive resemblance**, i.e. produce re-encoded content and communicative clues that will *provide access* to meaning (cognitive effects).

Secondly – access to what meaning? There seem to be two clearly distinct candidates:

i.   the meaning the speaker intended to communicate; or
ii. the meaning derived by (putative) addressees (or any listeners?) reading/listening to the original directly in the source language.

The first option begs the question 'how do we know?' The second looks like a sophisticated refinement of the naïve and traditional answer 'the original text', and is at least as problematic: *which* addressees, or listeners? And again, how do we know? The answer, of course, in our account of human verbal communication, is that we do not know, in either case. All the interpreter has to go on is her own understanding or projection, informed by all the knowledge and attention she can muster, of one or another of these meanings.

So which representation should we focus on – the speaker's intended meaning, or the likely interpretation of it by a putative direct audience? The simpler of the two would seem to be 'the speaker's intended meaning'. But we can do a little better than this, since the interpreter's representation, the best available basis for her work, is a synthesis – it is the interpretation of the speaker's intended meaning by a single listener (the interpreter herself) doing her best to project the probable contexts of interpretation available to her addressees.

We need this artificial 'two-faced' consciousness to capture both aspects of the exchange necessary to her task, to the best of our ability: the cognitive effects intended by the speaker, and the likely processing cost to the (projected) audience to derive them from the version that the interpreter provides. This gives us the **default goal** already presented in CC-5.8.4 and TG-10.4.2 in connection with the discussion of default, constrained and optimized interpreting, and recalled here for convenience:

> **Default goal of interpreting:** to make accessible to the interpreter's audience the cognitive effects intended by the speaker as she understands them, at reasonable processing cost and risk, using whatever communicative devices available in the output language are appropriate and effective to do so in her projection of the listeners' available contexts.

In the pursuit of this goal the interpreter will find opportunities for **optimization**, i.e. *amplifying the cognitive effects and/or reducing processing costs.* But these opportunities are to be used selectively and strategically, subject to process, setting or situation (in some adversarial situations, even constraining the default process and translating more literally).

We have now sketched the first of the three steps promised in 12.2.1, situating interpreting within a general theory of communication by contrasting the interpreter's resources, goals and cognitive activity with those of other communicators. To connect this hypothesis with the observable phenomena, we must now focus on the linguistic constraints and freedoms of the act of interpreting.

12.2.3 Linguistics and translation[12]

At first sight, the disciplines that seem most promising to model interpreting are linguistics and psychology. But mainstream linguistics has traditionally been mostly descriptive, aimed at revealing the structures or contrasting typologies of different languages. A first theoretical bridge, from **language** to **translation**, might aim to describe what may, should or must happen when meaning is re-expressed in another language, explained in terms of descriptive linguistic categories.

What is kept and what is left behind in T/I? Speech utterances are traditionally describable at multiple levels, arranged in a rough hierarchy:

1. *Phonetic*: non-semantic acoustic characteristics: pronunciation, accent, diction
2. *Phonological*: meaningful acoustic variations
3. *Morpho-syntactic*: more or less compulsory or meaningful linguistic forms and arrangements of words and sentences
4. *Semantic*: propositional and lexical content encoded by phonology and morpho-syntax
5. *Pragmatic*: the speaker's intended meaning, indicated using combinations of all the above.

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12. Translation with a capital 'T' is used here to cover all forms of translation, written, oral, or signed.

Speakers/authors use these resources more or less flexibly at all levels – prosody, word-choice, sentence structure – to serve the expressive needs of levels 4 and especially, 5. As a first approximation, in what is now commonly called 'pragmatic' (as opposed to literary) translation – where getting the message across has primacy over preserving elements of form – higher orders supersede lower orders: pragmatic fidelity (level 5) has the priority, keeping elements of 1–4 only insofar as they serve its needs. The most common 'default' interpreting norm (12.3) would normally also aim to preserve level 4 (information content) intact – e.g., a list of facts, figures or names given as examples would be transferred in full even if one or two are deemed to suffice pragmatically. This default norm is relaxed or adjusted, deliberately or not, (a) when replaced by a different, locally-specified **norm** (implicit or by instruction) – typically, in legal or literary translation (but also in media interpreting), with special expectations on form; and/or (b) under **processing pressure** – typically, in fast, dense SI; but both these factors may come into play in both translation and interpreting.

For interpreting, we can probably say that the basic '**default**' heuristic is to strip or extract the fruit of levels 4-5 from its SL husk (1-3) and reformulate it in TL 1-3, conveying the same 4-5. However, on subsequent examination of a corpus, we will still find TL features that resemble or seem to correspond formally to SL features 1-2-3. These will include some that *must* be preserved in similar form (names) for level 4-5 fidelity, and some that have been preserved to meet norms of form; but other SL/TL resemblances at these levels 1-2-3 may be accidental, including artefacts of language-type similarity (e.g. the position of phrases in a sentence, or contrastive stress reflecting relative emphasis).

Optimized interpreting may further elaborate the TL *form* (1-3), and/or adjust some elements for *content* (4), typically in the service of level 5, or in some cases beyond it, with the addition of annotations, explanations etc.

In what we have called '**constrained**' interpreting, some of TL levels 1-2-3 may be copied (imitated in TL) *deliberately or by special instruction*; e.g. courtroom interpreting norms or officials may require mimicking of prosody, hesitancy, even syntactic parallelism, regardless of the interpreter's assessment of their pragmatic value. Broadcasters or focus-group marketers may ask interpreters to mimic speaker voice tone and quality (Setton and Guo 2009) to preserve certain semantic or even aesthetic values.

'Default' translation procedures are an abstraction that is clearly always modulated in practice by norms or processing pressures. Until now, the impact of the former (norms) has been more evident and thus more widely discussed in connection with written translation studies, the latter (processing pressures) more in relation to interpreting.

12.2.4 Functionalist approaches to translation

Functionalist and 'text-linguistic' approaches – especially ***skopos*** theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984; Vermeer 1996), which has been applied to interpreting notably by Pöchhacker (1994) – have had some influence on interpreting studies, perhaps not surprisingly in view of their emphasis on reception and support for 'optimized', 'function-' and targeted-oriented translation. As we have seen, this sensitivity to varying norm and function becomes increasingly relevant as we step beyond the confines of traditional conference interpreting into other settings where the interpreter may need, or be called on, to be guided more by the perceived *skopos* (or function) of utterances than their face value (when speakers ask the interpreter to use her own knowledge and discretion in helping them to express themselves).

To help both themselves and students understand what it is that makes a speech a speech (TG-5.10.3), rather than just a linguistic product that can be converted into another language by matching words and structures, interpreter trainers have drawn on a long tradition of insights into speech-making and verbal communication that go back (in the Western tradition) to Greek (Aristotle), Roman (Cicero, Quintilian), medieval and classical rhetorics (the theory of tropes), through to modern-day functional linguistics, discourse analysis, and everyman's guides to success through public speaking (Dale Carnegie). These traditional and popular frameworks still speak to the imagination, and are still widely drawn on for pedagogical impact, while modern cognitive models, though more technical, offer a broader basis for instructors and researchers to understand communication processes and learning challenges.

In the classical tradition, making students aware of the 'function' of a speech may be helpful. Roman Jakobsen, of the Prague-based Functionalist school of linguistics, identified six functions of language said to be present in texts in different proportions (Jakobsen 1960): referential, expressive, conative, poetic, phatic and metalingual (TG-5.10.3). Variations on this scheme with different labels have proliferated (as taxonomies will), but the idea of text function has been theoretically and pedagogically fruitful for translation training, generating practical theories of translation such as *skopos,* or 'dynamic equivalence' (Nida 1969, 1993; Nida and Taber 1969) that help students to recognize the dominant quality of a text and adopt appropriate strategies – for example, attending to the 'appellative' or emotional over the informative, referential dimension, when a text seems to be designed primarily to persuade rather than inform – and texts can be roughly classified in *genres* by the relative dominance of these functions. Functional linguists have also highlighted patterns of information structure in discourse, notably the alternations between theme vs. rheme (topic vs. comment/focus), or new vs. old/

given information, that help us construct coherent models of a speech (Mathesius 1975; Halliday 1990/2004; Chafe 1987, 1994).

A selective visit to general translation theory (see Further reading) can be instructive for interpreting students. But to fully capture interpreting for training purposes we must capture the impact of its more specific constraint: the time pressure on processing.

12.2.5 Models of interpreting

Two broad classes of models of interpreting – cognitive (process) and social-relational – have been described in TG-3.2.3.2 (see Setton 2003a, 2013, 2015 for overviews). Models of SI in particular have drawn mainly on mainstream cognitive psychology, linguistics, information theory and action theory to represent what are assumed to be the key components of the interpreting process.

Speech comprehension
The interaction between parsing, lexical retrieval, memory and attention in ordinary speech processing have been explored in several lines of research under the heading of either psycholinguistics, or discourse studies; for example,

- ▶ *sentence processing* research, for a long time fixated on assumptions based on linguistic structure, now integrates contextual and other cognitive factors (e.g. for comprehension, Altman and Steedman 1988; for production, Levelt 1989);
- ▶ *discourse processing* research, exploring memory for text, words or gist (e.g. van Dijk and Kintsch 1983; Kintsch 1998) and proposing a role for cognitive mechanisms such as mental and discourse models (e.g. Johnson-Laird 1983; Fauconnier 1985; Gernsbacher 1990), schemas, scripts, frames (e.g. Fillmore 1985) and other mental structures and procedures for organizing, editing and retaining information;
- ▶ (for background) *linguistic typology* – to put folk beliefs about the relative difficulty of languages in perspective by showing how all living tongues globally offer similar functionalities (e.g. Hawkins 1988; Comrie 1989); and to help understand when and why typological differences may or may not be a real obstacle in interpreting.

Memory, attention, knowledge, coordination
In general, findings from cognitive psychology and neurolinguistics help to appreciate both the natural limits of the brain, in terms of processing capacity, and the (trainable) techniques for overcoming or 'cheating' them. Key areas in cognitive science for understanding interpreting include

- models of *memory and attention* – now seen as more or less indissociable (e.g. Baddeley 2004; Cowan 1995);
- *expertise research*, notably showing how expert knowledge (both 'what' and 'how') can be used to leverage basic cognitive processes (e.g. Ericsson and Simon 1993);
- *use of knowledge, schemas*: how pattern recognition bypasses or complements laborious bottom-up word and sentence processing by mobilizing relevant schemas (Simon 1974; Clark 2008; 'cognitive load theory');
- *neurolinguistic research into bi/multilingualism* helps to understand the potential and limits of language availability, including language switching, lexical readiness, maintenance, activation or interference (e.g. Paradis 2004: see next section);
- *second-language learning literature* may help with personal linguistic development and maintenance.

Speech production

Various lines of research help to appreciate the potential of language use in public speaking and its flexibilities, such as compression, nuancing and explication (for 'optimized' interpreting), under the pressures of consecutive, and finally of SI:

- ▶ traditional (classical and mediaeval) rhetoric, and the theory of tropes;
- ▶ modern discourse analysis and text linguistics, from the Prague school of linguistics, through to Halliday's 'functional grammar' (Halliday 1985), and their applications in translation studies, notably *skopos* theory (Reiss and Vermeer 1984; for a summary in English, see Baker 2008: 236–7);
- ▶ contemporary popular 'everyman' guides to public speaking and rhetoric (e.g. the works of Dale Carnegie – as much to understand contemporary North American oratory as to pick up tips for students' own performance).

12.2.6 Language selection and interference

Language knowledge in our brains is widely believed to be organized as a network of nodes with entries for the sound, spelling, meaning, and syntactic instructions for the use of each word and phrase[13] known to the individual, in which complex patterns of association form based on sound and meaning, but also the derivation

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13. The lexicon is assumed to contain entries for *lexemes*, which may be distinct functional and meaningful fragments shorter or longer than a graphical word (e.g. prefixes, suffixes and similar sub-word morphemes, significant in agglutinative languages like Korean or Turkish, as well as set phrases).

and written shape of the items. But in multilinguals, these associations cross language barriers, and clearly some will help with the speed and quality of translation process while others will interfere with it.

Research suggests that each language system in the multilingual can be in one of three states: *dormant* (not used for a long time), *active* (playing a role in ongoing processing) or *selected* (for output) (Green 1986). More than one language can be more or less active, so that "switching between languages in suitable contexts can occur without disruption of performance" (ibid. 1986, 1993). Some modellers have suggested that a 'verbalizer' selects the output language by proportionally raising the activation and thus the availability of the words in that language as opposed to any other (Bierwisch and Schreuder 1992; de Bot and Schreuder 1993). The bias achieved is not foolproof, however: when more than one language is active, interference – phonetic, syntactic or semantic – is still possible, "especially when a language is being acquired or an individual is subject to stress, […] when the individual is less fluent in L2, or when production in L2 is paced" (Green 1993: 265).

SI, of course, is both paced and potentially stressful, and involves continuous exposure to ongoing speech streams in two different languages, so it is fair to assume that control is even more critical.

Interpreters are well aware of the dangers of interference, and must train and discipline their bi- or multilingual lexicon to favour certain connections and suppress others. In interpreting as in any goal-directed task, acceptability must be traded off against time and resource constraints.[14] But it is in the nature of expertise both to avoid hazards and to exploit opportunities. Speeches vary widely in originality, or in the density of jargon and clichés (a form of technical term). While a default tactic of 'distance and vigilance' or 'deverbalization' with respect to the incoming language may be best, it may also be that a direct transposition of words or structure is sometimes communicatively adequate while also saving effort. In addition, even when re-conceptualization is inevitable, faster paths through this conceptual space to adequate TL phrasing (see Figure 8.1 in TG-8 Appendix) might be opened or facilitated in advance by self-conditioning techniques – such as self-priming with brainstorming, glossaries, or targeted practice – which activate certain paths and suppress others, so that certain cues will lead directly to the viable direct equivalent, while others are directed to explore rich networks of associations of all kinds (lateral thinking) to find a paraphrase.

Speech production, given its speed, must require *parallel processing* – planning a sentence structure while finding words to slot in – and is always prone to errors even without the presence of another language, as evidenced in various kinds of

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14. This process of accommodation might be captured as a process of 'parallel constraint satisfaction' in a trainable network.

speech errors, slips and repairs. Both these processes are prone to interference in interpreting (CC-4.8.3) – not just lexical, as with the many false cognates (*faux amis*) that lie in wait for interpreters working between West European languages with their common Latin heritage, but also *syntactic and pragmatic* in *any* language pair – in Chinese and English, for example, word order that may look very similar actually disguises very different logical and semantic structures.[15]

These examples of various approaches to understanding and modelling interpreting are offered mainly as pointers for instructors wishing to from a general picture of the research landscape. A more complete overview can be found in the references given in Further reading at the end of this chapter.

It is important that students and prospective trainers understand that disciplines like linguistics or cognitive psychology provide **no ready-made models** of translation or interpreting. Those that have been proposed by interpreter 'practisearchers' have had to be assembled from parts borrowed from other disciplines, none of which has a specific remit to explore or account for the phenomenon of interpreting. T & I studies are thus necessarily **interdisciplinary**, and we must always look closely and critically at how easily or directly findings in mainstream disciplines can be validly applied to interpreting.

Instructors will choose their favourite theories and models (or images and metaphors), but in a vocational course, students should be able to link what they are taught with their own experience and understand the constraints and freedoms of cognition, language and role for professional practice. A basic menu for two modules, oriented first to theory and then increasingly to practice, is given in the next section.

12.3   Theory and Practice: a mini-syllabus

12.3.1 Focus and timing

In a complete professional diploma course, the Theory and Practice track should make the connection between three Cs: the students' individual learning experience ('cognition'), the goal of interpreting ('communication'), and the social reality of professional interpreting ('conditions'). The syllabus can be taught in two or three phases organized as a suite, flowing smoothly from Theory to Practice, including practical details about the profession (CC-11).

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15. For example, Chinese syntactic Topics are not English syntactic Subjects, while 'verbs' may behave like 'prepositions' and vice-versa (给…, 让…,).

1. **Theory of Interpreting** (S1 through to S3) should be aimed mainly at supporting skills acquisition, helping students to understand their abilities and current learning challenges, but also relating the cognitive aspects of the tasks to the overall purpose of interpreting as a communication service in specific situations, and appreciating when it is successful or not and why. In the second year, the content of the module should increasingly show the links between theory and practice, until students fully understand the interaction between the 'three Cs': cognitive aspects of the task, working conditions and effective communication. This syllabus is described below.

2. **Introduction to Professional Practice**, in S4, should provide students with practical information about the market and how it is organized and relations with key partners such as colleagues, clients and users. The focus is now on the interaction between the goal (communication) and the environment (conditions), with case studies and in-depth discussions of the interpreter's role, mediation issues and professional ethics. The syllabus for this final-semester unit is described in CC-11.

Credits in both modules of the Theory and Practice track, based on continuous assessment and/or (a) pencil-and-paper test(s), should be a prerequisite for graduation with a professional diploma in conference interpreting.

Theory and Practice classes can be organized fortnightly at most (to avoid course overload), with content ideally planned to accompany and help with the current challenges being faced by students in their skills training. This can begin as of Initiation with discussions on language and communication, then focus in turn on the techniques and challenges of Consecutive, Sight Translation, SI and SI-text, explaining variations on the task in different modes and settings. Finally, in Introduction to Professional Practice (S4), the emphasis shifts to working conditions, professional practice, ethics, and judgment in managing complex situations.

Syllabus for a Theory module within a Theory and Practice track (S1–S3)

1. Language and communication: basic concepts [S1]
   (signalling and recognizing communicative intent: the joint role of code and inference)
2. Interpreting vs. translation: the advantages and challenges of situated immediacy [S1]
3. Constraints and potentials (memory, attention, knowledge, and language and how to use them) [S1–2]
4. Modes of interpreting: contrasting and comparing techniques; a closer look at each mode can be timed to coincide with skills training [S1-2]
5. Settings, situations and the interpreter's role (mediation); a trip through history [S3]
6. Optimization, mediation (see CC-2, CC-5.8.4 and TG-10.4), and issues in cross-cultural inter-lingual communication, with case studies in students' language combinations [S2–3]
7. Interdependence between quality and working conditions [S3]

12.3.2 On the scene: interpreting as live situated communication

The first task of any theoretical accompaniment to the Initiation phase is to help dispel any attitude to interpreting as an isolated mental operation converting language to language in a vacuum – i.e. a 'challenging linguistic exercise', which is how many beginners see it at first – and circumscribe it as a constrained communication service performed in a specific context for specific people. This awareness should grow out of the experience of doing contextualized exercises in the skills class, but can be reinforced in various ways, to be favoured according to students' receptivity:

i.   by using the pragmatics literature (e.g. Relevance Theory) to explain the difference between the automatic encoding and decoding of linguistic items and intentional human communication, and the contributions of code and inference. A diagram may help, such as Figure 12.1 (see Appendix) that distinguishes these different types of communication using concepts from evolutionary psychology and pragmatics;

ii.   by demonstrating the almost infinite variation of possible linguistic forms to express the same message (Gile 2009: 54–55) describes an entertaining experiment in which students are asked to write down a sentence in their native language giving the meaning of a sign saying 'Paris 50 km'); or by using examples to show how the most appropriate rendition of the same sentence may vary almost infinitely in the choice of words, structure, tone and so on depending on the context;

iii. by discussing the differences between language conversion and translation, and then between text translation and interpreting (CC-2.1), bringing out the implications of a live, changing context.

12.3.3 Prerequisites, constraints and potentials: what can be done and how

To different degrees, students will already be aware of the constraints on *translation* – the lack of one-to-one equivalents and the loss of nuance, especially when the two cultures are far apart. For those who underestimate the need for vigilance, imagination and creativity, there will be opportunities to show once again, with well-chosen examples, how translation involves judgment and compromise. The focus should now be on the parameters of this challenge in live oral conditions, i.e.:

i.   the **constraints on interpreting**: the basics about human memory (working memory, 'iconic' or 'echoic' memory, long-term memory, for words or gist), and the nature of attention (selective, shared, focused, background etc.), can be presented to show that there are inherent **limits on processing capacity** and on memory span, but that are **different for different kinds of information**. The constraints on immediate language/lexical availability in L1 and L2, and the risks of interference in bi/multilinguals, can also be covered here.

ii.   the *potential* for leveraging or **bypassing these constraints**: here, knowledge and deliberate practice emerge as the key to adapting our brains to the 'unnatural' and challenging tasks of interpreting. The instructor introduces the notions of organized and mobilizable **procedures and knowledge schemas** that can stretch capacity (TG-6.8.3.2), and how to maintain and activate them.

iii. prerequisites for overcoming these constraints: once it is appreciated that *knowledge* is most often the key to overcoming linguistic and processing constraints, it will be clear that understanding the **context** will be a prerequisite for good interpreting.

12.3.4 Modes of interpreting

For trainee conference interpreters acquiring the techniques of full consecutive and SI, two or three sessions can be devoted to the more abstract, challenging and theoretical dimension of the mental or cognitive operations of the task, preferably shortly after each technique has been introduced in class. A graphic model of each task can be used that is clear, realistic and explicit enough to be of help to trainees who are thinking about or struggling with their new skills. Simple models for each can be found in CC-4.8.1 (Initiation), CC-5.1.3 (Consecutive), and CC-8.1.3 (SI). Each mode – Consecutive, ST, SI, SI-text – has a different dynamic depending on the input sources and degree of simultaneity (see Appendix, Table 12.4), and thus calls for different procedures and cognitive management techniques, and presents different challenges.

For example, the challenge of providing a fluent and usable **sight translation** (CC-6, TG-3.3.5.2) becomes clearer if we explain that this is actually two translations in one – from one language to another and from a written text (drafted to allow leisurely consultation) to a spoken one (a live communication to be received in real time); or to point out that **free SI** is the only mode of interpreting which is done at a single pass with nothing to rely on but the speaker's voice (Appendix, Table 12.4). Preferably, a special session should be devoted to Consecutive, another to SI, both in theory and practice, and another, if time suffices, to Sight Translation.

12.3.5 Settings, situations and the interpreter's role (mediation)

A discussion of the interpreter's role, norms and client expectations, as well as the source and authority for such norms, and how they may vary in different settings, may be useful at this stage (S2-3, once students have mastered note-taking and rediscover the wider social, interactive aspects of the exchange). Instructors can use the overview of Optimization and Mediation in CC-5.8.4 to introduce the topic,

in anticipation of actual practice with making judgments and choosing strategies in tricky cases (TG-10.4), which should only begin much later, in S3 and S4, after basic skills are in place.

12.3.6 The interdependence between quality and conditions

In S3, as a transition to the Professional Practice module, the angle should now be widened again from these technical details of the task and how it is done (Consecutive, SI) to consider the recipients of the service. In moving from the cognitive and linguistic details ('theory') to the wider interpreting environment ('practice'), the instructor should show how the 'three Cs' – cognition, communication and conditions – are interdependent in determining quality.

The details of this interaction go much deeper than these general terms suggest. The position of a consecutive interpreter at the table can make a big difference to the success of interpretation and of the meeting: we capture both the words and intentions of a speaker much better when we can see them, and vice-versa (the 'McGurk effect' described by McGurk and MacDonald [1976]; clips demonstrating it can be found on YouTube). In SI, the process is somewhat more complex to explain. In addition to the advantages of a direct view on the meeting, as for consecutive, our SI equipment – soundproof booths, lightweight headsets, booth and console design – has gradually evolved to optimize the capture of input from a meeting and create the optimal environment for SI. At the simplest and most obvious level, a soundproof booth and headsets allow the relevant sound streams (speaker and interpreter) to be isolated for optimum concentration; which in turn allows for the selective and attentive listening, controlled by the individual interpreter while working, that is vital to the SI process.

As explained (see e.g. CC-2.1.2 on differences with text-to-text translation), interpreting is *dependent* on the live context, and the feasibility of SI depends on the use of the context of time and place, the ability to put together a coherent dynamic model of the ongoing discourse, since it is that knowledge that is tapped to produce initial 'gambits', to formulate sentence beginnings, or to fill in, restructure or rephrase when the nature of the incoming speech requires it, due to asymmetries between SL and TL language structures, or speaker hesitation, delivery, and so on.

Pointing out the connection in these more explicit and technical terms should help trainees to understand why the interdependence between working conditions and performance is not just an idle (or ideal) exhortation to be 'good' or perfectionistic; rather, the live context and our access to it is integral to interpreting. A social and interpersonal environment conducive to good work (CC-10, Figure 10.2), is an added bonus.

The second module, introducing professional practice, will consolidate this understanding, go more deeply into issues of ethics, trust and role, develop students' judgment and strategies for handling relationships with key partners (colleagues, clients), and provide practical information and tips on the market (employers, sectors, organizations, recruitment methods, contractual relations) and the life of an interpreter.

Here are some **examples of useful concepts and research findings** that could be used to make processes clearer or answer students' FAQs:

Table 12.1 Interpreting: useful concepts and research findings

Question/process	Relevant concepts, models and literature
What/how much should I note?	Studies of unaided recall of extended speech and text (van Dijk and Kintsch 1983; Kintsch 1998) (general recall processes)
	Taylor (1989): **unaided** recallers i. miss *numbers, names* (ITT currant bun analogy); ii. scramble the logical *order* in discursive, conference-like speeches; and iii. miss conceptual content, especially on atypical discourse structure.
Why is SI-text hard?	**More sources** to juggle (Appendix Table 12.4: Modes of translation)
How to stretch working memory (WM): a complement to the Effort Models	**Two ways to stretch processing capacity (PC):** • *Procedures*: Automation reduces the need for focused local attention (see e.g. Shell et al. 2009: 58), freeing it for more global analysis and production monitoring; • *Schemas*: Familiarity reduces effort to retrieve and manipulate in WM; organized knowledge is booted up in whole schemas, reducing effort to **one clue + vigilance**.
How should I handle awkward word-order?	• Freer word order usually goes with case marking (ex: Latin) which gives clues to each word's role (Comrie 1989: 213–4) • Knowledge also helps anticipate • Hypotactic (embedded) sentences and less predictable final verbs are much more common in written text, much rarer in impromptu speech[16]
How should I handle long sentences?	• Forget 'sentence' notion – transcripts show 'sentence' hard to define in oral speech • Chunk and/or get documents

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16. "Most SOV languages, even those that are classified as rigidly verb-final, do allow some leakage to the right of the verb" (Comrie 1989: 214). Spoken language has less complex embedding, and especially, many more clues to where the utterance is going.

Question/process	Relevant concepts, models and literature
Survival (prioritizing under pressure) and audience impact	• 'Functions of Language': informative, persuasive, social, ritual. Persuasion is king, information its handmaiden – look for 'persuasive' thread; recognize old/new information patterns, use prosody. • Relevance for smart concision: maximize effects, minimize listeners' efforts to get them.
Sensitivity to input	Sensitize students to each language's quirks & conventions (e.g. in English, Latinate vs. Saxon, bureaucratic passives…)
Language readiness (availability)	Active vocabulary/lexical availability In A and B (Gravitational model: Gile 2009: 226 ff.); Priming and activation (glossary functions: Setton 2003b; language organization in the brain, interference etc.: Paradis 2004)

12.4   Postgraduate studies and research

12.4.1 The MA thesis

Many courses confer an MA degree, with the requirement to write a thesis (see 13.2.6). This may benefit both the student and the institution, and raise the general status of the profession, but writing an academic thesis should not be allowed to delay *vocational* graduation, via the professional diploma.

The MA thesis, when it is compulsory, as is the case in many schools for institutional reasons (see TG-13.3.5.4), is in many ways an irksome and irrelevant requirement for trainees aiming specifically to become conference interpreters. Some programmes have negotiated waivers with their educational authorities, allowing students to take a Theory class in lieu of submitting a written thesis. But when the MA degree with thesis requirement is an option, separate from the professional diploma, some students may be willing to jump through one or two additional academic hoops for the sake of also getting a recognized academic degree, initially an MA, to broaden their career options. Finally, some may specifically wish to pursue a career partly or wholly in teaching and/or research.

The criteria or requirements for a good MA-level thesis are outside the scope of this book, but given the significant time and effort some students may spend on this work, it is worth trying to make the exercise as useful as possible for the student, the school (and future trainees) and the profession.

Depending on the institution, various formats and topics of study, more or less demanding, are accepted; some are much easier (or believed to be so) and therefore much more popular. Among T & I schools a range of requirements can be found, varying in stringency. Usually a humanities-based methodology is accepted (though often at the looser end of social science or literary criticism methodology),

and interpreting trainees are often allowed to (and do) choose a topic that has more to do with written text, such as:

- analysis of a translation, or comparative review of two translations of the same work
- diary of a personal translation project
- extended essay or literature review

In the past, many such MA theses, as academic exercises imposed on vocational trainees without the time or the inclination to do serious research, have made little contribution to knowledge, just gathering dust in a corner of the school library. Empirical studies are still in the minority (just over a third, according to Gile 2001), and are often marred by methodological problems and/or samples that are too small to have any real value. Unfortunately, as yet few if any schools have taken advantage of the thesis requirement to have students replicate well-designed studies done elsewhere and thus add incrementally to a growing global pool of knowledge.

Some students, and their supervisors, may want to make a serious attempt to contribute to the existing body of research. If they show promise as future trainers (and/or researchers) it is usually in the institution's interest to encourage them, for reasons explained in TG-13. However, unless the student has previous research training, a more ambitious project – a survey or an experiment – will mean a good deal of critical and concentrated background reading and some initial training in research methods and conventions of academic writing. As already explained, it will almost certainly be counterproductive to try to provide such training as part of the interpreter training course. For best results, both on the vocational and academic side, any MA thesis, whether required or chosen, is best left until *after* the professional diploma.

Choice of research topic

Some topics or project designs are much more challenging than others, especially for students with limited research training. If a thesis is compulsory for all students, administrators must find the balance between meeting minimum requirements, realism in terms of time available and the student's research abilities, and the ambition to make a substantial, publishable contribution, which can serve as a stepping-stone to a PhD but also put the institution on the map. Often the best compromise may be a well-done case study.

Tables 12.2 and 12.3 show a rough classification by topic of MA theses completed in two schools: GITIS in Taipei (1991 to 2005) and SSLMIT in Trieste (2005–2011).

The GITIS list includes theses of both translation and interpreting majors; translators and interpreters were trained in separate streams, but interpretation students did some translation courses and were allowed to choose a thesis topic in

Table 12.2 GITIS (Taipei) MA Theses by topic, 1991–2005 (both T and I departments)

Interpretation		Translation	
SI theory, process	5	Genre-specific translation	21
Evaluation or reception of interpretation	4	Own translation with commentary	13
Media interpreting (TV)	4	Comparative critique	13
Sociology (professional)	3	Linguistic analysis	8
Consecutive interpreting	2	Terminology	6
SI training	1	Cultural issues in translation	6
Total	*18*	History of translation	5
		Subtitling, dubbing	5
		Training, education	3
		Profession	2
		Librettos	1
		MT evaluation	1
		Total	*84*

Table 12.3 SSLMIT (Trieste) Interpretation Department MA Theses (for '*laurea specialistica*') by topic, 2005–2011 (total = 166, with some overlap between categories)

Topic and/or methodology	Titles
TV and media interpreting (SI)	27
Terminology studies	22
Film subtitling and/or dubbing	18
Discourse analysis, especially political speeches (at least 6 theses based on EU SI corpora)	18
Skills and processes, esp. SI (14), but also consecutive (4) and directionality [A>B] (3)	18
Translation of sample text with commentary	13
Community/PSI settings (of which 6 explicitly address role, face, politeness, dialogue management and/or cultural mediation)	10
Linguistic studies (contrastive, dialect, etc.), language policy (2)	8
Organization of T&I services, market	5
Business and in-house interpreting	4
Training (resources, impact)	3
Other setting-specific (diplomatic, faith, court, trade fair: one each)	4
Cognition, philosophy, T&I authors, and miscellaneous	–

either specialization. Critical analysis of one or more existing translations is easily the most common topic, with the autobiographical or 'diary' genre, in which the student comments on a translation project of her own, figuring prominently.

Even without a closer analysis of the methodologies applied, and allowing for differences (T vs. I students), we can see that especially in the 'emerging market'

school (Taipei), most students chose topics perceived as easy and theory-light, such as terminology or a personal translation with commentary. In the more mature and long-established European programme (Trieste) we can see evidence of a strong local specialization (TV and media interpreting, political speeches) and a favoured 'house methodology' (corpus-based discourse analysis). Many titles indicate a language-pair-specific approach.

12.4.2 PhD-level studies

12.4.2.1 *Institutional challenges and disciplinary positioning*

There are several reasons for interpreters to consider earning a PhD in Translation or Interpretation Studies. First, those interested in teaching and researching interpreting alongside their professional activity can then qualify for a higher academic rank and remuneration, thus also reinforcing the school's competence and prestige both within and beyond the University. Second, regulations in some centres may still require teachers of MA-level students to hold a PhD, although this has fortunately been waived for many leading schools (see TG-13.3). More importantly, many programmes still require students to complete an MA thesis, the quality of which will depend to a large extent on instruction and guidance from supervisors who understand and can teach basic research methods. Finally, there is an urgent need to prepare the next generation of interpreter trainers, while steadily upgrading the qualifications of existing faculty, especially, as we have seen, in key areas such as feedback and testing.

However, the tiny size of the T&I community makes organizing formal, recognized postgraduate training in research methods and pedagogy a huge challenge. Even a PhD in the broader discipline of Translation Studies is considered by most Universities to be too highly specialized, even where there is a strong T&I tradition and presence, as in Europe, and has therefore often had to rely on ad hoc arrangements involving exchanges of courses, lecturers or supervisors between universities, without structured coursework or requirements.

Even where a sufficient critical mass of postgraduate students might make a multi-institutional PhD school feasible, a 2008 Survey[17] revealed how international cooperation is still complicated – despite the Bologna process in Europe – by a wide diversity of conditions, with fees ranging (in 2013) from €600 > €8000/yr; credit requirements, from 60 to 240 ECTS[18] units (but with actual expected outputs

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17. unpublished, but for background see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwFj3jBEgWw& feature=player_embedded&list=PL510A87C18CBA4588 (Accessed November 24, 2015).

18. ECTS: European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System.

and coursework requirements variously and vaguely defined); time limit, from 3 up to 8 years or more, or open-ended; and even the minimum mandatory length of the dissertation, from 120 to 600 pages…

The obstacles to institutionalizing a PhD in Interpretation Studies are thus similar to those that have often stood in the way of interpreter training (as described in TG-13.3), only more so. Nevertheless, optimal training of conference interpreters for today's needs requires instructors – and especially, course designers and leaders – with substantial interdisciplinary knowledge and pedagogical skills, a considerable investment that should be rewarded with a higher, recognized academic qualification that can make such posts and duties attractive.

Several established leading schools have developed doctoral programmes in Translation Studies, producing a small number of PhDs specialized in interpreting over the years, while some students have earned such PhDs elsewhere, acquiring research competence in a department of cognitive science, applied linguistics or translation to complement their professional knowledge and qualify them to train interpreters. Such ad hoc expedients are a welcome addition to the in-house programmes existing in a few schools.

As to content, whether pursued in a T&I school or not, there seems to be a consensus that a PhD in Interpreting Studies should include at least a thorough training in research methods, and a teacher-training component. However, as we have suggested throughout this book, the specificity and complexity of interpreting, and the challenges of teaching it, also seem to require a deep and broad understanding of how verbal communication works, from both cognitive and social perspectives.

The outline PhD syllabus we propose here therefore comprises both theoretical and practical components. The theoretical knowledge we propose to cover will seem ambitious, but it is not more demanding than any grounding in mainstream cognitive science that might lead to a different specialization. Also, students must be exposed to multiple domains, because Interpreting Studies is still at the stage of *multidisciplinarity* (also dubbed 'doorstep' interdisciplinarity [Gile 1999b: 41]) rather than true *inter*disciplinarity, i.e. "the connection and integration of several disciplines, along with their specific perspectives, in the pursuit of a common task [that is] often applied to areas felt to be too complex to be dealt with by a single discipline" (Timarová 2008). At this stage, the research community that we rely on to integrate and develop a specific body of theory on interpreting must first acquire basic literacy in all (or a good selection) of the multiple potentially relevant disciplines – the cognitive sciences in particular, plus some notion of communication theory, and methods in social sciences, including statistics – with a view to adapting and integrating them.

12.4.2.2 *Aims and content*

In addition to a grounding in the relevant source disciplines and literature, research methods and conventions, the holder of a PhD must be able to relate theory and research to his/her own experience to be qualified to develop pedagogical strategies for interpreter training. The ideal candidates will therefore be trained interpreters (e.g. former graduates) who are in close contact with a training programme, for example as part-time teaching assistants.

The aim of a PhD in Interpreting Studies can thus be stated quite simply and practically, leading straightforwardly to the content of the syllabus. A PhD candidate's main goal is usually to obtain an academic post as a researcher in Translation Studies and/or trainer of interpreters. As such s/he would be expected to be able to

i. conduct research and publish in the field;
ii. train interpreters, and perhaps eventually, the next generation of interpreter trainers;
iii. give lectures and review submissions for specialized journals, requiring familiarity with the landscape of the discipline;
iv. generally contribute to maintaining the life of the T & I research community;
v. act as assessor or supervisor of MA-level and (rather sooner than later, given the dearth of qualified personnel) also PhD theses.

Because of the interdisciplinary and exploratory nature of the field, these requirements entail a fairly eclectic range of qualifications:

a. An understanding of the **basic conventions and procedures of scientific research** and its dissemination. Most candidates for post-graduate study have an arts or humanities background with little or no training in research methods. They will need to learn about the scientific method, the conventions for **reporting others' work** accurately (literature review), **designing experiments** and surveys, and **writing up results** in an accepted format and language (in practice, usually two languages, their own and English).
b. A basic **grounding in the main 'feeder' disciplines of T & I studies**, and their methods and epistemic standards. Translation Studies (TS) itself is a relatively small and marginal discipline, which is still defining itself. The foundations and contours of Interpreting Studies (IS) especially are still in flux, a landscape of competing paradigms which draw on the methodologies of multiple more established disciplines, primarily from the cognitive and social sciences – sociology, cultural or discourse studies, linguistics, (cognitive) psychology, and marginally, even anthropology or neuroscience. For a list of potential 'feeder' disciplines for Translation Studies see Appendix, Table 12.6.

c. Familiarity with the most commonly used **research methods** of interpreting studies (and with the landscape of the discipline: i.e. its origins, rationale and applications, and the most significant contributions and controversies, past and present, that have shaped its **history and current paradigm(s)**).

d. Initiation to **interpreter training and assessment**. This is the most compelling reason for postgraduate T& I programmes to be attached to a translator or interpreter training institution where graduate students can get hands-on experience as teaching assistants. Ideally, the PhD supervisor is also an instructor. The proximity of a (hopefully 'tame' if not 'captive') community of both novice and professional interpreters should provide a reservoir of subjects and performance data for research.

12.4.2.3 *A syllabus for a PhD in Interpreting Studies*

This syllabus for a PhD course in Interpreting Studies was piloted at SISU-GIIT[19] in Shanghai from 2006 to 2009. The taught component consists of four of five introductory modules, each divided into sub-units, which can be covered in a period of one to two years, depending on the students' initial level and on their availability, before students choose a topic and begin work on the dissertation. Assignments in the first semester are likely to consist mainly of précis and exercises (for example, 'Linguistics 101'), with more substantial term papers expected from the 2nd semester (e.g. a pilot questionnaire survey or a corpus-based study).

To encourage cross-interdisciplinary exploration in interpreting studies, a syllabus can be designed to include optional modules or units, to be chosen (with approval) among courses offered in other departments, such as in cognitive psychology (especially memory or attention) and/or linguistics (especially pragmatics). A unit in general translation theory might also be accepted for credit, subject to local institutional rules.

The core syllabus might consist of the following four or five compulsory modules to be taught in a *coursework year* (which could be somewhat elastic, depending on progress and institutional pressures). In the first semester, students acquire basic background knowledge in relevant disciplines, and are introduced to conventions and procedures in scientific research, moving to applications in the second semester.

Preparatory reading and orientation

A preparatory reading list is provided, preferably immediately on admission to the programme (i.e. typically 3–4 months before classes begin). At the start of the first

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19. Graduate Institute of Interpretation and Translation, Shanghai International Studies University ('Shangwai').

semester, two or three sessions are devoted to orientation: exploring resources in the local libraries, internet search tools, access to journals etc.

A partial and indicative **reading list** for postgraduate studies in Interpreting (more or less updated to the time of writing) is given at the end of this chapter in Further reading.

PhD Semester 1: Groundwork

Module 1: Introduction to (cognitive) science

This module can be divided into several units, which can overlap or be taught in parallel or in alternating sessions:

1A	'Doing science' (introductory)
1B	Critical reading and writing
1C	Introduction to the cognitive sciences
1D	Research methodology in the cognitive and social sciences

1A: 'Doing science'

This is an introduction to scientific methods and conventions, with readings in basic logic, scientific reasoning and epistemology, and to the distinct methods and norms in the 'harder' and 'softer' sciences, and can be taught through readings and discussions on the nature of science, scientific method, and the cycle of scientific inquiry (Appendix, Table 12.5). Students come to grips with basic issues in philosophy of science and epistemology, learn about the compromises that scientists in the real world have to make, and their research methods, norms, conventions and practices of scientific enquiry – and learn to distinguish between theoretical elaboration vs. empirical research, and to understand the respective methods and standards of 'quantitative' vs. 'qualitative' approaches, with emphasis on the study of human behaviour.

Interpreting is interesting both as an individual mental performance and as a social activity, so it is natural that research into interpreting should draw on the methods and models of both the cognitive and social sciences. In addition to the history and current state of his or her own specific discipline, a serious researcher with a PhD in Interpreting studies should be able to apply the knowledge and methods – observational, analytic and experimental – of cognitive psychology and linguistics, but also methods from the social sciences, such as survey research based on questionnaires or interviews.

Many if not most students embarking on a PhD in IS or TS (and most interpreter trainees) are from literary and other arts backgrounds. The readings and discussions must therefore immediately address what is generally meant by 'doing science' (Appendix, Table 12.5) comparing introspective or intuitive approaches

with empirical, controlled and recognized 'intersubjective' (e.g. panel, survey) *methods* of gaining knowledge. At the same time, students approach and consider various kinds of *data*, from actual translation and interpreting performance, or from interviews or questionnaires; and various *applications* of TS and IS, and reflect on the methods appropriate to each.

Teaching this material in contact hours does not have to be dry. It can be made interesting by describing to the students what it is like to be a researcher in the real world: designing and conducting surveys or experiments, drafting and publishing papers or presentations for conferences, and explaining how one earns respect and influence.

1B: Critical reading and writing

Trainee researchers must know the classic structure of a research paper, but it is at least as important to learn care in reading and reporting what others have written: showing a knowledge of their predecessors' work, avoiding misrepresentation, writing clearly and precisely, and presenting results with the right degree of confidence (and learning the appropriate phraseology for this purpose). In this unit, students learn

i.   how to find and select relevant readings, read quickly but thoroughly, and précis usefully and accurately; learning to report other author's work without misreading or misrepresenting it;
ii.   the structure of a research paper, article or thesis (motivation, literature review, hypothesis, procedure, results, discussion, future work…); conventions for footnotes, references and bibliographies; conventions of scientific writing and publication of original work, reviews; etiquette in fora and public debates and controversies; etc.

Assignments should include **précis writing** and **critically reviewing** research papers. As a term paper, students can be encouraged to write up a first outline for a research project – which may eventually mature into their thesis – thus ensuring they have a clear plan that is neither too broad nor too narrow, a key factor in the success or failure of a PhD.

For most students worldwide, this unit is much more challenging than for native English speakers, since they will have to learn to read difficult material penetratingly, and write clearly and cogently, in English as well as their own language – a feat which, in our experience, will test even the best professional interpreters.

1C: Introduction to the cognitive sciences

Content: Brief histories of modern psychology (from early introspective techniques through behaviourism to the emergence of cognitive science) and linguistics (from

typological and descriptive linguistics to modern pragmatics); basic readings in computer science, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, anthropology and their interaction with psychology and linguistics to form the emergent 'hyper-discipline' of cognitive science.

1D: Research methods (in the cognitive and social sciences)
Content:
i. the component disciplines of cognitive science and their common and differing methods (illustrate with examples of research in psychology and linguistics; contrast 'softer' and 'harder', qualitative vs. quantitative methods, etc.)
ii. the dominant and unifying framework (the 'computational-representational understanding of mind' [CRUM: see e.g. Thagard 2005]) and its competitors (connectionism, embodied cognition, emotions…): challenges and prospects.
iii. Discussion of inter-disciplinarity: possibilities for connecting up different levels of investigation and description of human behaviour: cognitive, social, cultural.

Module 2: Language, Communication and Translation

2A: 'Linguistics 101 plus' (basic literacy)
The amount of groundwork needed will depend on students' background, but will usually require extensive preparatory reading, going through a good textbook covering basic phonetics and phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, and also including:

i. A brief history and overview of the study of human language: discovery of patterns, classification in language families, typology, the search for universals.
ii. Modern descriptive linguistics: the Chomskyan revolution (Universal Grammar, Principles and Parameters) and its competitors (Functional Grammar, etc.). Relationships between structure, form and meaning.

2B: Language and communication
i. *Langue* vs. *parole*, semantics and pragmatics: sentence vs. utterance; code and inference; linguistic under-determinacy, and the role of context and extra-linguistic knowledge in verbal communication. Theories and models of speech comprehension and production (I): speech-act theory, Gricean and post-Gricean pragmatics: Relevance Theory.
ii. *Speech processing*: psycholinguistic approaches and findings. Theories and models of speech comprehension and production (II): e.g. van Dijk and Kintsch (1983); Kintsch (1998); Levelt (1989).
iii. *Language acquisition and bi/multilingualism*, with a focus on L2 acquisition, performance and maintenance (especially in an environment where interpreters work into a B language).

Assignments and class tests:

a. Exercises from 'Linguistics 101' textbooks (e.g. the latest edition of Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams).

b. Analysis of meaning conveyed in speech into explicit and implicit components.

2C: Theories and models of translation and interpreting
Students who have followed the foundation course at MA level (the Theory and Practice track in the professional interpreter training course, 12.3 above) will only need refreshing on the main points of the most influential models; others must become familiar with them.

PhD Semester 2: Applications

In the second semester, research and applications to interpreting are approached and evaluated against the backdrop of what has been learned about doing science and about mind, language and communication:

Module 3: Research Methods and Models in Interpreting Studies

In this course, interpreting is revisited against the knowledge acquired in the introductory semester, and situated as a phenomenon to establish where IS fits into the disciplinary spectrum – as social and/or cognitive science – and where relevant findings, models and methods can be found. Findings and models in linguistics and psychology and sociology, as well as the classic research methods of these disciplines, are examined for their applicability to the phenomena and context of interpreting.

3A: Focus on key themes and models with promise for application to interpreting:

- *memory and attention*, constraints on speech processing; discussion of 'multitasking';
- constraints and flexibilities of human languages for *expression*;
- *pragmatics* and the use of context and inference: the trade-off between effort and effects; factors in difficulty, factors in quality; user reception;
- cognitive *constraints on linguistic performance*, especially L2; L2 maintenance and activation, etc.

3B: Main research methods in Interpreting Studies

- intro(/retro)spection, interviews, questionnaires;
- analysis of performance data (recording, transcription, analysis);
- combining or triangulating research methods (e.g. quantitative and qualitative);
- choosing a research topic: feasibility, scope, relevance…

3C: Basic statistics
Procedures and techniques (preferably an outside course taught by a specialist, but the supervisor may have to provide at least one set of data from interpreting research for practice and assignments). Separate assignments.

Assignments: term paper, preferably relevant or preparatory to main thesis topic (e.g. pilot study).

Module 4: Basics of Interpreter Training and Testing

This module is a basic 'in-house' introduction to conference interpreter training and comprises both theoretical and practical components. A more complete syllabus for a full-fledged Training of Trainers course is given in the next chapter (TG-14.5). Access should normally be restricted to graduates of a recognized conference interpreter training programme – i.e. young practising conference interpreters – although a modular structure might be developed to accommodate future instructors making theoretical, partial or supporting contributions to an interpreter training programme.

4A: Theoretical component
- models and history (international experience) in conference interpreter training;
- selection and testing (design and procedures: testing theory, especially CRT[20]), assessment, measurement, rater training, etc.);
- curriculum design;
- cognitive analysis of interpreting skills and tasks;
- choice of pedagogical and practice materials;
- performance analysis and feedback to students.

4B: Practica
- attendance and participation in classes in the main training programme (and partner schools if exchanges can be arranged);
- demonstration classes;
- supervision of trainee group practice.

Term assignment: demonstration class, providing feedback to students; or approved research paper with presentation.

12.5   Summary: theory in interpreter training

Interpreting is a complex cognitive activity, a performance and a social service, and thus almost impossible to theorize or model comprehensively, but it can be much better understood by drawing on theories of communication and multidisciplinary

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20. CRT: Criterion-Referenced Testing; see TG-11.3.2.

findings in cognitive science (discourse studies, language competence, psychology) than by relying solely on intuitive subjective experience.

Theory is useful in interpreter training, but in different doses and formats for students, instructors and researchers. In the skills classroom, instructors can use vivid diagrams and metaphors that speak to the students' imagination and demonstrably help them address their learning challenges. Such models, analogies and conceptual explanations can draw on the instructor's personal experience, provided that faculty coordinate to avoid contradictory messages; or better still, that they explicitly share a general theory of interpreting. To be able to field questions, all instructors should have some knowledge of research and theory in human verbal communication and translation and interpreting studies, and should establish a common metalanguage of agreed terms to ensure clarity of feedback and discussion of key aspects of performance.

More structured theoretical and practical guidance can be given in a sequence of regular (weekly) dedicated classes that move from Theory to Practice, taught by one or more experienced practitioner-trainer-researchers, with the aim of ensuring that by the end of the course, students fully understand the interdependence between the cognitive constraints of the task, working conditions and professional ethics, and the communicative goals of the service; and in the last semester in particular (CC/TG-10 and CC-11), are informed of the practicalities of professional life and where appropriate, variations in its settings and role conventions.

Postgraduate studies are a valuable adjunct to an interpreter training programme, as a vehicle for teacher training and evidence-based research, as well as promoting a culture of quality that contributes to the standing of the programme in the host institution, and to the status of the profession (TG-13.6.2).

Further reading and materials

(see References for full publication details)

*1. Foundation: 'Theory and Practice' module for MA/diploma
(films, extracts, handouts)*

Films about the profession (non-fiction):

"The interpreters: a historical perspective". Evelyn Moggio-Ortiz (AIIC) and David Calderwood.
    2003. Euro-Pacific Film and Video Productions

"The Whisperers" (Die Flüsterer) Christian Beetz and David Bernet
    2004. Gebrueder Beetz Filmproduktion GmbH

History of the profession: see Further reading in CC-2

2. PhD in Interpreting Studies: indicative list of readings

In English:

Anderson John R. 1980/2014	Cognitive Psychology and Its Implications (8th edition 2014)	New York: Worth
Blakemore, D. 1992	Understanding utterances: an introduction to pragmatics	Oxford: Blackwell
Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, & Joseph M. Williams 2008	The Craft of Research (3rd Edition)	Chicago: University of Chicago Press
Chalmers, Alan 1976/1999	What is this thing called science? (3rd revised ed. 1999)	3rd Ed.: Hackett: Queensland Univ. Press
Creswell, John W. 2013.	Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.)	Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
Edwards J. A. & Lampert M. D. 2014	Talking data: transcription and coding in discourse research	New York: Psychology Press
Fromkin, Victoria, Robert Rodman, and Nina Hyams 2002/2013	An Introduction To Language (International Edition)	Cengage Learning (10th edition 2013)
Gardner, Howard 1987/2008	The Mind's New Science: A History of the Cognitive Revolution	New York: Basic Books
Gile, Daniel 2009	Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training	Amsterdam: John Benjamins
Gile D., Dam, H. V., Dubslaff F., Martinsen B. and Scholdager A. 2001	Getting Started in Interpreting Research	Amsterdam: John Benjamins
Hunt, R. Reed & Ellis, Henry C. 2004	Fundamentals of Cognitive Psychology	McGraw-Hill
Jay, Timothy B. 2002	The Psychology of Language	Pearson
Johnson, Robert L., James A. Penny and Belita Gordon 2009	Assessing Performance: Designing, Scoring and Validating Performance Tasks	New York: The Guilford Press.
Munday, Jeremy 2001/2013	Introducing Translation Studies	London: Routledge
Paradis, Michel 2004	A Neurolinguistic Study of Bilingualism	Amsterdam: John Benjamins
Pinker, Steven 1994	The Language Instinct	Penguin Books
Poechhacker, Franz 2004	Introducing Interpreting Studies	London: Routledge

Seleskovitch, Danica and Marianne Lederer 1989/2002	Pédagogie raisonnée de l'interprétation English version 1995: A Systematic Approach to Teaching Interpretation (Tr. J. Harmer). Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf	Paris: Didier Erudition
Setton, Robin 1999	Simultaneous Interpretation: a cognitive-pragmatic analysis	Amsterdam: John Benjamins
Shaughnessy, John, Eugene B. Zechmeister and Jeanne Zechmeister 2014	Research Methods in Psychology (10th ed.)	McGraw-Hill
Solso, Robert L., Otto H. MacLin, M. Kimberly MacLin 2007	Cognitive Psychology (8th ed.).	Pearson.
Sperber, Dan and Wilson, Deirdre 1986/1995	Relevance: Communication and Cognition	Oxford: Blackwell
Thagard, Paul 2005	Mind: An Introduction to Cognitive Science	MIT: Bradford Books

Relevance Theory

Online Relevance Theory bibliography, https://sites.google.com/site/franciscoyus/bibliography-on-relevance (Accessed November 23, 2015)

Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995: Relevance: Communication and Cognition

Translation studies (general reference)

Genzler, Edward 2001: Contemporary Translation Theories

Munday 2001: Introducing Translation Studies

Munday 2009: The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies

Interpreting studies (general reference)

Gile 1995: Regards sur la recherche en interprétation de conférence

Pöchhacker & Shlesinger 2001: The Interpreting Studies Reader

Pöchhacker 2004: Introducing Interpreting Studies

See also the reference books listed in the General Introduction to these volumes, and for twice-yearly updates about new research, the CIRIN bulletin (1998 to the present) at http://cirinandgile.com.

Expertise in interpreting

Liu 2008: Consecutive interpreting and note-taking.

Tiselius 2013: Experience and expertise in conference interpreting.

Ericsson 2000: Expertise in interpreting: An expert-performance perspective.

Moser-Mercer et al. 2000: Searching to define expertise in interpreting.

Writing a Thesis

Gile et al. 2001: Getting Started in Interpreting Research.

Appendix
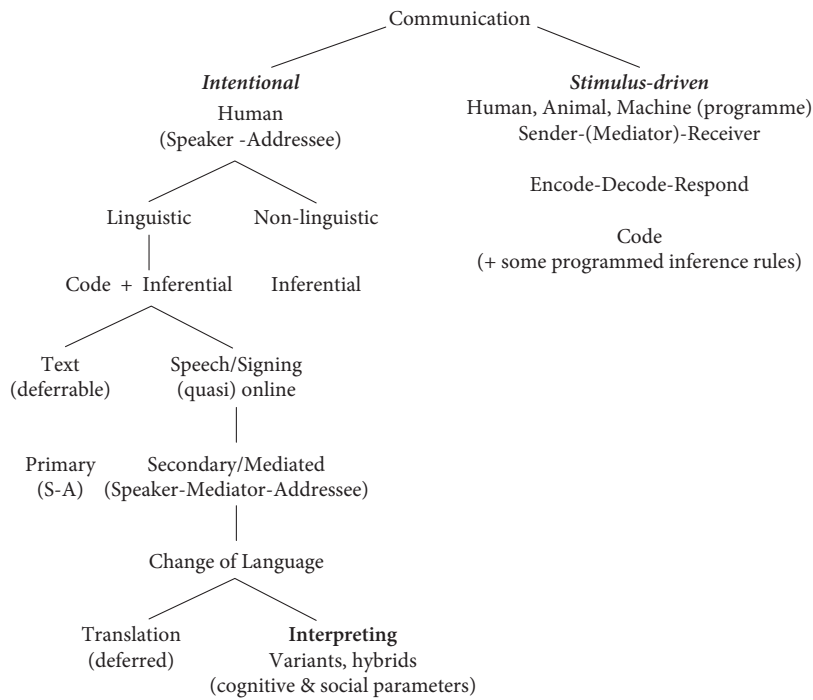
Figure 12.1 Interpreting as a form of communication

Table 12.4 Modes of translation: resources and dynamics

Free Simultaneous	SPEECH ⟶ SPEECH	
Consecutive	SPEECH ⟶ NOTES	MEMORY + NOTES ⟶ SPEECH
Simultaneous with Text supplied	TEXT ⟶ (NOTES?)	TEXT + SPEECH ⟶ SPEECH
Sight Translation	Variable Conditions >>	TEXT (+ MEMORY) ⟶ SPEECH

Text Translation	T E X T ⟶ T E X T

Table 12.5 'Doing science': the cycle of scientific enquiry

One version of the conventional steps in scientific inquiry (Western tradition) as adapted for a class introducing postgrad T&I students to research methods in these fields:

1. Notice an interesting phenomenon (Aristotle: 'wonder')
2. Record observations
3. Identify patterns which may be significant
4. Attempt a description
5. Theorize – formulate an explanatory hypothesis (e.g. of cause and effect)
6. Collect more data by experiment, observation, introspection, according to explicitly described and reproducible protocol. Some alternative methods in T & I research:
   a. *Experiment*: Try to reproduce phenomenon partially or under some control (lab)
   b. *Simulation*: computer (symbolic or self-organizing, learning/feedback)
   c. (Humanities) *Introspective data*: questionnaires, Think Aloud Protocols
7. Manipulate variables to test hypothesis – needs a methodology to <u>control variables</u>
8. Analyse data
9. Obtain mixed results:
   a. Collect and examine additional or secondary (e.g. qualitative) data for new insights
   b. Refine research protocols, network with other researchers and centres
   c. Return to earlier point, iterate (retest).   (Patience, lucidity….)

Table 12.6 'Feeder' disciplines for T&I research

Translation sub-mode	Salient characteristics	Research discipline
(Written) Translation	– Context shifts SL-Tr-TL – Time to compose text, consult whole original – Permanent trace	Text linguistics (cohesion, text function); Literary criticism Culture studies
Liaison, dialogue and short-consecutive interpreting Community, health, welfare, conflict, in-house business…	– Oral, face to face conversation – Personal stakes – Power gradients, affiliation	Discourse analysis 'Socio'-pragmatics Speech act theory
Conference interpreting	– Mixed oral/formal – Cognitive skills – Impersonal/technical – No feedback	Cognitive sciences, e.g. – coordination – attention (divided/shared) – memory – speech processing – expertise research

CHAPTER 13

Institutional issues

13.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the institutional prerequisites and preferred arrangements for effective interpreter training (valid mostly but not exclusively for conference interpreting) and offers guidance, based on best practices and historical experience, to help planners in different regions and economic and institutional contexts anticipate and work around common challenges.

Today's leading courses – those that have trained most of the conference interpreters practising today at the highest levels – fall into roughly four types, with somewhat different constraints and freedoms depending on their autonomy and regulatory environment:

a. Subsidized university-based courses, usually housed in postgraduate schools (institutes) of Translation and Interpretation: currently the majority, especially in Europe;
b. Private college-based courses that typically receive little or no subsidy and must rely on higher tuition fees;
c. 'Commercial' training courses run by private agencies, such as large translation and interpretation service providers, as in Japan;
d. In-house training courses run by large institutional employers such as an international organization (e.g. the EU) or a government department (e.g. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MoFA), which are typically short (up to six months) and tightly focused on the host institution's needs.

For historical reasons, most leading schools today are university- (or more rarely, private college-) based postgraduate courses. These are two-year, full-time courses taught to carefully selected students in small classes (3–6 students is normal) by practising professional conference interpreters, leading to a postgraduate degree or equivalent diploma in Conference Interpreting for those who pass their professional examinations.

Securing this formal status as an accredited postgraduate course, especially in a prestigious public university, was seen as a key achievement towards the recognition of conference interpreting as a discipline – which may explain why AIIC declines to recognize commercial training courses to this day. University-based schools in this position have modest operating budgets relying largely on subsidies,

which means low fees, but also low pay for teachers and other funding constraints that are only partly offset by resource-sharing with other departments and centres of expertise in the University.

Most of our collective experience is therefore based on this traditional (and still dominant) model. The success of these courses is varied, depending to some extent on the local and national context. Some have successfully negotiated substantial autonomy in selection, testing, staff hiring, timetabling etc., but must struggle with tight funding constraints, while others have had to contend with obstacles such as regulatory restrictions, undue institutional interference or market-related factors (13.3 below).

Historical trends are changing the economics of interpreter training, just as they influence norms of interpreting (CC/TG-10). The growing trend toward privatisation and pressure on universities to become self-financing is still too recent to provide us with substantial experience of privately-run courses, or of the commercial courses that are still disregarded by the professional association. Whether publicly or privately funded, any course must constantly demonstrate its relevance and value, to meet economic and/or regulatory challenges to its quality goals and its responsibilities to its various stakeholders.

The status of conference interpreter training courses is fragile – now perhaps more so with the pressure of English as Lingua Franca (ELF). The profession is neither officially recognized nor regulated; formal training is welcomed but not strictly a requirement for professional practice, even by the main institutional employers like the EU or UN, or indeed for membership of the professional association (AIIC); and even long-established courses with strong reputations and stable markets may fall victim to swingeing cuts in higher education subsidies, or on grounds of perceived language needs – as has happened recently, notably in the English-speaking world.[1] This vulnerability reflects short-term perceptions of the future of multilingualism (see TG-15), but also a lingering but persistent historical scepticism about the skillset specificity of interpreting – the belief that interpreters are just gifted linguists who need only induction training by employers (Nuremberg, UN, EU) or, to work freelance, a viable specialization and the necessary entrepreneurial spirit.

In reality, however, self-teaching and in-house training alone would be hopelessly inadequate to meet the continuing steady demand for these highly-skilled professionals from international organizations and private-sector employers, neither

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1.   In 2011–2012, the best known and most long-established programmes in the United States (Georgetown, Washington) and the United Kingdom (University of Westminster) were respectively discontinued and radically downgraded. However, a new programme has recently been launched in the US, at Maryland (http://oes.umd.edu/professional-programs/interpreting-translation Accessed November 23, 2015).

of which seem willing or able to run even partial, let alone complete interpreter training courses, but rely on a supply of trained graduates from specialized schools.

The strongest argument in the defence of serious training is therefore the continued demand for professional interpreters. A proven and demanding market is the course leader's main weapon in the fight for survival (and if dependent on public budgets, also for funding, especially in times of austerity), as well as being a vital reference point to keep the course relevant and adequate to current needs.

However, proven demand for the skills being trained is not the only prerequisite for survival and success. Any course dependent on a host institution and subsidies (as the majority are today) must work in a partnership in which interpreting professionals adapt to the institution and its norms, while negotiating the flexibility needed to accomplish their mission in areas such as staff recruitment and qualifications, class scheduling, and – last but not least – student selection and certification. The alternative is independent, privately-run training, where the main challenge will be to ensure the quality of the 'product' without dilution by excessive profit-seeking, and thus, ultimately, the credibility and brand-image of the business. Whatever the model, an interpreter training course has a responsibility to users of the service, and can only benefit by pressure from quality-driven employers and the profession.

After setting out the basic requisites for successful interpreter training in any specialization, and describing the 'Standard Model' for conference interpreting (13.2), we address some common constraints on implementation – institutional, regulatory or economic – in university-based schools (13.3), suggest possible variations and workarounds, and discuss tactics for negotiating with funders and sponsors. Albeit with some caveats, we argue that privately-run courses may be no less viable in some regions and contexts in the future, given the same key prerequisite conditions for training operational professionals.

Although our focus here is still on conference interpreting, there is now a growing interest in developing training models for other segments of the interpreting market, and courses have begun to take shape in legal, healthcare, public-service and other interpreting specializations. For general interpreting there are detailed guidelines in the [US] *National Interpreter Education Standards.*[2]

The basic prerequisites for *any* course aiming to train reliable interpreters – whether for conferences, business, public service or any other needs – can be listed as follows:

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2. http://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/433.pdf (Accessed November 23, 2015). These standards are issued by the [US] Conference of Interpreter Trainers, and are mostly intended to apply to ASL interpreting programmes, but could apply *mutatis mutandis* to any kind of interpreter training.

1. Funding, appropriate facilities and sufficient autonomy;
2. Qualified course leader, faculty and support staff;
3. An appropriate, focused curriculum with sufficient contact hours, quasi-tutorial teacher/student ratios, and time for structured group practice and self-study;
4. Qualified students and credible assessment, testing and certification;
5. Contact with the target market, and cooperation with natural partners and stakeholders (employers, users, professional association, and host institution).

Let us first see how existing guidelines and training models meet these requirements.

13.2   Existing models and best practices

13.2.1 Conference interpreter training: the standard (AIIC) model

Most successful ('leading[3]') conference interpreter training courses today follow a 'standard model' (Mackintosh 1989) that crystallized in 1959–60 when, after a decade of experimentation in both West and East (see Chernov 1999), four Universities (Geneva, Heidelberg, and HEC and the Sorbonne in Paris) agreed to establish training courses to meet a set of key criteria proposed by AIIC, which then recognized their diplomas as of 1963 (Seleskovitch 1999: 58). These are still among the leading schools today[4] in terms of reputation and perceived quality, making them not only the historical forerunners and standard-setters but also the most robust and longstanding over time.

In 2001, in view of new needs created by the ongoing enlargement of the EU, its main institutional users of interpreting (JICS [now DGI SCIC], DGXXII, and the European Parliament) launched the EMCI (European Masters in Conference Interpreting[5]), in which eighteen European interpreter training programmes (CITPs) (as of 2013; originally eight) share a common core curriculum, recruitment and assessment methods based largely on the AIIC-approved model and implemented with some variations[6] (and with different degrees of success due in part to local constraints). This has made possible the sharing of resources and expertise between the mature schools and newer courses.

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3. Those that have produced most of the successful conference interpreters on the market.

4. The HEC and Sorbonne programmes merged as today's ESIT; ETI in Geneva is now FTI.

5. http://www.emcinterpreting.org/ (Accessed November 30, 2015).

6. International harmonisation of higher education structures, in Europe's case the 'Bologna process', has helped to harmonise the level and status of CITPs as autonomous MA-level programmes (see e.g. Kwiecinski and Feder 2005).

The key features of this 'standard model' are set out in AIIC's best practice recommendations for conference interpreter training (Table 13.1). For a summary of our proposed improvements and additional recommendations, see Table 13.3 at the end of the chapter.

Table 13.1 AIIC Best Practice Recommendations for interpreting schools and courses[7]

- Courses at postgraduate level are more appropriate to train conference interpreters for entry into the profession.
- Applicants have to pass an aptitude test before being admitted to the school.
- Applicants are encouraged to spend considerable time living and working or studying in a country where their non-native languages are spoken before they consider entering a professional training course.
- The school and teaching faculty inform candidates before and during their studies about relevant potential employment opportunities.
- Is the curriculum posted online?
- Courses are designed and interpretation classes taught by practising conference interpreters whose language combinations are recognized by AIIC or by an international organization.
- Teachers of interpretation have had some teacher training specifically related to interpretation.
- All courses are delivered by a combination of native speakers of the students' A and B/C (native and non-native) languages.
- The curriculum includes a theory component and a course which addresses professional practice and ethics. These courses should be delivered by practising conference interpreters.
- The final diploma in Conference Interpretation is only awarded if the candidate's competence in both consecutive and simultaneous interpreting in all working language combinations has been assessed and judged consistent with professional entry requirements.
- Final examinations are conducted in an open and transparent fashion. Candidates should understand the assessment criteria.
- Final examination juries are composed of teachers from the academic course and external assessors who are also practising conference interpreters. The latter's assessment of each examinee's performance should count towards the final mark awarded.
- Representatives from international organizations and other bodies that recruit interpreters are invited to attend final exams as observers if they are not already present as external assessors.
- Interpreting Schools/university courses may not benefit financially from assignments worked by their students.

Students are also invited to check that:

- The language combinations offered as part of the regular curriculum reflect market requirements.
- Any Degree or Diploma awarded states the graduate's language combination, clearly indicating active and passive languages.
- All tests are eliminatory at finals   (http://aiic.net/page/60. Accessed August 20, 2015).

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7.   Best Practice Recommendations: http://aiic.net/page/60 (Accessed February 17, 2016).

AIIC has traditionally reserved its approval for courses that are open only to post-graduate students admitted on an oral aptitude test, taught by conference interpreters, and that include both consecutive and SI training and last at least two semesters (one academic year). Until recently, every few years AIIC published a list of approved conference interpreting courses, ranked with one, two or three stars by degree of compliance with its training principles, based on the schools' self-reporting and information gleaned by AIIC through other channels. However, this ranking, now discontinued, was obviously prone to distortion from unverifiable claims, or assumptions based on historical reputation. More valid measures of course performance might include

i. percentage of graduates (a) who sit and (b) who pass accreditation tests with the EU/UN;
ii. average number of days per year worked as conference interpreters by graduates since graduation;
iii. fees and working conditions commanded by graduates on the private market, and trends over time;
iv. percentage of graduates making a full-time living as conference interpreters three years after graduation;
v. percentage of graduates working as permanent staff in international organizations or having been admitted to AIIC five years after graduation.

Publication of such data[8] would give a much more reliable picture of the quality of CITPs (conference interpreter training courses) than their own claims, or their general – sometimes outdated – reputations on the grapevines of students, practitioners or employers, which are now the only sources of information available. For example, even leading schools probably differ widely in the performance of their graduates on institutional accreditation tests, and many self-styled 'conference interpreting' courses produce few if any graduates who become full-time professional conference interpreters.

Still, a high proportion of conference interpreters now on the market, at least in the profession's traditional heartland (Europe and the international organizations, and to some extent North America) are graduates of schools that traditionally share most of the key features recommended by AIIC: they are full-time postgraduate courses lasting at least one year but more typically two years (four semesters), with predominantly professional instructors, strict and autonomous selection procedures at admission, curricula broadly along the lines described in the last

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8. MBA schools collect data on their graduates' employment, salaries, etc. which are 'weighted heavily' in published MBA rankings: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master_of_Business_Administration#MBA_programme_rankings (Accessed November 24, 2015).

chapter – i.e. skills-focused, with progression from consecutive to simultaneous, and some supporting knowledge and language enhancement – and graduation with a diploma requiring a pass at a final examination before a jury composed primarily of professionals.

However, the most mature schools owe their longevity, autonomy, and high standards to some key additional features not explicitly mentioned in the AIIC guidelines, chief among which has perhaps been their **geographical location** in or around a major conference venue (Geneva, Paris, London, Vienna, Brussels), or a bilingual national parliament (Ottawa, Cameroon, Brussels) and/or a vibrant private or national market. Similarly, successful training courses in healthcare, public service, judicial or community interpreting would naturally be located in areas with significant immigrant or multilingual populations.

A strategic location naturally brings a suite of attendant benefits: the **proximity of instructors** who are active interpreters in the local market, and have close ties to the major international institutions (the part-time faculty may include the chief interpreters or senior staff interpreters of these institutions, who will also send experts as panel members for Professional Exams); **opportunities for practica** (internships, dumb-booth practice) and observation; and a demanding local market that provides enough work for graduates in an environment in which conference interpreting is seen as a real profession and enjoys a high level of internal solidarity. The presence of demanding institutional employers helps keep standards high – a big advantage not enjoyed in some locations where most graduates work for large corporations (e.g. Shanghai, Seoul, Taipei).

This is a robust, sustainable ecosystem – a 'win-win partnership' for the schools and for the institutions. The school can enlist support from **powerful external allies** in the event of attempts to dilute or downgrade its course; and the University can gain prestige for its contribution to the attractiveness of the city as an international centre of diplomacy or convention venue, and often, to national language policy. The Paris (ESIT, Sorbonne) and Geneva schools (FTI [formerly ETI], University of Geneva), in particular, have been helped by either high-level policy in defence of French (Paris) or of the image of a city or country as a neutral international centre (Geneva), as well as by the presence of strong and well-defined local and regional demand from organizations like the EU, UNESCO, OECD, NATO, the Council of Europe, etc., as well as the private sector.

An alternative to location in a major conference centre city that has also proven successful is direct sponsorship by an institutional employer with guaranteed employment for graduates, as in the case of the former UN-sponsored courses in Beijing and Moscow.

These natural advantages are not immediately present elsewhere. In the English-speaking countries, demand for community and court interpreting is

primary, with a much smaller conference interpreting segment that is vulnerable to business trends. 'Emerging' regions typically lack headquarters of international organizations, but there is significant demand for conference interpreting for national or local government and the corporate sector. The private market is dominant, and demand is mostly (often overwhelmingly) for 'bi-active' interpreting (AB), though in some countries it may be vulnerable to changes in the national language policy or trends in the business sector. Training courses that are dependent on institutes of higher education in these regions thus face a greater challenge in securing durable support, and in pressing their claims for the minimum autonomy and control needed to train competent profesionals.

In summary, then, history shows that the decisive condition for the survival and success of a training course is a **clear and present (and proximal) demand** for good interpreters. But to keep up a high standard, rather than just survive, the course must be subject to external professional oversight and pressure from the market and professional community. Without this, institutional sponsorship or national language policy alone are not enough, and any course created primarily for prestige or economic motives (to generate revenue from tuition fees), or lacking close contact and interaction with a real live market, is unlikely to thrive.

The University-based course, though dominant, is not the only model in which AIIC best practices AIIC could in principle be implemented. Also, there are several points on which these recommendations could be refined and extended for optimal training.

13.2.2 Establishment, status and autonomy

Specialized CITPs were set up in universities like Geneva and Paris at a turning point in history when multilateralism favoured the recognition of conference interpreting as a skillset distinct from mere language proficiency, different from written translation, and meeting a real demand. (Today, similar recognition is gradually being extended to the complex skills required for legal and, to some extent, PSI/community interpreting.)

These host institutions have recognized **postgraduate** training as the right level for both conference interpreting and professional translation, and the two specializations are often taught as parallel streams in the same Institute. Undergraduate language teaching has always included some translation, and the recent addition of dialogue interpreting in some curricula is welcomed by employers looking for help with basic business liaison, or in tourism. But to start training as a conference interpreter, more knowledge and exposure to the world is needed, making a full first degree or equivalent a necessary (but not sufficient) prerequisite. Even the EU – the

world's largest employer of conference interpreters – no longer trains promising university graduates, but relies on the specialized CITPs, providing only top-up training for new recruits and 'near-missers' at accreditation tests (CC/TG-9.1.1).

A postgraduate conference interpreting course must therefore do the *whole job* of training market-ready professionals, and the host institution has a public responsibility (13.3.6.2) to ensure that there is no possible confusion in 'labelling' between this qualification and any partial training in interpreting skills offered at undergraduate level, or other specializations such as PSI or short-consecutive business interpreting. A full professional training course not only has different goals from an academic course of study, but also responsibility to different and multiple stakeholders, with implications for all other aspects of its organization.

Vocational courses may be targeted at different skillset levels. There is a real demand in many countries for community or in-house business interpreters with reliable short consecutive interpreting competence (cf. NAATI 'Professional Interpreter' level: see CC-2.5.2). Training in this skillset could be offered at MA or possibly even at undergraduate level, depending on students' starting abilities, always ensuring that the skillset is accurately described on the final certificate.

Once the creation of a course has been approved in principle, a key factor in its success (regardless of its exact administrative status, for example as a Graduate Institute attached to a Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, or of Translation Studies or of English) will be its **autonomy** to define its curriculum, staffing, selection and graduation requirements as appropriate to its specific vocational needs.

This battle is never completely won, especially while interpreting still lacks the legal status of a profession, and schools still constantly have to defend and negotiate their position, and often, their very survival. New courses, as we will see, must fight not only for their budgets but also for autonomy on key aspects of design and organization.

Funding

First, course planners must be aware that some of the basic needs of a conference interpreter training course will seem expensive compared to those of the liberal-arts academic departments to which they are usually compared, in particular:

i.   Initial funding grant to **install equipment and facilities**: an interpreting course needs one or more realistic conference rooms fitted with standard booths and an SI installation, and will have to employ a full-time technician. An (existing) language laboratory will not do.

ii. Provision for the cost of **organizing exams**, which may require inviting experts from abroad for several days once or twice a year to ensure the international validation of the course.

In terms of its **operating budget**, the course can be supported by a regular grant, or be partly or wholly self-supporting – raising the delicate issue of the balance between tuition fees and pay for instructors (13.3.2.5). Today, even in countries with a tradition of subsidized higher education, universities are being pushed towards a more self-financing business model. Whatever its position on the public-private funding continuum, a course may come under pressure either to cut expenses, or generate more revenue, in ways which may jeopardise its credibility, fairness or accountability, or make it difficult to maintain the quality of training and thus its reputation and long-term viability. These challenges and some possible solutions are discussed in 13.3.2.2.

13.2.3 Leadership, faculty and staffing

An interpreter training course should be designed, supervised and taught (except for some ancillary modules) by professional interpreters.

Interpreter training courses are often housed in a combined T&I Institute with separate course leaders for each course (T and I). The **Director** of such a combined Institute should usually have a background in translation or interpreting, but schools have sometimes thrived under the leadership of a politically canny appointee sympathetic to the T&I cause – provided that s/he defers to the course leader (or department head) of each specialization on key aspects such as curriculum design, staff qualifications, selection and testing, within negotiated budget parameters. The **course leader** of the interpreting programme, however (who may or may not also be the Institute's Director), should be a well-known and respected senior professional interpreter.

Instruction in the *core skills* of interpreting (in contrast to auxiliary subjects, see below) should be entrusted entirely to professional interpreters who have themselves been trained, have substantial successful experience (>5 years, ideally 10) as practitioners on the target market, on which they are still active, and have been 'ratified' as having advanced competence either by accreditation with international organizations and/or AIIC membership; and last but not least, have proven teaching ability, preferably having received some teacher training.

While it may not be possible to meet *all* these requirements simultaneously and for all staff when a course is first set up (see 13.3.3.1), it is vital to the quality of training that instructors are practising professionals, who can select appropriate and current materials for practice and testing, simulate real communication scenarios, identify real problems, as distinct from artefacts of the classroom situation, demonstrate skills and offer a model of performance, organize internships and opportunities to sit in at real meetings, play a mentoring role post-graduation, and help graduates find employment (TG-2.2, TG-9.4.3).

In the standard model, core interpreting skills are usually taught in **separate classes for each language pair and direction** (TG-2.4.1). Instructors are most effective when they can advise on the quality of students' linguistic output as well as points of technique, and are thus best employed in teaching classes in their own language combinations, into their own A language (though a senior bi-active instructor may sometimes teach a two-way class: see TG-2.4.4). The skills teaching faculty (in-post and external) must therefore include **native speakers of all target languages** and **cover all combinations offered**.

The school may also occasionally hire additional teachers or auxiliaries to train students in less used or newly required languages (e.g. for a new EU member state). Some schools may offer skills classes in dozens of different language combinations. ESIT and ISIT[9] (both in Paris) each routinely train students with different combinations of twelve languages, sometimes rising to fifteen or more,[10] requiring up to 30–40 different 'language-pair-and-direction' classes (and other configurations: see TG-2.4 for details).

Auxiliary (non-interpreting) classes which complement core skills teaching, such as advanced language enhancement, topical introductions to economics and law, voice training, public speaking or stress management, can and should be entrusted to **specialist instructors** in those fields (TG-2.2.7), *provided that* the content and teaching are designed in collaboration with the interpreting course leader to be **adapted to the needs of interpreters** (CC-7.2.1; TG-7.4).

The institute (or course, if independent) will also need **administrative** and **secretarial staff**, and a reliable full-time **technician** on permanent call who will have multiple responsibilities, including maintenance and repair of the interpreting, audiovisual, recording and computing equipment, maintaining an AV library of archives and samples, coaching not only students but also teachers (who may be more cerebrally than technically inclined) in the use of all these resources, and providing technical support during exams (playing speeches, recording performances, cueing recorded interpretations for the raters as required…), as well as *videoconferencing* for various events such as joint seminars and network-based teacher training. A large training programme may need up to 3 or 4 support staff;

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9. Institut supérieur d'interprétation et de traduction. http://www.isit-paris.fr/isit-ecole-management-communication/master-interprete-conference/ (Accessed May 14, 2015).

10. For example, in 2012–13, students were enrolled at ESIT with combinations of Arabic, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian (BCS), Chinese, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Romanian, Russian and Spanish; twelve languages are routinely offered, plus up to 6 or 7 additional ones in any given year, which in the recent past have included Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Czech, Slovak, Slovenian, and briefly, Dutch, Turkish, Hindi, Thai, Farsi and others (information provided by present and outgoing course leaders, p.c., November 2012).

fewer if administrative services and/or library, computer room etc. are shared with the translation section.

Finally, **teaching assistants (TAs)** are a valuable resource for any serious programme, as mentors, speakers and listeners, group practice monitors or exam assistants and invigilators (TG-2.2.6). These TAs will typically be recent conference interpreting graduates who are sharing their time between professional activity and teaching, perhaps with a view to induction as fully-fledged instructors, and may also be doing postgraduate research for a higher degree (PhD: see TG-12.4.2).

In some institutions, therefore, the presence of TAs may depend on the school's success in developing an advanced research programme that is attractive enough to compete with more lucrative work on the market. Such TAs are a precious asset, but they must not be overloaded with teaching or supervision duties that leave them no time to complete their own research, or stifle their professional development (and income) nor must they be be exploited by the institution, for example by being constantly called on to interpret pro bono for university officials or to teach on auxiliary courses. For optimal results for all concerned, it is important to define the TAs' duties and workload carefully, and to ensure that they have time and opportunity to work and gain experience as professional interpreters: after all, sufficient field experience is a necessary condition for good teaching.

Full-time and part-time instructors

The specificities of interpreter training make for a somewhat unusual staffing regime. At least one administrative secretary and the technician will normally be full-time, but in multilingual courses, the requirement for instructors who are active professionals teaching in their own specific combinations will mean that many, perhaps most instructors may only teach a single language pair(-direction) for one or two classes a week, being paid either on an hourly fee basis or on a contract. In the typically low-fee, low-budget University-based course, a few reasonably well-paid salaried posts are usually available (but often only at 50% or 75%, even for the course leader) for key faculty with higher qualifications (PhD), who will be expected to do some thesis supervision, exam jury service, administrative tasks, and possibly also some research of their own, in addition to teaching a few hours of classes each week. In such programmes, this set-up will usually be the only practical way of securing instructors who are practitioners in touch with the market. In principle, however, there are two possible approaches to staffing, in which teaching relies on either:

A. a **majority of part-time instructors**, each responsible for teaching between 2 and 6 hours a week. This model works best

i.   in a location near one or more large international organizations and/or a large private market, where the school can usually find enough professionals (including among their own alumni) with the necessary languages and a comfortable separate income to devote two or three hours a week to training without high expectations of pay;

ii. where the school cannot afford to pay teachers a salary competitive with working as an interpreter.

An advantage of this model is realism and variety. Many graduates will begin as freelancers, facing a wide variety of settings, organizations, discourse genres and specialized domains. Exposure to multiple instructors bringing materials and experience from different market backgrounds helps to prepare them for this diversity.

The potential drawbacks of this arrangement are that many instructors may be so poorly paid that they see themselves as volunteers, are insufficiently committed to the school's needs, or simply do not have the time to prepare classes thoroughly and write up detailed feedback for students, let alone attend ongoing teacher training, staff meetings, mock conferences, etc.; nor will they be motivated to accept supervision and feedback on their teaching, making quality control, professional development and pedagogical consistency difficult. Scheduling may also be a serious challenge, as instructors will be likely to reschedule classes frequently to avoid losing properly paid professional work.

B.   a **small group of (nearly) full-time instructors** who each teach 8 or more hours a week. Unfortunately, because of the relative scarcity of instructors able or willing to teach in multiple language combinations, this option will normally only be feasible for courses offering few combinations, or dominated by a single two-way language pair, as on many private and emerging markets, and only where the school can offer a competitive salary (or hire some retired interpreters, see TG-2.2.7).

The main advantage of this model is that instructors can be selected for their proven expertise and commitment to teaching, can further improve with regular involvement, attending workshops, evaluation etc., and can work under central coordination, teaching to the same curriculum.

For most schools, the best practical compromise will probably be a mixture of these two models, with a core of more stable instructors supplemented by part-time teachers. The more resources a course has, the closer it can approximate to option B, provided the language combinations it offers are fully covered.

Any model that relies on the services of active professional instructors at uncompetitive pay levels will have to allow some **flexibility in class scheduling**.

Among the available instructors, staff interpreters in international organizations may only be free to teach in the evenings, while freelancers will not be available on the same day each week, and may have unexpected timetable changes.

An independent (private or quasi-private) course that can offer more salaried posts, and is free to set tuition fees high enough to offer competitive pay to instructors, would open up other possibilities, as discussed in 13.3.2.5.

13.2.4 Course design and structure

Realistic demands on the duration of studies coupled with the high demands on a modern conference interpreter mean that the curriculum must be

- focused on skills
- accurately targeted on actual market needs
- …but not overloaded.

Freedom to design the curriculum to these specifications, without academic add-ons and requirements that are not strictly relevant, is therefore paramount.

13.2.4.1 *Relationship with other Translation specializations*

Many existing interpreting schools share an Institute with a (written) translation course. Various models of the relationship between the two courses have been described (Arjona 1984; Mackintosh 1989; Sawyer 2004: 85–90):

a. **Separate departments**: interpreting and (written) translation share some administrative and technical services, but are otherwise completely separate and independent, each with its own distinct admission exam, students, curriculum and requirements for graduation, except possibly for some auxiliary modules that can be taken by students in either department.

b. **'Y-fork' model**: in this structure, all students do a first year of translation and introductory interpreting, including consecutive, and are then streamed, usually on the basis of a Midpoint Exam to specialized training in either T or I (in interpreting, now mostly SI) in the final year. In some institutes, each group may take one or more (optional or mandatory) modules in the other specialization.

c. **Combined T-&-I course** and qualification: all students do a course that includes some written translation and some interpreting, possibly with a choice of 'minor' and 'major' with credit requirements weighted accordingly.

The merits and drawbacks of these models are discussed below in 13.3.4.

13.2.4.2 *The curriculum for interpreter training*

As set out in TG-3, the curriculum must focus on **skills training**, with some complementary theory, language enhancement, introduction to professional ethics and practice, and a few relevant and well-designed auxiliary subjects (domain-specific knowledge modules, public speaking), with additional options such as voice coaching or written translation. Auxiliary subjects and options should not take up more than 25–30% of total class time (see Table 13.2).

As for **duration**, existing recommendations seem inadequate for full training to readiness for contemporary market needs. AIIC recommends at least one year. The EMCI requires a minimum of 400 contact hours, of which 75% (i.e. 300 hours) should be devoted to core skills training, yielding a total of at least 800[11] hours including class contact, group work and self-directed study (background reading, preparation of glossaries, etc.). Many European schools are now one-year courses (2 semesters of 14–17 weeks each), but a handful maintain their historic 2-year (4-semester) courses.

Our view is that significantly more contact hours are needed to develop market readiness in the full range of tasks required of interpreters today, as argued in the previous chapters (see especially TG-9). Even students with good prospects at admission – with the possible exception of those with near-native B language proficiency, or 'lighter' combinations (e.g. ACC) of culturally close languages – generally need a full **two years** with at least four hours of class time weekly for each pair-direction, ideally more for work into B (plus language enhancement), perhaps less for a very strong C language (or waiving language enhancement). Special domain modules (e.g. law, economics) and LE will be needed for nearly all students, and group practice is indispensable.

As Table 13.2 shows, in a 32-week academic year this regime yields a total of 11–19 class contact hours weekly, depending on language combination (or a total of 19–29 hours of 'on-task' group study, including group practice and auxiliary subjects), and this with only minimal auxiliary subjects (2 hours/week) and language enhancement (2 hours/week). Schools that feel this is too heavy a requirement may reduce it in certain cases, or allow and even encourage students to repeat a year. (A far better solution, of course, would be to lengthen the academic year.)

To avoid overloading the curriculum or leaving little or no time for group practice or private study, more **complex language combinations**, such as ABsimCC, ACCC (now commonly sought by the EU for certain languages), or including C into B(sim), could be offered by reducing contact hours in either skills, knowledge

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11. http://www.emcinterpreting.org/?q=node/13 (Accessed May 15, 2015).

or language (enhancement) components. Schools may prefer to refuse such combinations on first admission, or to allow students to do an extra year to add another language, or offer a lighter curriculum to graduates returning for a year to add one or more languages, so that they can continue working; or allow them subsequently to take a partial PECI to add a C language they have practised on their own (or upgrade a C to a B, or a Bcons to a Bsim: see TG-14.3.2).

Table 13.2 Sample weekly/annual course load in hours for a 2-year CITP (academic year of 32 weeks,[12] slashes distinguish load in 1st and 2nd years) See TG-3, Table 3.1 for a timeline of stages in the course.

Language combination	ABsim	ACC	ABC*	ACCC	ABsimC
Language pair-directions (Y1/Y2)	*2/2*	*2/2*	*3/3**	*3/3*	*3/3*
Core skills (Consec, ST, SI) *(Y1/Y2)* *4 hrs × lang pair-direction, plus 2 extra hours for Bsim in Y2*	8/10	8	12/11	12	12/14
Special domain modules (e.g. law, economics)	2	2	2	2	2
B language enhancement	2		2		2
Theory (Y1)/Professional Practice (Y2)	1	1	1	1	1
Contact hours per week	13/15	11	17/16	15	17/19
Contact hours per year (@ 32 weeks)	416/480	352	544/512	480	544/608
Group practice	8	8	8	10	10
Total school time per week: contact hours plus group practice	21–23	19	24–25	25	27–29
Total school time per year: contact hours plus group practice	672–736	608	768–800	800	864–928

* 'Bcons', i.e. A into B in consecutive but not in SI

NB The above includes scheduled class time and structured group practice time, but excludes individual time spent on language and knowledge enhancement or any extra personal practice and review time.

This curriculum provides for four class hours per week in each language pair-direction, plus two extra hours into B-sim, minimal domain modules and language enhancement (no written translation).

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12. This table should be adaptable to any full 2-year course. A survey of EMCI schools in Europe showed an average of approximately 28 weeks actual teaching time per semester. This seemingly inefficient use of the school year is no doubt due to regulatory constraints. The key factor is the total use of contact hours, but overloading the week is counterproductive; time is needed for private study and group practice. Longer semesters are therefore strongly recommended.

The ideal **class size** for a core interpreting skills class (typically in one language pair, in either one or both directions) is between 3–6 students, with an absolute limit of 10 (TG-2.4.2; see also 13.3.4.2).

Auxiliary subjects should be tailored to the needs of interpreting students, with little homework, and preferably taught in the students' B language.

The course **timetable** must have built-in flexibility to accommodate instructors' professional engagements, and time and opportunities must be found for internships and practica.

Adapting to demand: change with continuity

In the medium or long-term, schools have to adapt to external changes such as shifts in market needs (new languages, profiles favoured by dominant recruiters), or funding and support from host institutions.

Intake selection decisions, class design and even the provision of different enhancement modules must all be adjusted with an eye to market needs, for example in terms of domain coverage, weighting between modes, or technology. Institutional recruiters, for example, occasionally call on schools to train interpreters who are better adapted to their needs in terms of language combinations, modes or subject matter.

Adapting to demand is the responsibility of schools as credentialling institutions. We have proposed adjustments to the traditional syllabus and final exam to reflect modern demand in terms of both task skills (short consecutive, SI into B) and user expectations (e.g. ability to work from fast recited text, 'optimize' where necessary, etc.). But a good training programme takes time and effort to build up and mature, and schools are also repositories of expertise in training. Both the 'realistic' and the pedagogical value of course elements must be considered before making sudden radical changes. Accordingly, although Consecutive now only accounts for 10% of conference interpreting assignments according to current AIIC world market surveys, no leading school has cut Consecutive training down to 10% of all classes, believing it to be valuable preparation for SI (and more in demand than AIIC statistics suggest).

Also, most conference interpreter training programmes (CITPs) must cater for both a general international and partly local market, in both institutional and private sectors, and will never be able to cover all conditions.

13.2.4.3 *Extensions and repeat years*

Most institutions and legislations allow students to **repeat** part of the course. 'Standard Model' schools generally allow students to repeat *either* the first year, *or* the second year (if they fail the Diploma on the first attempt). Most such schools also allow alumni who did not pass the Diploma, even after using up their repeat time, to come back and attempt it again, usually within not more than 2–3 years, and on condition they have been practising.

13.2.5 Student selection, testing and certification

The importance of **valid and reliable testing** has already been extensively argued for in Chapters 3 and 11. An ideal system combines a robust admission test with good training, rigorous testing at Midpoint, options to change track on the way (streaming, 13.3.5), and a final exam that fairly but uncompromisingly tests for professional readiness (possibly, with certification at different levels of competence, see TG-11.7.5). The complete screening, testing and certification regime must be constantly monitored as *a single system* for its fairness, efficiency, and accountability, and constantly refined with validity and reliability evidence (e.g. of false positives and negatives) collected from beyond graduation. A *transparent* system of this kind preserves accountability

- *to students*, who should know that they will not be taken unless they have a fair chance of success, and if taken, will not be left to their own devices, but trained responsibly; will not be failed willy-nilly and without good and demonstrable reason; and if unsuccessful in the main course, will be given the opportunity to graduate with another diploma, such as a general short-consecutive interpreting skillset (cf. NAATI 'Professional Interpreter': see CC-2.5.2);
- *to the profession and users*, by guaranteeing the course will not graduate poor performers who will drag down the market standard.

The main challenge to defending such a testing regime, whether in private or public courses (but not employer-based training), is likely to be pressure from the host institution – if public, through the subsidy, or if private, through high tuition fees or investments – to increase pass rates at admission (student intake), midpoint and graduation, in the hope of attracting more students and/or increasing revenue. Responses are discussed in 13.3.5.

13.2.5.1 *Admissions procedures*

Student selection is a key decision-point in the quest for a training regime that is efficient, fair and responsible. However, as the nature of interpreting constantly changes, and other professions offer promising career opportunities to bright and knowledgeable young people with languages, it is not just a matter of excluding unqualified candidates, but of attracting the right ones by clearly explaining the requirements, challenges and prospects of training to be a conference interpreter.[13]

TG-4.3 sets out a recommended procedure in four steps that the authors have developed and implemented as course leaders:

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13. For example, by offering preparatory modules for interested senior-year undergraduates.

1. Publication of prospectus online, with description of course and entrance exam on website, tips on how to prepare, etc., and public information sessions or open days;
2. Filtering applications through screening of dossiers including language proficiency test scores (IELTS etc.), CV, transcripts and a voice recording (details in TG-4.3.1);
3. Written exam, and voice recording in the B language(s);
4. Aptitude test (live oral interview by panel).

These multiple pre-screening steps are especially useful when large numbers of applicants are applying to be admitted directly into Conference Interpreting. In a 'Y-fork' model (13.2.4.1 above), students can first be admitted on a generic (mostly or entirely written) T&I aptitude test.

In practice, admission procedures may have to be adapted for institutional or other reasons. For example, candidates cannot be fairly and realistically expected to make an intercontinental trip for a test which not more than 25% candidates pass even after careful filtering upstream based on dossier, written exam, and recording. Videoconferencing may therefore be used to interview students in remote locations, provided more than one examiner is involved and the proceedings are recorded to allow for review. As technology improves, it may soon be possible to do a full aptitude test remotely, with an entire panel of examiners and an entire range of tasks.

Another solution is to admit applicants on a dossier (i.e. at step 2) that includes language proficiency test scores (IELTS, GRE) and academic transcripts, supplemented with some kind of self-assessment, such as an 'at home' test kit (at MIIS in Monterey, California, for example, all applicants must take an 'Early Diagnostic Test', a self-administered exam that consists of two translations, an abstract, two essays, and an oral assessment[14]), and/or a telephone interview – with subsequent **streaming** of some students after a short trial period, but with a second chance to switch back later depending on performance over time (see 13.3.5.3).

13.2.5.2 *Midpoint assessment: checking readiness for SI training*
In the full 2-year course described here, and in the 'standard' training model, students do not learn to do SI – now the defining mode of conference interpreting – until the second year (arguments for this course design are given in TG-3.3).

For all the reasons given in the introduction – glamour, mystery, pay and the difficulty of evaluation – plus the fact that Conference Interpreting is an unregulated profession, it is not unusual for people with a knowledge of languages and plenty of naïve self-confidence to find their way into a booth and create the

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14. http://www.miis.edu/admissions/requirements/translationinterpretation (Accessed November 24, 2015).

illusion of SI for a limited time or in a protected environment. The bluff is possible because monitoring SI fully and fairly for accuracy takes very close audience attention and discernment (see for example, Collados Aís 1998/2002, who showed how even experienced assessors were blinded to the inaccuracy of interpretation by plausible, engaging delivery). But an unreliable interpreter can cause serious damage not only to users but also to the profession by destroying trust and user confidence (Donovan 2002).

As Gile (2005) points out, SI should not be taught to students who will not be doing conference interpreting – for example, those taking interpreting as a minor subject at undergraduate level, with consecutive for in-house business purposes[15] – since they will not need it, and "may actually be counterproductive in letting them slip back into word-for-word transcoding" (2005: 148). SI is a highly specific skill that (unlike consecutive) is of little or no value to individuals who will go on to other careers. Also, teaching SI to these students may encourage them to seek conference interpreting assignments without the necessary qualifications (ibid.).

Responsible courses must therefore only teach SI to students who have demonstrated their readiness for this training, not only for 'gatekeeping' reasons, but also to avoid wasted time and effort and high attrition rates. The only responsible and resource-efficient policy is (a) to be very careful in admitting students to initiation into SI; (b) to have the courage to prescribe more preparation when necessary (or even a change of career plan, for those experiencing fundamental difficulties); and (c) for those who *are* admitted to SI training, to offer an intensive, well-thought-out and realistic course, with a strict and realistic Professional Exam at the end that students must pass to graduate (TG-11).

One weakness of traditional aptitude testing for admission to training has been the lack of tasks specifically testing for *SI* aptitude. As a tentative remedy, we have proposed including some 'pressure drills' in the admission interview (TG-4.3.3.5); but pending research to validate their predictive power, we recommend that access to SI training should be preceded by strict selection at a **Midpoint Exam** (TG-3.4.1) – i.e., in a fully-fledged two-year conference interpreting course, after a full year of training in basic skills, including consecutive interpretation, sight translation and advanced (fast, dense) passive-language comprehension, which we consider fair indicators of readiness for SI training, as argued in 3.4.1.1. Outside this context (for SI training of experienced in-house consecutive interpreters, for example), it should be subject to rigorous pre-selection tests. Workarounds to

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15. SI training at undergraduate level or as part of an interpreting 'minor' in generic postgraduate T&I programs has not produced reliable SI professionals (perhaps with some gifted exceptions).

preserve this 'safety valve' against the risk of high attrition or poor quality where regulations make midpoint testing difficult are described in 13.3.5.2 and 13.3.5.3 (streaming).

If there is a significant failure rate at the Midpoint assessment, the school should

a.   review and improve the oral Admission exam, including more tests for long-range prediction of SI ability (TG-4.3.3.5, (v));
b.   consider arrangements for streaming unsuccessful students into other specializations (13.3.5.3 below).

Midpoint testing as currently practised in leading schools usually results in either a clear pass, a conditional pass (if one language pair-direction and/or mode is borderline), or a fail. Due to regulations in some jurisdictions, a 'fail' decision can only take the form of advice to the student to change tracks or career plans, but it is rarely ignored and the effect is the same.

A 'conditional' pass allows the student to re-take the test, either after the summer break (if the problems are minor and could be overcome with practice), or after a(nother) stay in a B-language country (if the problem is with language proficiency). If there are more serious problems of technique, a student may have to repeat the first year, or – perhaps the most common outcome – spend a few (more) months in a B-language country (possibly in a sister school), then return to take the Midpoint tests in March or April, continuing if successful. (Similarly, those who fail the PECI at their first try may repeat all or part of Y2, possibly with a stay in the B-language country).

13.2.5.3 *Degree and graduation requirements*
AIIC recommends that graduation from a (postgraduate, MA-level) conference interpreting course should be conditional on passing a final exam. In TG-11 we recommend that this Professional Examination in Conference Interpreting (PECI) be designed as a criterion-referenced performance test of professional entry-level competence in the modes and language pair-directions offered, using materials that adequately sample the relevant domains and realistic speech genres found on the target market, and assessed by trained raters who are professional interpreters following a clear and fair scoring system with clear assessment criteria, with the requirement to pass all subjects without cross-subject weighting or compensation (11.6.5–6).

In addition to the exam, graduation should also be conditional on a pass in key domain knowledge modules (Law, Economics) and the two parts of the Theory and Practice track (TG-10, TG-12.3), which also checks the understanding of ethics, and knowledge of how the market works, that are both prerequisites for Professionalism (see also TG-11.6.8).

In some jurisdictions, conventions or regulations may forbid making a pass in a final exam of this kind a condition for obtaining a postgraduate degree, or may require that alternative routes to graduation be available to students through coursework, continuous assessment, etc. A realistic exam is vital for credible credentialling, but some other workarounds are discussed in 13.3.5.2.

13.2.6 Responsibilities of a vocational course and external relations

A vocational course in a specialization like interpreting has responsibilities towards multiple stakeholders: the host institution, its staff, the students (and alumni), the profession and the employers of its future graduates.

These responsibilities include transparency, accountability, equity, continuity, a commitment to needs-relevant training, and beyond that, an effort towards constant qualitative improvement.

13.2.6.1 *Transparency: target skillset and market demand*

The first responsibility of a vocational course is its commitment to train students to a defined skillset or profile aimed at an identified need, with appropriate built-in flexibilities. Projecting exact market needs is difficult: fast-changing economies, especially, sometimes find themselves under- or over-supplied with architects, sociologists or computer programmers; and decisions to open, close, upgrade or downgrade courses are ultimately in the hands of funders. But the profession, and specifically its trainers, helped by employers (through bodies like IAMLADP[16]), should have special knowledge and therefore assume part of this responsibility for accurate market targeting.

Neither the profession nor course directors have much influence over the *number* of schools in a particular centre, but at course level they should try to match their intake and training to projected demand – in terms of language combinations, but also more generally, to the market segment(s) that will be most accessible and proximal to students – be it the UN family, the EU, the private business market, or as often a combination of private and IO clients.

Targeting a particular market – broad or narrow – will significantly influence curriculum design, particularly in the Knowledge component, through the choice of texts, subject matters, genres etc. and the content orientation of 'domain modules' (e.g. more parliamentary procedure, or more macro- or micro-economics, etc.: see TG-7.4, TG-11.7.2).

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16. IAMLADP: International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications. www.iamladp.org

A prospectus always holds at least an implicit promise, if not of individual student outcomes, at least of prospects for graduates. For this promise not to be empty, it should describe

- the target skillset (conference or in-house/business interpreting, etc.),
- the types of job available (freelance, in-house),
- language combinations in demand and current prospects, and
- employment statistics of past graduates (TG-4.3.1).

Once the school has decided what language combinations to offer, on no account should perceived market demand influence pass-fail decisions when testing students who have already been accepted; still less should staff discourage students on these grounds.

13.2.6.2 *Committing to improving quality*

A good course should aim not merely to *match* the training profile to market demand, but go beyond it in various ways:

- Aim to exceed market expectations and **train better interpreters**. As explained in previous chapters, the best graduates will be certified for reliable 'journeyman'-level competence, but will still be (promising) beginners in the profession. Good pedagogy will not replace experience; but it can lay the basis for each generation to outstrip its predecessors. To quote Donovan (2006), "in some circumstances – [such as] an emerging or rapidly-changing market situation – courses […] may wish to contribute actively to enhancing quality of interpreting, rather than merely meeting current expectations" (2006: 13).
- Foster **research and development** in key areas like testing, quality, trends in the market for interpreting and changes in communication patterns and the skillsets and profiles in demand (for example, the impact of new technology). Universities expect an MA-level Institute to conduct research, but have never objected to its being oriented to professional practice and training.
- Provide **teacher** and **rater training** (TG-14.5, TG-11.6.5.5), and look out for potential future teachers (and/or researchers) among the best students. This need has become especially pressing in the new century, at a time of aging and renewal of the ranks as the 'baby boom' generation of interpreters moves into retirement (Durand 2005).[17]
- Mature, established schools can also reach out to contribute through training to the **professionalization of other branches of interpreting** (PSI, judicial), include court, community and sign-language interpreting in their courses, or focus on special challenges such as interpreting in conflict zones (CC-2.3.1.5).

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17. In 2009, the average age of AIIC members was 49 (http://aiic.net/page/1906/aiic-a-statistical-portrait/lang/1 Accessed November 25, 2015).

13.2.6.3 *Relations with the market and the profession*

To keep training relevant, the school must nurture close contacts with the market, through the active professional interpreters on faculty and by inviting professionals as speakers, exam raters ot lecturers (such as a local consultant interpreter, or the local AIIC rep, to lecture on the organization of the profession: see CC-11). Formal links of cooperation should be established with major employers who support training institutions (e.g. by participating in diploma exams): the EU's 'pedagogical assistance', or the UN Language Outreach programme.[18]

However, care is needed in relations with the professional community, particularly on the private-market because of sensitivities to competition.

First, schools should **abstain entirely from commercial activities** such as providing interpreting services, renting out booths and equipment or offering interpreter referrals.

Second, schools should **never offer the services of students**, on a paid or unpaid basis, to interpret at meetings (even ones that the organizer insists are 'easy'). Just as a medical school would not make available in-training medical students to perform operations before they have completed their training, conference interpreting students, even advanced ones, are *students*, not professionals, and will not be deemed ready for practice until after they have completed their training and passed their professional exams.

Internships in the dumb-booth at real-life meetings, of course (see TG-9.4.2), are very valuable for advanced students (in S4), but should under no circumstances involve students actually interpreting 'on mike'.

There is no harm in students earning occasional pocket money as 'liaison' interpreters – manning an exhibition stand, for example – or if qualified, doing written translation, subtitling, etc. – but they should *not* do SI in meetings. Upholding this policy will send a strong message about the status of conference interpreting as a serious profession, but will require willpower and moral suasion in the face of financial temptation. Finally, schools should be careful to cultivate neutrality towards different 'clans' or groups around consultant interpreters.

Naturally, any school is entitled to set up an **alumni association**, which may function as a non-profit secretariat (see CC-11.2.5) for *graduates*, confining itself to giving contact details for alumni with the requested language combinations (but not recommending any in particular). It should not charge fees, and on no

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18. https://languagecareers.un.org/content/outreach-universities (Accessed November 25, 2015). In 2015 at St. Petersburg, the MoU network notably proposed ways of improving provision of information to the 24 signatory schools on internship opportunities and vacant posts, and facilitating visits by UN staff to brief students on working practices and preparing for the accreditation tests.

account operate as an agency or service provider. Alternatively, and more simply, the school may maintain a list of all its graduates with their language combinations and current contact details, and provide this list upon request to interested parties – or, for maximum transparency, even just post it on the website (with the choice of opting out for those graduates not wishing to be contacted).

In a nutshell, (non-commercial) schools are not market participants and should refrain from any kind of market behaviour. Any infringement of this rule will antagonize service providers and inflame any latent resentment against schools among freelancers, who may be suffering a lull in employment and be tempted to begin questioning the need to train more interpreters on a saturated market. Justified or not, the antagonism of working professionals – the school's natural partners – can only harm the whole training enterprise.

13.2.7 Best practices: summary

Running an effective CITP means securing the necessary autonomy to apply best practices for quality training in comfortable symbiosis with the academic, economic and political environment. Defending best practices may call for constant efforts of advocacy, and sometimes, active resistance to disruptions. Any effective vocational training course must stay attuned and relevant to the realities of its target market. To address their responsibilities to multiple stakeholders, schools must also be ready to adapt to changes in the market demand for language combinations, modes, specialized domains or setting-specific norms, or to other changes in the skills profile expected of interpreters, including new technologies and patterns of communication. The key guiding principle is quality before quantity.

13.3   Challenges, constraints and responses

13.3.1 General challenges to best practices

Any CITP is likely to encounter various challenges to upholding standards, even when operating in general harmony with its host institution. Donovan (2006) lists some common constraints on university-based schools meeting the AIIC/EMCI training model guidelines due to either external factors such as national educational or language policy, institutional structures or academic regulations, or internal weaknesses, such as inadequate teacher training. These include

1. Establishment and funding:
   a. Reluctance to establish interpreter training at postgraduate level (or restrict it to that level, as recommended for conference interpreting);
   b. When interpreting is not recognized as a separate discipline, 'forced marriages' with modern language or linguistics departments, or integration of (state-funded) courses into higher education structures "which are not in any way designed to meet the specific needs of interpreter training" (2006: 7). Donovan gives the example of the requirement for a continuous assessment element, which she considers more appropriate to knowledge-based than skills-based learning;
   c. General difficulties in obtaining funding;
   d. Over-estimation or artificial inflation of needs, thus increasing pressure for high intake and pass rates, but possibly resulting in over-supply or misalignment with the market after a few years (2006: 8).
2. Intake and class sizes:
   a. Regulations against selection or admissions testing, or that restrict or define these procedures;
   b. Pressure to increase student intake and/or class sizes. This may take the form of a refusal to fund for class hours below a given student-teacher ratio which neglects the coaching, tutorial approach needed in interpreter training, and will also have the effect of ruling out training in relatively little-used languages, despite urgent demand (e.g. new EU languages).
3. Staffing:
   a. Requiring academic credentials for teaching staff, such as a PhD for postgraduate teaching;
   b. Pressure to hire or use academic staff with little or no knowledge or experience of interpreting.
4. Testing and certification: pressure for high pass rates, in both government-funded and (high-fee) private courses (Donovan 2006).

13.3.2 Establishment and status – launching and maintaining a CITP

Founding a University-based CITP, securing and maintaining the conditions for success over time, and achieving and upholding a reputation for quality, depends on four factors: the political will and motivation of the authorities, the continued existence of real market demand, and the committed support and oversight of the professional community.

Interpreter training courses are fragile and often short-lived. Probably hundreds have been launched all over the world – often with official backing, on the

perception of an imminent need – with the stated aim of training *conference* inter-
preters; but almost as many, for various reasons, internal or external, have failed to
produce graduates ready for this market, or have been otherwise mismatched to
demand. Such courses may quietly adjust their sights to supply a different need (for
reliable consecutive in-house or business interpreters, for example[19]), or fail to do
even this, surviving only to bring spurious prestige to a University but with little
benefit to either students or society; or worse, as a dishonest profit-making activity.

The main internal reasons for course failure or devaluation are

▶ withdrawal of *sponsor or host support*;
▶ *misunderstanding* or ignorance of one or more of the basic prerequisites (at
  worst, some courses were never more than language-teaching courses under
  a new and fashionable name);
▶ *market needs overestimated* or misjudged (or subsequent market shrinkage or
  saturation through no fault of the school);
▶ lack of *access to qualified teaching staff* due to location or lack of influence or
  resources;
▶ inability to attract promising, qualified students.

13.3.2.1 *Emerging markets and quality standards*

On new or emerging markets for interpreting, it has been argued that courses
should initially aim for lower standards.

> The basic strategy recommended here is to adapt the methods so as to achieve
> feasible objectives in a first phase, and let time and experience do the rest, while
> planning long-term environmental improvement of the situation. In other words,
> the principles of interpreting should be learned and internalized by the students
> as solidly as in standard environments, but improvement of performance towards
> the desired professional proficiency level should be sought over a longer period,
> beyond the duration of the training course.   (Gile 2005: 144)

This does not seem to us to be the only or even the best policy for emerging markets
in interpreting. It is not clear why high performance standards cannot be aimed
at from the start; indeed this approach risks condoning and even entrenching
poor standards, by enfranchising a group of underqualified practitioners as the
standard-setters and trainers on that virgin market, who will resist the imposition
of higher standards, ultimately hurting the cause of professionalization. Starting by
teaching the full range of techniques but accepting lower standards would hardly
be recommended for training in surgery in a poor African country, for example,

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19. See CC-2.5.

and there are no grounds for believing that 'time and experience' will 'do the rest' – i.e. raise standards to acceptable professional levels – either at the level of the individual or the system. Entropy usually works in the other direction.

A better approach would be to instil the *principles* of good interpreting, as Gile suggests, but also begin by offering strict, high-standard training in *consecutive* interpreting to selected trainees – if necessary coupled with intensive language enhancement. The course could aim first at developing solid basic consecutive competence (cf. NAATI 'Professional Interpreter', CC-2.5.2), and instilling an ethic of professionalism; then, in a second phase, SI training could be offered as an add-on to those with aptitude who have proven their excellence after gaining real-world experience in consecutive. The same high standards for assessment and certification would be applied as on mature markets, and it should be made clear from the outset that conference interpreting is a profession with international (high) standards. This is the approach currently being adopted by various UN and EU supported courses in Africa (e.g. in Accra, Ghana[20]).

13.3.2.2 *Market (mis)match*

A key factor in getting the approval of authorities is identifying and demonstrating the **existence of a market**. But this is not enough – in fact it may work against quality and standards, if at the outset the authorities *over*estimate the needs and/or *under*estimate the time needed for the course to mature while still being unclear about the requisite skills, graduate profile and training prerequisites.

When a sudden demand for interpreters is anticipated, a new course may be launched or favoured with generous funding and/or staff secondments or other pedagogical support from government or a large employing institution. This may happen in the run-up to a large locally-organized international event or a sudden expected increase in business contacts (Taipei 1986); or a country's accession to a major international organization (new EU member states in the 1990s; China's accession to the WTO in 2001). This initial support may initially give the impression of creating a thriving training course, but the perceived demand may be short-term, limited in volume or mismatched to real market needs (cf. TG-14.1). In some cases the market may reach saturation after a few years (Taipei); or the target users may prefer to use English in the organization they have joined instead of their national language (some new EU member states). Alternatively, the course may be located too far from a target market to be viable.

This market mismatch will be reflected in **graduate outcomes**. In a new conference interpreting course created to meet a real and immediate need, the first

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20. C. Donovan, p.c.

graduates may find work immediately in an international organization, and/or regular freelance work as conference interpreters, but as this niche becomes saturated, later cohorts may have to accept quasi-interpreter and non-interpreter corporate and government jobs (for example, in-house, as assistant to a CEO, for example, with occasional consecutive but with no requirement for SI), or be underemployed, supplementing their interpreter income with teaching, translation, etc. (see Lim 2000 and Setton & Guo 2009 for accounts of this phenomenon in Seoul and Taipei).

Even a small course can quickly fill the structural demand in a local market, until a tipping point is reached when just a few new graduates are enough to exceed its incremental growth. When the course no longer gives access to high-level conference interpreting, it will not be able to attract the best applicants, so the quality of its graduates will go down over time, and the less qualified may undercut fees on the market to get more work, damaging the interests of all. As explained, unfortunately for interpreting, there are other attractive and better-paid occupations available to bright and energetic young people with an excellent command of English.

When the market originally targeted dries up or is saturated, the course may have to **adjust its language offering or market focus** (from conference to in-house business or liaison interpreting, for example, or evolving into a combined T&I course), or even **close down**, instead of continuing regardless to canvass for students to train for a specialization that has no real prospects, damaging quality and the credibility of the profession. On some markets it would make better sense for interpreter training courses to be set up as **limited-life entities**.

Market failure of a course is less of a risk when the school is situated in a major conference centre and largely targeted on an organization such as the EU, as several schools in Europe have been. More broadly targeted schools must stay vigilant to ensure that they stay reasonably aligned on changing demand in their various target markets.

13.3.2.3 *Establishment and autonomy: forestalling problems*

With the course's position in the academic hierarchy established, the next and ongoing challenge is to secure the **autonomy** needed to design and run the course to meet its vocational goals. If the design of the curriculum has been entrusted to professionals, there will be little interference in internal teaching methods. However, there is always the risk of pressure on key features of the course. The main areas of potential conflict are addressed in the remaining sections below.

A course leader must be a good negotiator, since conditions and institutional leadership may change and the same issues may resurface in different forms. However, problems can be forestalled to some extent by taking three important steps at the design, planning and validation stage, to pre-empt continual challenges to its autonomy and key features:

▶ Develop **explicit documentation and validation** of the course design, goals, curriculum, timetabling, staffing principles and qualifications, testing procedures (selection, midpoint, graduation diploma and its procedure and status), target competence level and profile desired in final graduates, etc. as officially accepted by the University, to be **enshrined in the prospectus** (a quasi-legal document), and **posted in full on the website** for transparency (cf. 4.3.1). If the course is marketed on the strength of these design criteria, it will be difficult for the university to tinker with them later.

▶ Generate **a sense of ownership and pride** in the course at the level of university leaders (president, vice-presidents); show them international standards and guidelines (such as AIIC's Best Practice Guidelines) and get their commitment to meeting them, as a point of pride.

▶ Appoint an authoritative and **influential external Board of Advisors** that is respected by the University, including, for example, the chief interpreter of the national Ministry of Foreign Affairs, chief interpreter/head of booth of a major institutional employer such as the UN, EU, OECD, or other international organization, and alumni in other prestigious jobs, who can lobby the University if it tries to change some fundamental parameter of the course.

13.3.2.4 *External challenges: noise and mixed signals*

Since interpreting is an unregulated profession, a viable interpreter training course may face any of the following **external challenges** to its training and professionalization goals from the wider environment:

▶ Language departments and private companies advertise interpreting courses to take advantage of the fashion, but without qualifications, experience, staff or understanding of the skillset;

▶ Large corporations or government departments believe they can train their own interpreters, but underestimate the effort required. There are examples of successful in-house training, especially for very specific objectives (e.g. at the EU Commission, or the Chinese MoFA[21]), but usually these are either 'part courses' that focus on consecutive or 'finishing courses' for partly pre-trained applicants, and targeted on a single institutional domain;

▶ Independent/freelance professions are not recognized in the prevailing social tradition or infrastructure;

▶ The new discipline is hijacked, either (a) by educational authorities and established academic interests, who put the T & I institute under pressure to meet academic rather than vocational goals (competitive research and publication

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21. Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

rather than training operational practitioners) and to hire academic staff qualified to teach language and literature, instead of practising interpreters; or (b) by commercial interests who capitalize on fashion and scale up 'training' to make money from tuition fees, but without having the expertise to deliver any kind of genuine professional training;

▶ Hiring preference is given to locals and nationals – making it difficult or impossible to hire instructors with an A in other than the local language;

▶ Certification is uncontrolled: any private or public body – a language school, a university undergraduate department – can issue 'certificates' of interpreting competence, making qualifications unreliable. This may be aggravated by rivalry between universities to produce more graduates. Test-based certification schemes can be all-too-attractive money-spinners, while remaining completely unaccountable;[22]

▶ The (perfectly legitimate) creation, in the same business centre, of **too many courses** training conference interpreters – even good ones – that compete for limited numbers of qualified students and instructors, for a market of limited size.

A bona fide course can do very little about most of these nuisances, except to compete with them on quality and results, backed by some public relations work.

13.3.2.5 *Funding models: private vs public*

Economics is always a constraining factor, but pressure to cut costs or increase revenue may seriously jeopardise the quality of training. A privately-run business model is not immune to this problem, but may offer other advantages.

In **subsidized University-based** courses, tuition fees may be very low – currently only around €255 per academic year at the ESIT in Paris (University of the Sorbonne)[23] – but so is remuneration for adjunct faculty (part-time instructors), in line with national payscales for academics. Salaried posts at higher academic ranks though they may offer better pay, are scarce (e.g. associate professor – but requiring a PhD, and, often, continued research activity). There may be pressure to increase student intake to raise more revenue from tuition fees, or to combine savings on teachers' pay with tuition fee revenue by increasing class sizes; or the subsidy may be indexed to student intake or graduate output. But relaxing standards under

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22. An example is the 'high-level-interpreter'[高级口译] certificate in Shanghai, administered by a university with the approval of the municipal government. Despite its name, on closer inspection employers have found it to certify only a set of language skills that are inadequate for professional conference interpreting.

23. In 2012–13; plus around 200 € for student health and welfare insurance, if not otherwise covered, and a one-off administrative fee of 350 € to take the certifying EMCI diploma examination.

economic pressure will make the progressive, constructive curriculum described in this book impossible to implement due to uneven student qualifications, and lower the course's reputation for quality.

There is no reason in principle to rule out interpreter training to best-practice standards on a **privately-funded business model**. Conference interpreting courses have traditionally been located in universities for two main reasons: to benefit from public funding, and to win recognition and status for the profession as a highly-qualified specialization. Today, this context has changed: translation and interpreting (SI in particular) are widely recognized as professional activities requiring special high-level skills; and with the increasing trend toward privatization since the 1980s, many universities are now run like private businesses.[24]

A private institution that receives no public subsidy must charge **high tuition fees**, which students will pay if they can be fairly confident of securing some marketable qualification. This business model can be viable on a confirmed market, as demonstrated by one or two leading schools. For example, in 2013 the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS, based in Monterey, California, that is part of a private liberal arts college), quoted tuition fees of US$34,970 for a full year (US$17,485 per semester.[25]) At some schools, fees may be much higher for 'international students' than for locals (e.g. Toronto[26]). In Europe, fees seldom exceed the €12,000 (depending on language combination) charged in 2013 for a 1-year interpreting course at Madrid's ICADE Business School (Comillas University), for example.

Fee levels must be assessed relative to market prospects. In Shanghai in 2010, GIIT,[27] a semi-autonomous university-based course, charged conference interpreting students RMB 40,000 for their first year and RMB 60,000 for the second (including a UN internship, with airfare covered), equivalent at the time to around USD 15,000 for the whole course, a sum which a successful student in the first few cohorts could typically pay back after about 20–30 days of freelance work, thus conceivably within a first year. Even after some market saturation, graduates were able to find good government and corporate jobs and recoup their investment in about two years (probably sooner than an MIIS graduate, albeit not necessarily or solely as conference interpreters).

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24. The long-standing course at the University of Westminster (formerly Polytechnic of Central London), reputed for its quality training over three decades but not profit-generating, has now been restructured as a semi-PSI course with many more fee-paying students.

25. http://www.miis.edu/admissions/tuition (Accessed November 25, 2015).

26. Also in 2012–3, Toronto's Glendon College charged CAD $5,544.69 (€4,200) for Canadians or residents, CAD$12,032.46 (about €9,100 at the contemporary exchange rate) for international students.

27. At Shanghai International Studies University (SISU).

A relatively high-fee course may thus be viable in some regions, and may indeed be necessary to attract qualified professional instructors; but there must be a vibrant market within reach. Interpreting must compete for the available talent with other, often more highly-paid professions. If the prospects for success are uncertain, high fees may be a deterrent, particularly for students who must rely on loans.

Independent courses charging high tuition fees will be under more pressure to be accountable to their graduates in terms of employment and income prospects, and offer good return on investment; but again, quality objectives may also be undermined if the school bows to pressure to lower standards at admission, with the aim of generating more income by increasing the intake (possibly under pressure from the host institution), or at graduation (from high-paying students or their families). At worst, an interpreting course may be 'hijacked' and turned into a cash cow, with large student intakes generating big profits from tuition fees and no concern for students' subsequent prospects, or responsibility to users or to the profession.

High tuition fees may also make it harder to stream students into other (usually less highly paid) translation-related specializations (13.3.5) – an important way of avoiding high attrition rates (where a high proportion of students are eliminated or fail to graduate with any diploma) for the Institute as a whole – since students who may have paid very high fees in line with the expected future pay of a *conference interpreter* (as the AIIC guidelines might be interpreted) may object to finding themselves on a less high-paying track. On MBA courses, students paying high fees can all at least expect to receive the same certificate on graduation.

In some countries, such as Japan, more high-level professionals have been trained in **private, 'commercial' courses** than in University courses, mostly in Institutes set up by the large translation and interpreting agencies that have successfully attracted top-level instructors (AIIC members) and grant certificates at various levels. Trainees and alumni are offered assignments from the agency on a freelance basis, according to the level attained, from liaison to conference interpreting; and accreditation at one major school is generally recognized by other agencies. In this model, the dominant entity is the agency, which assumes the functions of interpreter (and translator) trainer, consultant, recruiter as well as PR and business development; all markets are handled and interpreters are ranked by level of competence for these different segments.[28] Fees are said to vary according to rank and seniority, from around 20,000 yen to 100,000 yen a day in 2013 (around US\$215 to US\$1075 at that time). In the case of interpreting schools that are also

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28. C-level: "around 3 years experience, capable of liaison interpreting and consecutive for business meetings; B-level: "around 5 years experience, capable of consecutive in a wide range of specialized subjects, and SI on general topics; is teamed with Class-A interpreter for SI on specialized topics". A-level: "10 years experience or more, can perform consec and sim at a very high level". See also http://www.simul.co.jp/en/interpreter/faq.html#q6 (Accessed November 26, 2015).

large agencies (such as Simul Academy[29]), graduating students can thus transition seamlessly into professional work. Finally, some schools offer training in T&I 'co-ordination', i.e. as an agent. In terms of tuition fees, most private schools seemed to price their courses at around 200,000 yen a term in 2013 (around US$2,150 at that time).

If conditions are favourable for charging higher fees, teaching staff should be compensated at professional pay scales. As a rough rule of thumb, 60% of the school's budget should be kept for remuneration of **instructors** and examiners, leaving 40% for overheads (administrators, facilities, equipment, support staff and utilities).

13.3.3 Leadership, faculty and staffing

Pressures on hiring faculty may be of various kinds:

i. *Imposition of unqualified faculty*: The host institution may try to replace the course leader with one of its 'own people', or to assign staff from the school's parent department – the language and literature faculty, for example – who may not have enough teaching hours on their own courses, and being on salary are therefore cheaper than hiring professional freelance interpreters as externals.

ii. *Academic credentials required for faculty*: In some countries, higher education regulations require all or most instructors in a postgraduate course to hold a higher academic degree (MA or PhD) for teaching at MA level. Few practising interpreters have PhDs, and some highly skilled and qualified practitioners may have a professional diploma, but not an MA.

iii. *Resistance to flexible class scheduling*: The host institution may try to impose fixed regular class times, making it difficult for professional interpreters who teach part-time to combine teaching with their day jobs.

13.3.3.1 *Faculty credentials*

The argument for defending the course's needs on all these points is clear: the core practical skills of any craft or vocation – be it violin, woodworking, surgery or interpreting – should be taught by practitioners, to students with prerequisite qualifications.

On some points the school may have to apply for a special dispensation or exemption, perhaps from as high up as the Ministry of Education. The application should be presented as a proposal to *substitute vocationally-relevant for academically-relevant* credentials, consistent with the authorities' initial decision to admit

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29. http://www.simul.co.jp/en/academy/ (Accessed November 26, 2015).

vocational training within the University, rather than as a plea to waive them. ESIT (Paris), for example, was granted the use of special part-time contracts to recruit instructors on the basis of their professional qualifications.

As explained in 13.2.3, core skills instructors must have practical experience (at least 5 years), plus both a Diploma in Conference Interpreting *and* AIIC membership and/or accreditation with an international organization, and preferably some teaching experience. Higher academic qualifications are a desirable plus, to contribute to research if necessary. On new interpreting markets it may not be possible to meet all these requirements – notably at the diploma, if this is the first course offering a particular language – but every effort should be made to bring in experienced and (IGO and/or AIIC) accredited instructors and if necessary, team them up with experienced local practitioners. Where budgets are tight or there are staff availability problems, retired veteran interpreters may be happy to contribute to the teaching effort on a semi-pro bono or reduced-fee basis (TG-2.2.7), and the help of TAs (TG-2.2.6) will also be useful in some functions.

In negotiations on staff hiring, course leaders will clearly be on stronger negotiating ground if their instructors have had some **teacher training** (TG-14.5). If the course is the first to be set up in a particular country or centre, training should be organized up-front for all prospective instructors, either by inviting teacher trainers, or enrolling instructors in available intensive courses (e.g. at FTI in Geneva[30]), as one of the key foundational steps in the establishment of the course alongside the purchase of equipment and the development of the curriculum, prospectus and testing regime, and refreshed thereafter with regular upgrades and seminars.

13.3.3.2 *Timetable flexibility*

To secure the services of active professionals as instructors, special permission for flexible timetabling may be needed from the host institution.

At the same time, a fair balance must be found between teacher and student interests. A good solution is '**smart timetabling**'. This involves having a fixed weekly timetable with scheduled sessions by language-pair and level in a reserved classroom. Each scheduled session is then designated either as an instructor-led class or as a group practice period, depending on instructor availability in a given two-week period. For example:

French-English – Y1 – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 1400–1615 – Classroom B

French-English – Y2 – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday – 1000–1215 – Conference Room A

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30. http://virtualinstitute.eti.unige.ch/mas (Accessed November 26, 2015).

Typically, two of the four sessions in each case would be classes and the other two would be practice sessions; although all four sessions take place at fixed times on fixed days each week, which sessions will be instructor-led classes and which will be unsupervised (or TA-supervised) practice sessions will vary from week to week depending on instructor availability. Occasionally some minimal make-up across weeks may be permitted (e.g. one class and three practice sessions one week, followed by three classes and one practice session the following week), but this should be minimized, and 'empty' weeks with no actual classes should be avoided. Where necessary, classes may also occasionally be scheduled outside the pre-assigned times by trading slots with other language combinations, under the coordination of the administration, but scheduling integrity should be maintained as far as possible (and rescheduling to weekends or evenings avoided save in exceptional circumstances).

Smart timetabling gives instructors freedom to choose from among the available time slots to fit in with their interpreting calendar (perhaps exceptionally allowing for an absence of up to two weeks, if there is somebody to cover for them); allows the school to allocate classrooms on a fixed schedule for the use of a given language pair-direction (classes or group practice); and ensures that students know where and when they have to be there so that they too can schedule their out-of-school lives (and part-time jobs if necessary). However, staff must keep careful eye on the overall schedule for different language-pairs so that students with complex combinations don't find themselves having to be in two places at the same time.

Some such system is necessary to respect students' interests, but it takes coordination among faculty and administration and a commitment by instructors to teach a fixed number of classes during every two-week period. More flexibility may be needed for rarer languages for which market demand is uneven and all instructors may be unavailable in the same week, but if the schedule becomes too patchy, it may be better for the school to drop that combination.

Another alternative, if not too disruptive for the institution, might be to move some teaching outside the official school calendar, avoiding classes in the busy international conference seasons of March-June and October-November. This would be especially helpful for exams, notably the Professional Diploma, which is seen in the University as a final exam and thus typically falls in June, i.e. in the middle of the high season on the interpreting market (including the annual conferences of several UN agencies), making it very difficult to find enough available and qualified examiners among the small community of working professionals. Some universities also oblige schools to hold admission or Midpoint Exams in these same busy periods.

Even with such flexibility, attracting and retaining qualified instructors and examiners will still be a constant concern for course directors. In a publicly-funded institution with low, subsidized tuition fees, located in a major conference centre,

flexible scheduling may be more important than pay to local professionals who are usually happy to help out for very modest remuneration provided they lose no interpreting work; but where tuition fees are high (MBA-like), instructors will naturally not want to be taken advantage of and expect to be paid accordingly.

On some emerging markets, and in the early years of interpreter training in new language combinations, there is usually a shortage of seasoned professionals available to teach. This is not exclusive to interpreting, but regularly occurs with the introduction of new skills and technologies. Temporary solutions include team-teaching with educated consultants to assist with any language not known to the interpreter-instructor (TG-2.4.5), part-time recruitment of retired senior colleagues (TG-2.2.7) and intensive teacher training for the first young graduates (TG-14.5, TG-12.4.2.2).

In no profession, however, do students prefer to be trained by instructors who are not fully competent themselves, nor can we recommend it.

13.3.4 Course design and structure

While courses need significant autonomy to provide relevant training for interpreters, cohabitation and some interaction with other translation specializations can be beneficial, provided the course stays focused and prioritizes its core skills.

13.3.4.1 *Relationship with other Translation specializations*
Sharing an Institute with a professional written translation course has generally proved to be a viable and beneficial arrangement, and for a new interpreting course, 'bunking up' with this older and more established programme may help to weather the first few years. Adding more specializations (community interpreting, dubbing and subtitling, translation technology and project management, etc.) provides further opportunities for streaming or switching (13.3.5.3).

It may therefore make sense to run multiple such specialized courses within the same institution; or alternatively, creating a generic T&I 'stem' curriculum, *alongside* full specialized courses (conference interpreting and full translation), which could train interpreters in a more limited skillset (CC-2.5.1–2.5.2) for some market niches, such as corporate in-house T&I, community/PSI focusing on healthcare or legal interpreting, etc., on a modular credit system. (A full professional qualification in *court interpreting,* however, will require full conference interpreter training, adapted appropriately to this domain, setting and conventions, with an additional compulsory legal knowledge module.)

However, translation and interpreting, in particular, are quite different skillsets (CC-2.1.2). Short of extending training to three or four years, the full 'combined T&I' course model (13.2.4.1 type (c)) may lead either to an overloaded curriculum

or to insufficient mastery of both specializations, and cannot therefore be recommended. Students will also find it difficult to take both separate courses simultaneously, as is allowed in some Institutes. At best, a combined T&I course might be suited to certain markets where there is not (or no longer) enough demand to support exclusive practice for new graduates as conference interpreters (e.g. Taiwan), or where a significant number of employers – private, government and some international organizations (such as the IMF, World Bank and some UN regional offices) require both translation and interpreting.

Kwiecinski and Feder (2005) describe a reasonable curricular compromise that was found at the Poznán (Poland) school to meet the multiple needs of (i) the traditional national 'bi-active' (ABsim) interpreting market; (ii) the multilingual EU, which Poland would soon join; (iii) certification for Polish legal interpreter-cum-translators (an important historical function of the school); and (iv) the large and lively market for liaison interpreting. Curriculum reform measures to meet the new challenges without losing touch with the traditional local market included:

- adding some ABC combinations;
- teaching some liaison/'dialogue' interpreting in both T & I student groups;
- some written translation (of administrative documents) for interpretation students;
- teaching Area Studies and locally-relevant knowledge modules, such as 'European Institutions', as common courses for T & I.

The ongoing Europe-wide harmonisation known as the 'Bologna process' has facilitated an upgrade to full-time MA-level interpreter training in some countries, but in others may have had the negative effect of reducing course length to one year.

It may also be possible and beneficial to allow some choice of optional credits in other specializations for pure skills-development reasons, such as some written translation for interpreting students needing to improve their precision and quality of expression (and some interpreting for translators needing to improve their speed).

13.3.4.2 *Keeping the curriculum focused*
As we have seen (13.2.4.2), the vocational goal of training viable practitioners in a reasonable time leaves no room for anything more than the key components we have outlined – core Skills, Language and Knowledge complements, Professionalism and ethics, group practice and private study.

An interpreting course may come under strong pressure from educational authorities (and sometimes national law, especially if the course confers an MA,

for example) to include compulsory but less relevant requirements, such as a **written thesis**.

Some schools have accepted this requirement and/or obtained some flexibility in its form, and use the opportunity to encourage students' interest in training or research on an interpreting-related topic. Others (e.g. ESIT, Paris) have obtained permission to replace the thesis with a short (15-page) reflective report on a hands-on interpreting experience, such as a dummy booth practice session, volunteer work, or a visit to an organization (or in written translation, a terminological study). However, we might argue that doing a piece of more substantial research at MA level is part of the mental training an interpreter needs (see discussion in TG-12.4).

To avoid overload in the vocational interpreting course proper, if students must complete a thesis in order to earn an MA in addition to their professional certification (in schools that offer two separate credentials – see graduation requirements below), they should be strongly encouraged to **postpone** writing it until after their professional diploma. If necessary, the school should request a longer deadline for completing this component of the degree (provided also that fees are not prohibitive for post-diploma students working on their MA theses but not taking classes).

Since significant time is also needed for group practice and private study, **add-on modules** and **auxiliary subjects** must be chosen carefully to avoid course overload. Excessive 'thematic' cramming with classes on computing, biotechnology, etc. will be counterproductive, with exhausted students ending up with only vague and confused notions on many different topics (Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989: 85). Given the almost unlimited range of potential topics that a conference interpreter may be called upon to handle, and the difficulty of pinning down currently 'hot' topics, the only viable strategy, for all but the mainstream domains of law and economics, is to encourage ad hoc **targeted reading** (CC-7) and cultivate **adaptability** to new subject matter and preparation skills.

13.3.5 Student selection, testing and certification

The **high attrition rates** and **low student numbers** in conference interpreting courses are a traditional sore point in the relationship with host Universities and educational systems.

In the leading European schools, pass rates at all stages of interpreter training, from admission through midpoint and final exams (and through to accreditation tests for employing institutions) have traditionally been much lower than in other university courses and vocations. To quote Gile,

> One of the most problematic points in conference interpreter training has to do with admission conditions and graduation. In spite of some research done on the subject, it is very difficult to predict upon admission who will reach the required level of proficiency at the end of the syllabus, and failure rates are very high, often much higher than 50% of the graduating class.   (2005: 142)

Donovan's (2006) figures are even starker when combined with these: "Whereas in most postgraduate courses in France students enrolled expect to obtain a diploma, the ESIT interpreting section accepts at entry only about 20% of applicants and of those only about half are accepted into the second year" (2006: 14). Also, in leading schools like ESIT, half or more of those may then not pass their final diploma at the first attempt. Some schools have higher pass rates throughout – say 70–80% at Midpoint and again at the Professional Exam – but many of these graduates may not really be ready for the conference interpreting market, even as promising beginners, being more suited for employment as in-house/general consecutive interpreters (cf. NAATI 'Professional Interpreter', CC-2.5.2).

To meet their responsibilities to all stakeholders (13.3.6), course administrators will need to defend a strict selection and testing regime. The key arguments are quality and responsibility: the rationale is to admit (and pass at Midpoint) only students who are qualified to benefit from the course without wasting their own and the school's time and resources, and graduating only those who are ready to work acceptably and professionally on the market, even though this may mean small class sizes and low student-teacher ratios.

13.3.5.1 *Admissions procedures*

In some places, rules aimed at ensuring fair and equal access to postgraduate studies, or more mundanely, to increasing revenue from student fees, may make valid and stringent admissions testing difficult or impossible. Acceptable workarounds must be found if the quality of the training is to be preserved.

Some countries (e.g. Austria, and until recently, Italy) prohibit selective entrance exams for postgraduate studies altogether. In ordinary French universities, a BA entitles students to enrol in a postgraduate course without taking an eliminatory entrance exam. To escape this obligation, ESIT (Sorbonne, Paris) was able to win special status as a *grande école*, exempting it from this rule. Another alternative might be to abandon the academic MA qualification and offer only a Professional Diploma (13.3.5.4).

Where no such institutional solution is available, the only remaining options are to take all students, and stream them within 6–8 weeks (see 13.3.5.3) – or accept high attrition. If neither of these options is allowed, it may be better to take conference interpreter training out of the university system altogether, and rely on privately-run courses.

In some jurisdictions, rules on testing procedure in academic disciplines may turn out to be incompatible with testing aptitude for a performance-based discipline like interpreting.[31] For example, regulations may require some component(s) of the admission exam – politics, theology, English – to be mandatory for all applicants to a particular Institute, or even for access to postgraduate studies nationwide. If a common component for T & I applicants is mandatory, the written entrance exam can be designed as the sole test for admission to written translation, but only a first stage screening test for applicants to interpreting, who must then go on to take the oral exam. This is not ideal, since the aptitudes sought for these two professions are somewhat different, and there may be disagreement between the two departments on the first stage test design and criteria. Two options present themselves, if allowed:

i.   *Different cut-off criteria or weighting* between test items or tasks for admission to translation or to the oral test for interpreting. This will not work, however, if the aim of the common exam is to 'recover' students on one side who fail on the other;

ii. An exam in three parts, with some common items*,* some designed specifically to screen candidates for the interpreting section, and some specifically to qualify for translation without further testing.

External economic pressures
The most serious challenge to selection and the quality of training as a whole comes in the form of pressure from the host University or education authorities to admit more students for the sake of increasing revenue, either from fees (for tuition and/or exams) or from subsidies, when these are indexed to student numbers – for example by setting a fixed *minimum* intake quota to be filled regardless of qualification (i.e. a 'norm-referenced' as opposed to a 'criterion-referenced' entrance test).

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31. When the first interpreter training course in Taiwan was launched in 1989 (GITIS, at Fu Jen University), the grade on the oral part of the test was capped at 20% of the total, following an ancient Chinese tradition of anonymity in examinations for government officials, added to a traditional reliance on written exams. An exemption was finally obtained through advocacy and negotiation, on an analogy with other performance-based disciplines (e.g. drama, singing, dancing…). Similarly, in China, rules for the recently-established nationwide Masters in Translation and Interpretation (MTI) prohibit admission test examiners from seeing the names, pictures or CVs of candidates, who can be identified only by a number.

Admission test pass rates: some examples

Schools rarely advertise pass/fail (still less overall attrition) rates, so information is patchy. Several of the older schools, including FTI (formerly ETI) in Geneva and the ESIT in Paris (more recently) use a written test to filter candidates for interview. ESIT in Paris may receive up to 450 applications each year in thirty or forty different combinations of 12 or more languages. Typically, of around 200–250 applicants to a European school, 120–150 might pass the written test, of whom 20–30 will be admitted after oral interviews.

   Courses with an established reputation or new courses in emerging markets may receive hundreds of applications each year, most of which will not meet minimum qualifications, particularly in language proficiency, even when these are fully and emphatically explained on the website.

   GSIT in Seoul, for example, reports taking about 10% of candidates for admission (Lim 2000: 129).

   An example will illustrate the trade-offs between optimal selection for quality and institutional constraints. One of the first semi-autonomous Chinese-English Conference Interpretation programmes housed in a Chinese university in the early 2000s received between 160 and 210 applicants each year, all of whom had to be tested because university policy forbade the course from requiring an IELTS score as a pre-filter for proficiency in English. All applicants therefore took a written exam and voice test (reading out loud: see TG-4.3.2.2 (v)), yielding a shortlist of the most promising 20–25 to proceed to the oral interview. From among these, typically 2–4 would be admitted unconditionally, and 3–4 more rated as 'possible'.

   However, the host institution required a further list of ranked borderline ('C') candidates to bring the total number up to 10, and to form a waiting list to replace any of the strong or acceptable candidates who did not accept an offer to enrol. A total of 8–10 would end up being enrolled (for the single bi-active class comprising the annual cohort in this school), including some strong, some acceptable, and some borderline candidates.

Internal pressures

Internally, a school or admission panel might be tempted to relax standards to admit at least one or two students in a particular language combination just to keep it going. This bias can be avoided by giving instructors flexible contracts allowing for their re-assignment to team-teaching or group classes (or if they have the necessary expertise, to an auxiliary subject such as 'International Institutions' or 'Parliamentary Procedure').

   Relaxing requirements for admission can only be made acceptable by **subsequent streaming** (see below) preferably within a few weeks of admission, to save time and avoid discouragement. If a streaming system is in place, the mechanism should be carefully explained in the prospectus, along with all other necessary information about the course, and students who are below standard at admission should be reminded of the forthcoming test and implications..

   There may also be pressure to increase **class sizes**. One option is to combine several language pair-directions in a single class (preferably team-taught). Another possibility is to seek special funding for additional classes and instruction from an

employer with a specific need for trained interpreters in a particular combination, such as the EU, or a national government, though such sponsorship may put pressure on the school's autonomy to pass or fail the students.

13.3.5.2 *Restrictions on in-course testing*

For reasons of efficiency, SI quality assurance and 'gatekeeping', we have recommended rigorous and potentially eliminatory testing at midpoint. However, it may not be possible to implement an in-course eliminatory exam in some jurisdictions, including those now in the post-Bologna reform European Higher Education Area, where the norm will increasingly be a modular system in which each module must be tested individually at the end of each semester. If the traditional skills progression is also abandoned (with consecutive and SI training both starting from the first semester, as is now the case in some schools), then the only remaining bulwark against either high attrition or declining quality will be a much more predictive selection procedure at admission, that also screens reliably for aptitude to learn SI to modern market requirements (see CC/TG-9).

The gatekeeping function of a (pre-SI) Midpoint Exam can of course still be achieved if some credits (e.g. consecutive) are designated as prerequisite for taking other modules (like SI) – and are rigorously tested. Other systems may be possible, such as combining an end-of-semester test in each module with a weighted grade for the CA component (assignments, attendance and participation, etc.). Wherever possible, the same criteria should be applied, whether in continuous assessment or tests, for obtaining the necessary credit on the relevant first-year or first-semester modules.

Alternatively, high attrition in the conference interpreting track can be made more acceptable in both human and other resource terms if students can be switched to other specializations.

13.3.5.3 *Streaming*

Some schools take applicants based on Step 2 of the admissions procedure alone (screening of application dossiers: TG-4.3.1), then stream students into different specialities – one of which may be conference interpreting – after a few weeks or months of generic or written translation training, and/or preparatory training for interpreting, with observation for aptitude.

The pros and cons of direct vs. delayed admission have been discussed in TG-4.4.3.2; but in either case, leaving students the possibility of switching to another track or specialization at some point, leading to a different degree, seems ethically far preferable to summary exclusion from the course. Streaming also provides a gentler and less wasteful way of offsetting high attrition at Midpoint and final Professional exams. Also, in jurisdictions where regulations make some

or all aspects of recommended selection or in-course testing procedures impossible to implement (13.3.5.1–2), some streaming solution may be the only way of keeping control over standards.

For streaming to be possible, some or all already earned credits must be recognized and validated as partial fulfilment of another course (for example in Translation Studies, or general T&I with short liaison-level consecutive) that is offered either at the same or a sister or networked institution.

13.3.5.4 *Degree and graduation requirements*

In the (ideal) standard model, students must pass a realistic final diploma exam (PECI) to graduate with an MA in Conference Interpreting, which thus has the dual status of a professional qualification and an academic title.

However, there is a high potential for conflict between the credentialling function of this qualification and the traditional academic requirements of an MA. For example, national legislation may forbid making a postgraduate degree conditional on a pass in a final examination, and may also require mandatory completion of a substantial written thesis. Educational authorities may understandably be reluctant to let students who fail the PECI (sometimes up to 50% or more) leave with nothing. Schools may thus come under pressure either to relax the standard required for passing the diploma, or to imply that professional competence has been acquired by all students who have completed the 'coursework'.

To avoid either of these outcomes, which would unacceptably downgrade and disqualify the degree, the most viable solution may be to delink the (academic) MA degree from the (credentialling) Professional Diploma. Students who complete their two years of training and pass the final performance test (PECI) are awarded a Professional Diploma in Conference Interpreting which certifies them as ready for professional practice in a specified language combination. A **separate** Master's degree is available to those students who complete their coursework and other general academic requirements (e.g. a thesis). This delinked model thus offers students the possibility to receive two separate qualifications, one professional, the other academic. Some students will qualify for both and will graduate with both the Professional Diploma and the Master's degree. Those who do not pass their PECI will not qualify for the Professional Diploma, but will still be eligible to receive a Master's degree subject to completion of other requirements.

Crucially, however, since this Master's degree would not certify any level of professional interpreting competence, **it must be labelled as a degree in 'Translation Studies' or similar generic terms, but under no circumstances whatsoever should it be labelled 'in Conference Interpreting', to avoid any risk of confusion with the Professional Diploma.**

The greatest danger of this delinked model is confusion on the market as to what the Master's degree signifies, and students who fail the PECI may be tempted to offer their academic Master's degree as 'proof' of their competence in interpreting. In any delinked system, then, each kind of qualification must be clearly and distinctly labelled, with an explanation of the difference clearly posted and communicated. This solution is not entirely satisfactory, since we can never expect the majority of clients to understand the finer differences between different interpreting skillsets, but it seems to be the least of several potential evils if we want to preserve high quality with low attrition in a Conference Interpreting qualification that is also an MA degree.

Another option to maintain high standards and clarity about qualifications while avoiding high rates of 'absolute' failure, which are brutal and wasteful, is to consider certifying students at different levels, depending on performance, with the possibility of upgrading later. This option is discussed in 11.7.5. Once again, however, certificates must be clearly labelled, with explicit descriptions of the competencies associated with each credentialled level (see CC-2.5).

13.3.5.5 *Pressure on selection and testing: summary*
High attrition and low pass rates are wasteful in any kind of training. The responsible solution, however, is not lower standards for advancement and professional qualification, but a regime combining three or possibly four features:

▸ better admissions testing to minimize 'false positives' at intake;
▸ better testing post-admission, to avoid 'false negatives' at Midpoint and Professional Exams;
▸ streaming options that allow students to leave conference interpreter training but still graduate in another T&I track; and
▸ (optionally) certifying students at different levels of professional competence, or in skillsets suited to different forms and settings of practice (CC-2.5, 11.7.5).

Relaxing standards at selection – and especially, graduation – gives illusory short-term gains that will very soon be outweighed by the damage to the school's reputation. Admission and downstream success rates could also be improved by

i.   pre-admission preparatory courses offered to undergraduate seniors who aspire to become interpreters (although the jury is still out on their value: see 14.2); and
ii. more transparency, by publishing complete information about courses and requirements.

Schools would then be able to publish their statistics more openly, and assume the responsibility of explaining the reasons for different pass rates in different specializations, rather than being on the defensive.

13.3.6 Responsibilities of a vocational training course

Whatever the institutional status or 'business model' of the programme, the perceived interests of key stakeholders – its sponsors or host institution, its graduates' future clients, and the interpreting profession as a whole – may not obviously coincide, and course leaders will often have to compromise and lobby to meet their various responsibilities successfully.

13.3.6.1 *Responsibility to a sponsor or host institution*

In the case of a university-based school, any sustainable programme must be a partnership between the professionals and the educational authorities and host institution, in which one side provides professional expertise, and the other, funds and infrastructure, including benefits such as access to speakers and experts from other disciplines, with efforts made on both sides to achieve a working symbiosis. The course leader (or Director of the T&I Institute) will usually have to lobby and fight to secure the necessary flexibility, and the institution will have to make some allowances to accommodate an optimal vocational training course in a traditionally academic environment.

But the interpreter-trainers must also accept the responsibilities of their 'establishment' as a university (albeit vocational) discipline – notably by recognizing that being able to *do* is not tantamount to being able to *teach*, and therefore making an effort to upgrade their educational performance both individually and collectively – i.e. including teaching but also testing and management.

Some requirements of the host institution may in fact contribute directly to quality and thus to meeting the school's responsibilities to its other stakeholders. Schools do well to undertake the following activities, all of which contribute to the credibility of the training and the status of the interpreting profession, as well as improving the course's stability by securing its recognition in the university:

i.   Providing **teacher training** for current and future generations of trainers (pedagogical qualifications cannot be taken for granted in professional interpreters);

ii. Doing and encouraging **research:** historically, this was a condition of accepting most of today's leading courses in the academic structure in the first place, and will usually always be a requirement of an MA-level Institute. Relevant research can also contribute to refining pedagogy;

iii. Improving transparency and accountability (and the perception as well as the reality of a fair deal for students) by developing valid and reliable **grading, testing and certification procedures** that can be related to wider existing norms and systems, while meeting the specific vocational needs of the course;

iv. Developing appropriate forms of interaction and cooperation with other parts of the university and the community, such as exchanges of teaching in targeted

areas, joint seminars, community service, etc. This is standardly required of staff in many universities, and a fair balance needs to be found between pro bono work for the university and community and time allowed for remunerated work elsewhere.

Some of the more successful schools have achieved a viable symbiosis with their hosts, permanently securing the necessary concessions and flexibilities, while learning to recognize their side of the bargain by adapting to the University environment and its norms, which may reflect the legitimate concerns of a much wider constituency. Adaptations that can easily be made include using a grading scale compatible with the national mainstream (a conversion table is enough), or accepting a continuous assessment element (11.7.2), preferably confined to knowledge components (thematic modules, area studies, theory and knowledge of professional practice and conventions).

A successful 'commercial' course – though we have few examples – may maintain high standards through enlightened self-interest, for the sake of a quality brand image. However, neither system, public or private, can be relied upon to deliver optimal results without the key element of *pressure* from the market (users of interpreting) and the profession – in other words, their stakeholders must hold training courses to their responsibilities.

13.3.6.2 *Responsibility to users and the profession: quality and gatekeeping*
Training for a profession entails instilling both high technical competence and professional ethics and standards of conduct (TG/CC-10, CC-11), goals which are obviously frustrated if students start working prematurely as interpreters with inadequate skills, or in unprofessional conditions. Leading schools are therefore often reluctant to admit 'experienced' applicants who have been working on an unprofessionalized grey market and may not easily accept what may be a new and more restrictive professional ethic along with the upgrading of their skills.

Unfortunately, without the legal recognition enjoyed by the medical and legal professions, which forbid practice without a licence, interpreting schools cannot legally refuse admission on these grounds, nor forbid students from working on the market while in training, but can only use moral pressure. Every effort should be made to explain that working without proper qualifications, or with a short-term and ethically elastic attitude to market and professional practices, will damage the school and the profession as well as the reputation of that individual student (13.2.6.3). Even though it may be difficult to enforce legally, the rule against accepting conference interpreting (formal consecutive or any SI) assignments before graduation should be clearly stated in the prospectus and at the entrance test.

13.3.6.3 *External relations*

Any vocational training school should stay in touch with the life of the profession and the community of trainers, to keep abreast of new trends and ideas in training, changes in demand, etc. In addition to general networking, the course leader should

▶ cultivate close relations with major institutional recruiters (eg EU, UN family, etc.) and invite their representatives to exams and to give lectures;

▶ attend (personally or by delegation to a deputy) the meetings of a handful of umbrella organizations that discuss and promote interpreter training and interpreting needs. These include IAMLADP[32] which provides information about recruiters' needs and expectations and takes part in cooperative training schemes; CIUTI;[33] EMCI, for Europe-based or EU-oriented courses; the UN's Conference of MoU Universities;[34] and the EU-JCIS[35] Universities Conference, an annual event of some importance for networking and cooperation, and (if invited) meetings of its Schools Committee.

13.4   Summary

Having listed basic prerequisites for an operational CITP in the Introduction, we can now highlight the determining factors in the lasting success of any such course, regardless of institutional status or 'business model':

▶ Proximity and access to a proven market;

▶ Direction and instruction by professional interpreters who are in contact with the target market and enjoy sufficient autonomy in designing the curriculum, hiring faculty and defining standards and procedures for rigorous selection and testing, with expert support (TG-12);

▶ Skills-focused curriculum, with small class sizes;

▶ High standards maintained by pressure from both market and profession.

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32. IAMLADP: International Annual Meeting on Language Arrangements, Documentation and Publications.

33. CIUTI: Conférence internationale permanente des instituts universitaires de traducteurs et d'interprètes. www.ciuti.org

34. http://www.unlanguage.org/Outreach/Mou/default.aspx

35. EU Joint Conference Interpreting Services, Directorate General of Interpretation, DGI SCIC.

There are a handful of long-established and successful interpreting schools, but their key features remain hard to achieve in each new country and region without a laborious process of negotiation and trial and error. History shows that strong advocacy on the part of professionals has always been necessary when setting up a new course, at least in the initial stages, along with sustained demand from the market and ongoing external oversight to keep standards high over time. The requirement for autonomy and the highly specific curriculum design, staff qualifications, etc. will often conflict with the established policy of the academic institutions or higher authorities on which schools depend for their status and funding.

Interpreter trainers have therefore generally had to negotiate hard with their host universities or education authorities for permission to organize their courses along vocational rather than traditional academic lines (student thesis, PhD requirement for teachers, etc.) – a battle which must be fought anew in each emerging market. The best tactic for course leaders is to present their demands as proposals that will improve the impact of the course and thus the reputation of the university, and to involve and interest higher officials in the school's mission, making its work tangible to them, for example by inviting them to a multilingual mock conference. Reference to AIIC standards can also be very helpful, as these provide an external benchmark that reassures university authorities (C. Donovan, p.c.).

The quest for autonomy and proper conditions for effective training is not the only challenge that courses may face. There may also be unexpected changes in demand, or mismatches between the languages offered by applicants and those required by the market. In such cases, schools must be ready to adapt by attracting and training temporary specialized staff for new language combinations, or when necessary, suspending training in some language combinations.

Privately run CITPs, though currently a minority model among leading schools, may be viable in wealthy societies with good market prospects. There will also be competition for the best students from other vocations that offer more solid-seeming career prospects, promotion, and higher pay. High tuition fees are justified if they pay for excellent instructors, but will be counterproductive and end up damaging the school's reputation if they 'buy' leniency on standards, especially at the final professional diploma.

Given funding, facilities and an appropriate location, experience suggests that a course's success is proportional to the presence of the basic requisites set out at the top of this chapter, especially in regard to curriculum design, staffing, selection, and certification. Other important factors are the market relevance of skills taught and practice materials used, simulation of real communicative situations, and the avoidance of course overload.

Finally, if there is a real demand for quality interpreting, and the level of competence needed to perform in the real world is made clear to students, the school

can and should openly and accountably describe its procedures and requirements for admission and graduation, publish statistics on pass rates, and provide up-to-date and detailed advance information on graduates' prospects.

Table 13.3 Key features of a successful Conference Interpreter Training Programme

	Standard Model (AIIC guidelines)	Additional recommendations	Typical conflict with host institution/funders
Level/status	Postgraduate-level (MA or above)	'Professional Diploma' may offer more flexibility than MA	If MA, may come with bureaucratic/academic requirements not compatible with objectives
Duration	At least 1 year	2 full years with option to repeat one year	May conflict with (supra-)national harmonisation (e.g. Bologna Reforms)
Admission	Aptitude test	See TG-4	Pressure to increase intake
Course leader	Respected senior professional	Preferably with knowledge of theory and pedagogy	Attempt to impose ('academic') appointee/ outsider
Instructors	Professional interpreters: AIIC members and/ or IGO[36]-accredited, preferably with some teacher training, to cover all language-pairs into their A	Min. 5 years experience as conference interpreters (500 days); 10 years preferred. Pedagogical skills a must, to be upgraded and developed in teacher training	Possible pressure to use in-post language teachers. Staff qualification – may require PhD to teach at MA level
Curriculum	Mostly skills (consec, SI) Some theory, ethics/ practice	Max. 30% auxiliary subjects (L, K, ethics, professional practice etc.)	If MA course, may be pressured to overload with academic & other mandatory courses
Final exit requirement	Professional Examination: • 'Market-readiness' criterion • Consecutive and SI in all pairs/directions • External examiners • Pass required in all tests	As recommended in TG-12, especially: • realistic speeches • clear assessment criteria • rater training	Pressure to increase pass rate at expense of standards. Academic requirement (e.g. thesis)

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36. IGO: intergovernmental organization.

	Standard Model (AIIC guidelines)	**Additional recommendations**	**Typical conflict with host institution/funders**
Diploma issued	MA or Prof. Dip. in Conference Interpreting, with ABC languages listed clearly	Consider certifying at different levels / skillsets (CC-2.5.2, TG-11.7.5)	Pressure to grant a degree to all students, discounting final exam or replacing it with continuous assessment (see 13.3.5.2)
Class size		<8; 4–7 ideal	Pressure for larger classes
Contact hours	[EMCI]: 400 hours TOTAL, of which 75% = core skills.	At least 10 hrs /wk core skills classes, min. 4 hrs/wk/lang. pair, more into Bsim (i.e. ~700 hrs in core skills over 2 yrs)	Pressure to reduce staffing budget
Non-interpreting classes	Economics, law, institutions, translation…	Tailored to needs of interpreting students, little homework, preferably taught in most students' B language	In some jurisdictions, possible imposition of generic courses prescribed for all students/postgraduates (politics, ideology, theology…)
Full-time/part-time		Full-time course only: many hours of (group) practice crucial, plus self-study (L and K enhancement)	Pressure to offer short or part-time (e.g. evening) courses
Timetable	Flexibility to accommodate instructors' professional engagements	Smart timetabling (13.3.3.2): also fair to students	Pressure for fixed timetable
Practica	Internships, dumb-booth practice	Students do 'dumb booth' practice only, do not interpret for real meetings	Pressure to use students to interpret at real meetings
Location	Near large, active market for professional conference interpreting	Crucial for access to the best instructors and market contact	Institutions located too far from market may want to offer training (motivated by profit or glamour)
Facilities	Realistic conference room with proper booths and equipment	Speech and text archive, kept updated; full video/AV equipment	Attempt to make do with existing (but inappropriate) language-lab facilities
Teaching assistants (TA)		A valuable asset in faculty and learning community	Institution may overload with other duties, stifling their professional development (and income)

Table 13.3 (*continued*)

	Standard Model (AIIC guidelines)	**Additional recommendations**	**Typical conflict with host institution/funders**
Tuition fees		Congruent with expected income, market reality	Private self-funded course may offer more autonomy, but vulnerable to capture in hard times. High fees may exclude talent, and increase pressure to relax selection at all stages from admission to certification
Commercial activities		Banned – the school is not a market participant.	Host institution may want to make money by providing services on the market, directly or through an affiliate.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

AIIC Interpreting Schools and Programmes Directory:
    http://aiic.net/directories/schools/lang/1 (Accessed November 26, 2015)
Arjona-Tseng 1991: The creation of a Graduate Institute for T&I in Taiwan
Caminade and Pym 1998: Translator-Training Institutions
Harris 1997: Translation and Interpreting Schools
Seleskovitch and Lederer 1989/2002: Pédagogie raisonnée de l'interprétation
    (English edition (1995): A Systematic approach to teaching interpretation)

CHAPTER 14

Lifelong and teacher training

14.1   Introduction

This book has described a full two-year course for training market-ready conference interpreters, but shorter, more intensive or specialized courses also play a role in further training for working professionals, or in upgrading the skills of practitioners in various settings.

Interpreters are needed whenever mediated linguistic communication service is extended either to entire nations, as in the successive enlargements of the European Union, or to new groups within a society, as in South Africa's new constitution of 1996, which officialized 11 national languages, or with the gradual enfranchisement of linguistic minorities such as the Deaf or immigrant communities engaging with their host society as students, patients, applicants or litigants in hospitals, offices, courts or schools.

A sudden demand for interpreters may also arise when a region welcomes a global event for the first time, like the Seoul Olympics of 1988 or the Shanghai World Expo of 2010; or when international or regional courts and commissions must be set up to seek justice or reconciliation at turning points in history, as in 1947 in Nuremberg (Gaiba 1998) or 1995 in South Africa (Lotriet 2000, 2002). In some cases, the training courses organized (sometimes hastily) to meet these needs have evolved into permanent programmes. The biggest wave of democratic (linguistic) inclusion of the last century, with the rise of multilateralism and the UN after the Second World War, launched an entire new profession with its schools, conventions and professional association (see CC-2).

There have always been more untrained than trained interpreters serving the world's language mediation needs at different levels of skill. Sometimes these needs will change, or become more specific or demanding, making it worthwhile to individual interpreters or their employers to upgrade or refresh their skills. Court and community interpreters may be encouraged to learn note-taking to support longer and more accurate consecutive; freelance or staff conference interpreters may want to add or upgrade languages, refresh rusty consecutive skills, or acquire specialized knowledge in areas like law, finance or medicine to meet the needs of a new market; and interpreters in any setting will often benefit from a short course in stress management or the use of new technology.

In short, there is a range of interpreter training needs that can be met by short-term, intensive or modular courses. However, as history has shown, and as should be clear from these books, reliable professionals with a full range of skills cannot be trained 'from scratch' in a crash course. Short or intensive courses are only appropriate to meet limited goals, either (in initial training) as preparation for proper professional training, or (in further training) to upgrade, update or refresh one or more components of a working interpreter's current expertise – her language proficiency, knowledge, skills or professionalism[1] (L, K, S, P: see CC-2.4).

The following sections discuss various kinds of short, specialized courses and their benefits and limitations.

Initial or basic training (14.2) can be provided to undergraduates to prepare them for a professional course, or to consolidate or upgrade skills in 'self-trained' practitioners working in a familiar and relatively narrow domain (in-house corporate interpreters, for example), by adapting modules from the first teaching chapters of the Complete Course (CC-4 to CC-7). The objectives set for such programmes can sometimes be defined in terms of the skillsets or competence levels described in CC-2.5.

The main function of short courses is to provide further training to working professionals (14.3), either to upgrade or refresh some component of expertise (L, K, S or P), or in complementary career skills. Such courses are difficult to compare and evaluate, but those offering intensive practice with coaching are clearly more effective (14.4).

One of the most important further-training functions is the training of interpreter trainers (ToT). An outline of a **teacher training syllabus** that can be assembled from modules in these books is set out in 14.5.

In community and public service interpreting, resources for full-length training may not be available, but successful training for these settings must include on-site practica. An example is described in 14.6, with links and pointers for further reading.

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1.   In terms of the Professionalism component, courses for any interpreters preparing to work in most other settings (e.g. community, court, conflict zones) will need to include an introduction to role norms and conventions, with case studies and role playing simulating tricky situations. Currently, some short courses for conference interpreters offer training in negotiating or other business-related skills, but not ethics, to our knowledge; however, any course in professional consecutive should in our view include such simulations and discussions of appropriate solutions on the 'optimization/mediation continuum' (CC-5.8.4, CC/TG-10.4).

14.2   Initial or basic training in interpreting

In this book we have argued that anyone wanting to become a professional (i.e. solid and reliable) interpreter does well to begin by learning how to listen and speak better (and differently in some ways) than the average person, and acquiring certain mental habits and approaches to communication.

To meet an urgent and historic need, as described above, interpreters have sometimes had to be trained in a few weeks. These were emergencies, and the organizers of these crash courses agree that such training is never optimal, leaving training to be completed on the job (Lotriet 2000).

However, these interpreters were not trained from scratch. Most of the successful graduates of the intensive training organized in Nuremberg in the 1940s and South Africa in the 1990s were 'mature' students with significantly more experience than fresh undergraduates of the world at large, and/or of similar activities – like translation or journalism – involving analysing, listening, translating or speaking under pressure (see Gaiba 1998; Lotriet 2000; Baigorri-Jalón 2004a/2014).

14.2.1   Preparation for professional training

One example of a short course designed as an *introduction* to interpreting might be a module offered to 3rd or 4th year (sophomore or senior) undergraduates, typically (but not necessarily) in the modern languages department of a university, to prepare them for full professional training in a postgraduate programme (CITP). As indicated in Table 14.3, such a course might sample all the modules and exercises of CC-4 (Initiation) and continue as far as 'Cue-words and Links' (CC-5.3).

14.2.2   Initiation to interpreting for mature students

For mature students, the possibility of shorter or accelerated initial training in some interpreting skills depends crucially on the starting abilities of the trainees and a clear definition of the goal. Where there is less urgency, a happy medium between just the first few weeks of the Complete Course and the full two years might be viable for limited-domain in-house applications, in particular – for example, two or three months to teach full Consecutive with notes (CC-5) to students with solid experience of short liaison consecutive, or proper SI (CC-8–9) to seasoned whisperers and consecutivists.

'Foundational' skills similar to those needed for interpreting are already present in other professional profiles. Applicants for interpreter training often include people with backgrounds in law, journalism or science, who will have a head start

in some respects (given strong language proficiency). A journalist, for example, would have extensive relevant knowledge as well as interpreting-related skills such as reporting speech, concision, summary, research and documentation (perhaps also a form of note-taking), and if s/he has worked in audiovisual media, also public speaking. Science and law both require rigorous logic and analysis, and lawyers will usually have a feel for discourse and persuasive rhetoric, and in principle also good listening skills.

For initial training in a strong community/PSI interpreting skillset, for example (CC-2.5.1, Table 2.1) – with or without note-taking – parts of the syllabus described in CC-4 and CC-5 could be combined, as shown in Table 14.3. below, in custom-made courses for in-house translators and other linguistically-qualified staff, with language or knowledge enhancement and any other adaptations needed for the specific post.

Initial training with SI
For many years, the programme at the University of Westminster (formerly Polytechnic of Central London, a 'leading school') trained conference interpreters in both consecutive and SI in a one-year postgraduate programme (24 weeks, or six intensive months) that in recent years[2] was geared mainly to the needs of the European Union.

AIIC recommends a minimum of a year for full training with SI for the general conference interpreting market, but for an in-house or staff application (i.e. in a limited domain in a familiar environment) a mature trainee with strong language proficiency and the necessary knowledge could conceivably be trained to provide reliable SI after four intensive months with a mixture of modules taken from CC-4 through to CC-8 (Table 14.3), depending on starting profiles and course objectives; or if full consecutive with notes were not needed, perhaps three months, starting with active listening and deverbalization, then some intensive consecutive and sight translation before moving to SI.

14.3   Further training: upgrades and refreshers

The main function of short and intensive courses should be to offer opportunities to practising interpreters, whether 'self-made' or partially or fully trained, at any level from journeyman to master, to upgrade or refresh aspects of their competence. Applications may range through

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2.   Like some other CITPs in the English-speaking world, this programme was downgraded to a generic T&I training course in 2012.

a. adding, upgrading or refreshing **skills** (consecutive, or less typically, sight translation or SI), **languages (**adding a C language or upgrading a C to a B, or a Bcons to a Bsim), **knowledge** for a new domain or specialization, or cultural and topical knowledge of a B- or C-language culture;
b. learning to work with **new forms of communication** or **technology** (remote or tele-interpreting);
c. ancillary and **career-supporting skills** such as small business accounting, client negotiation or stress management;
d. conceivably, learning **new role norms and conventions** for practice in a new setting (for example, for a conference interpreter planning to work in more adversarial situations, or those requiring more or less active mediation, such as court, community or conflict settings);
e. general all-round intensive practica working with challenging materials and personal coaching and feedback.

14.3.1 Adding or upgrading Skills

Add-on skills can help extend interpreting competence for

a. Interpreters who have been trained only in (or have learned to do) SI and want or need to acquire full consecutive skills;
b. Interpreters who have been doing consecutive informally and want to learn note-taking, to upgrade the service they can offer from short/liaison to full consecutive with notes;
c. Initiation to SI for experienced consecutive interpreters; however, this may be more challenging, since discourse processing habits acquired in the first year of a full course (especially deverbalization, CC-4) may be difficult to instil in the more mature student with any kind of interpreting experience – and bad habits such as literal transcoding or lack of analysis may be hard to break. Self-trained individuals who have been successfully initiated to interpreting in this way and have also learned full consecutive, but not SI, are relatively rare. They might include promising students who had to break off training in a serious programme after a year for family or personal reasons, or 'self-made' de facto practitioners who have tried or begun to teach themselves SI, but need more structured training and/or are seeking some kind of certification.

Refreshers for professionals
While most professional SI interpreters have been trained in consecutive, many will find themselves on a purely SI market, and will need to refresh their consecutive skills if a new market opportunity in this mode arises. Refresher courses in the skills of full consecutive have occasionally been organized in leading interpreting schools.

14.3.2 Adding or upgrading languages

As traditional school language teaching has sadly confirmed in many people's experience, languages are learned rather than taught; and interpreting schools have usually left language competence entirely to the student.

The bulk of the work of learning a foreign language must be done by the learner, as dynamically as possible through a combination of listening, reading, speaking, conversation and social mixing. Many interpreters have some knowledge of one or more other languages that they have picked up at some point, and that they might wish to bring up to professional level as a C, or possibly (especially if learned in childhood) even a B language. But even after a lot of personal hard work, a language in either of these 'states' – acquired as an adult but somewhat artificially, or absorbed as a child, but now rusty – needs exercising and patching in various ways, as well as a lot of on-line and deliberate practice, to take the interpreter the last mile and instil the confidence to use the new combination on mike for the first time. There may be few opportunities for practice off-line without going back to school (some schools will welcome alumni to relevant classes without enrolling, but it may be difficult to participate actively) or finding a dumb booth in a real meeting – and for some less-spoken C languages, occasions may be rare.

Short courses can offer targeted guidance and coaching for interpreters wanting to **add** a language to their combination (upgrading it from mere familiarity to a viable C through intensive practice and exposure), or **activate** a language, converting a C into a B (for consecutive or simultaneous), or a Bcons into a Bsim, for work into B in SI (*retour*).

The 'last mile' in these cases will typically mean (i) broadening and deepening comprehension, for adding a C, and (ii) for upgrading to a B, working on clarity and register control (CC-7.4.2) and additionally, for Bsim, extra speed and syntactic agility. Upgrading to active B in particular needs individual attention and feedback – ideally, sharing the booth with a coach with the appropriate combination.

Exercises and methods for passive and active language enhancement are described in CC-7. The key drills for adding, upgrading and activating B and C languages are summarized here.

14.3.2.1 *Adding a C language*
The goal for a C language is comfortable comprehension – leaving 'room to spare' for dealing with other, general interpreting difficulties – over a wide range of genres, linguistic standards (accent, dialectal variation), subject matter and speaker styles. C-language enhancement can be sub-divided into

▶ *deepening*: consolidating familiarity with more of the connotations of words and the pragmatic expressiveness of the language (*le génie de la langue*), developing a feel for the mood and tone conveyed by pause patterns, intonation and stress, and word order choices, and generally learning to hear what is implicit and 'between the lines';

▶ *broadening*: increasing passive vocabulary and comfortable understanding of a wider range of accents, registers and subject matter.

A short course can more realistically aim to *test* and *situate* participants with regard to their mastery in these two dimensions, and to some extent contribute to 'broadening', exposing them to different types of speeches, accents and subjects. Recommended exercises include

i.   reading text aloud in the proposed C language, preferably with difficult words and long involved sentences;

ii. gist extraction or memory-synthesis exercise on texts with complex arguments and long involved sentences (e.g. legal).

14.3.2.2 *Upgrading and activating: C to B and Bcons to Bsim*

Activating and strengthening a B language is the main focus of CC-7, but for convenience we have listed the key points to focus on, and exercises, in Tables 14.1 and 14.2 (see also Mackintosh 1989).

Table 14.1 Key B-language activation drills (see also CC-7.4.2 and CC-7.5)

Active B competency	Focus	Drills (examples)
Syntactic flexibility, agility	Chunking, starting/continuing sentences Using cohesive links Using conditionals, subjunctives, counterfactuals	B to B paraphrasing Convert direct to reported speech
Clarity and precision	Expressing logical relations precisely	Selected texts for consecutive and written and sight translation
Register	Practice in register control	Register switching (CC-7 Appendix)
Delivery	Intonation, prosody Melody, rhythm, momentum	Reading aloud, close shadowing of native speakers, consecutive and SI
Lexical range	Expand and/or consolidate active vocabulary Internationalese jargon, clichés, in B Ready equivalents, solutions for 'untranslatables', abbreviation conventions, useful turns of phrase	Drills as in CC-7.5; group brainstorming alternating with polishing (successive passes) in sight translation or simultaneous

Table 14.1 (*continued*)

Active B competency	Focus	Drills (examples)
Pragmatic dimensions	Using linguistic devices specific to the language (e.g. contrasting intonation (English), discourse adverbs (German), marked word order, rhetorical questions, etc.) to express mood and emphasis	Study recorded debates, talk shows, etc. (preparation by instructor) Practise hedging, suggesting, affirming etc. (text conversion)

Table 14.2 Language enhancement exercises for intensive upgrades (C and B)

Exercise	Develops or tests	Materials	Variations	Pedagogy
Reading aloud	delivery skills	Texts with long sentences	Vary speed	record, review
Paraphrase	all aspects of B competence	Target different genres (formal, dense, redundant)	B-to-B ST, consec (no notes), online (highest level)	group brainstorm for alternatives *then* instructor suggestions
Gist extraction	C-language competence	Sophisticated texts (CC-4.2.2.1); meeting minutes	Varied text genres	
Clozing	collocations	Prepared (labour-intensive, build up a collection)	In text vs. online (CC-8.2.1.2); size of deleted units	
Polishing (second try)	lexical range, register	All exercises	ST, consecutive, SI, A-B or B-B	
Shadowing	speed, accent, prosody, collocations	Good native speakers, slow then faster speeches	Vary genres	record, review
Compression and summary	coping from a (new) C, and into B (CC-9.3)	Fast and dense speeches in SI (C into A/ A into B)	Varied text genres; speeches with slides	

Interpreting exercises are also good for language enhancement, under certain conditions, including

► Sight Translation, but always under a time constraint;
► Consecutive interpretation, but with discussion limited to linguistic features;
► Simultaneous interpretation for overall practice, with or without recording and feedback as agreed with trainees (depending on objectives, levels of confidence and expectations).

14.3.3 Expanding or adding domain knowledge

Working interpreters may occasionally see a shift in the subject matter on their market, or move to a region where certain kinds of technical meetings are common, or simply wish to extend the range of meetings that they can comfortably accept without excessive preparation time, or develop a specialization (such as medical or highly technical financial interpreting). A well-structured lecture course – better still, with interpreting practice – can be more effective than hours of reading and personal research. (Also, not all schools offer modules in basic areas as international law or economics, or get as far as introducing more specialized but oft-encountered topics such as common law vs. civil law systems, or intellectual property law.)

Even the very broad general knowledge required of a professional conference interpreter will be far from adequate to cope with some highly technical or specialized domains in which interpreting is frequently required. Legal discourse in particular has become pervasive in international meetings with the increasing attention to intellectual property, commercial arbitration, the expanding complexity of trade law, the ubiquity of litigation of all kinds, and last but not least, the activity of international Courts of Justice (in the EU or the Council of Europe) and international criminal courts (e.g. the ICC in the Hague) hearing human rights and war crimes cases. Seminars have been organized in recent years to familiarize interpreters with legal concepts, terminology and procedures and contrasting national systems, and prepare them for the special challenges of interpreting in adversarial contexts or conflict situations, such as coping with vicarious trauma (see CC-11.3.1.2).

14.3.4 Ancillary competencies: technology, voice, stress, career

Interpreters also benefit from attending short courses open to the public to develop useful skills such as voice coaching, stress management, personal accounting for free-lancers, negotiating, etc., or learn how to use new technologies and forms of communication like videoconferencing (CC-9.4) 'smart pens' (TG-6.6.4) or software for virtual learning.

Voice training is offered in several established interpreting schools, and is now occasionally available for working professionals. AIIC has organized workshops with individual attention to help participants learn how to develop their voices and enhance tone and placement as well as breathing, posture, tension release, articulation, delivery (range and dynamics), and even emphasis, intonation and phrasing.

Negotiating skills seminars are now regularly offered with AIIC sponsorship to help freelance interpreters attract new business and develop the skills and confidence to conduct the negotiating process effectively, in competition (or partnership) with the increasingly active range of intermediaries such as translation agencies or professional conference organizers (cf. CC-11).

In summary, Table 14.3 lists a range of possible targeted short courses with different aims, their likely beneficiaries, the modular elements from chapters in the Complete Course that could be used in their design, and the skillsets and settings they might give access to (see CC-2.5, Tables 2.1 and 2.2).

Table 14.3 Short and intensive courses: contents, goals and durations

Course	Trainee, qualifications	Content and method (recommended)	Objective (CC-2.5)	Duration (recommended/typical)
Initial/foundational training				
Initiation and short consecutive (no notes)	Natural interpreter: has some L, maybe some K about 'clients' (family and friends) 4th year language student: some L	CC-4: Dos and don'ts, public speaking, liaison/no notes interpreting	Community/PSI cf. NAATI Level 2, ('Professional')	4–6 weeks
True (full, long) consecutive with note-taking (additional option: sight translation)	Casual in-house 'business' interpreter L, some local K, some S (own note system for short consecutive) SI interpreter, 'self-made' or trained in-house, but never learned consecutive	CC-4: Discourse Modelling/ Outlining, Idiomatic Gist, Sight Translation CC-5 (complete).	Community PSI and some legal, in-house cf. NAATI Level 3 ('Paraprofessional')	8–10 weeks
SI for students with L, domain K	In-house (usually self-made) consecutive interpreter	CC-6 and CC-8, some of CC-9	In-house SI	2–3 months
SI for students with L, K and some relevant S	Mature student (career change; some profiles only)	CC-4/5 (selection), CC-7–8 accelerated, CC-10, CC-11.	Domain-specific SI	3–4 months

Course	Trainee, qualifications	Content and method (recommended)	Objective (CC-2.5)	Duration (recommended/typical)
Refreshers and upgrades				
S: General intensive professional-level SI+ refresher/upgrade	Professional conference interpreter	Challenging materials, individual coaching	Raise general competence, self-confidence	2 weeks
S: Consecutive for SI practitioners	Professional conference interpreter, rusty consecutive	CC-5: Selective review of Note-Taking I–III + Advanced Consecutive	Refresh/reactivate consecutive skills	1–3 weeks
L: Language/culture refresher, practicum	Professional conference interpreter	CC-7: Language enhancement drills, lectures, visits with terminology	Upgrade/refresh L (B or C language) and/or K	typically 1 week, 2+ weeks recommended
K: Knowledge in special domain (e.g. medical, legal, finance etc.)	All comers, usually professionals	cf. TG-7.4	Specialization	3 days–2 weeks
Ancillary and career support				(typically)
Voice coaching				≥1 week
Anti-stress, relaxation				≥1 week
Trauma management				≥1 week
Use of new technology				≥1 week

14.4 Evaluating upgrade and refresher courses

14.4.1 'Area Studies': cultural-linguistic refreshers

Refresher courses for professional interpreters may include

▶ Lectures on aspects of contemporary local culture, history, art, law, politics, economics and topical issues, with explanation of standard and local usage and terminology;
▶ Visits to museums or other sites, and rest and recreation with a local flavour;
▶ Residence with local families;
▶ In some cases only, consecutive and booth practice to activate a prospective B or C language, with or without individual feedback or coaching.

Little or no independent evaluation is available for these courses. Feedback from participants tends to be overwhelmingly positive, even when there is little or no practice or structured teaching, perhaps because participants are by definition motivated in advance and glad of an opportunity to spend time in a pleasant place and a culture they are attached to, meet people, make contacts etc. (particularly when the course is subsidised or counts as a training mission). The contribution such events make to socializing the profession is positive in itself; but in terms of serious skills upgrading, a week of lectures and visits, even intensive and with debriefings on vocabulary, etc., may at best offer some temporary 'refreshment' or updating of knowledge about current social issues and buzzwords, but is unlikely to make a lasting or significant difference.

14.4.2 Upgrades with practice and feedback

To refresh skills (e.g. consecutive), a week of intensive practice *may* help if very well designed, with variety and coaching, but at least two weeks is preferable for tangible results. A comparative survey of feedback from different types of short course shows that the most appreciated are structured, intensive courses with opportunities to practise on challenging materials, individualized and non-judgmental feedback, coaching and advice – and importantly, for freelancers whose reputation is at stake – in a protected environment.

14.4.3 Initiation to new technology

These courses, aimed especially at trainers, are warmly appreciated as long as the instructor is gifted and communicative, and theory is kept below 50% and fully illustrated and demonstrated with opportunity for hands-on practice. Surveys show

that the more concrete the content, the more participants wish the seminar could have been longer. However, as in other contexts, class size and especially homogeneity in participants' starting (technical) knowledge emerge as potentially critical to the success of a workshop.

14.5 Training of Trainers (ToT)

The AIIC Training Committee (AIIC-TC) and some schools run regular workshops and seminars for interpreter trainers, usually lasting about a week and focused on themes like testing, materials selection, classroom feedback or teaching consecutive or simultaneous, as well as voice and stress-management training. Like other further-education courses, these are well received by attendees, a surprising mix of young or would-be trainers, more experienced instructors, and even programme directors.

While all such courses are popular, numbers and budgetary considerations have sometimes made it difficult to thoroughly screen attendees and stream them into homogeneous groups with similar goals, backgrounds and levels of prior knowledge or experience. As a result, instructors from conference interpreting and PSI programmes may often sit together in the same class with undergraduate language teachers who have to teach a module on interpreting. These differences in participants' qualifications, like 'tech-savviness' in new technology workshops, have sometimes been a complicating factor.

Tailoring seminars to attendees' explicit wishes is particularly fruitful, ensuring maximum relevance and satisfaction. To cite one example, one recent general seminar on training was able to draw up the following issues to be addressed based on participants' completed questionnaires:

i. *Students' problems*: concentrating, stress management, use of symbols in note-taking, coping with fast speeches, how to spot progress in their own skills and capabilities (feeling of standing still), occasional boredom;

ii. *Trainers' problems*: finding suitable note-taking exercises; assessing speech difficulty; grading material; keeping second-year students motivated; teaching second-year students to cope with any speaker; coping with mixed classes (different levels of ability, language knowledge, mother tongue);

iii. *Other issues*: basic assessment criteria; syllabus and curriculum design; overview of best interpreter training courses; useful exercises for introducing SI; progression in the teaching of SI; teaching blind students consecutive.

Training of trainers is available today in at least one full-blown one-year course, at the FTI [ex-ETI] in Geneva, in a new approach, adapted to the era of social media and online networking, that advocates combining or alternating online distance

learning with traditional face-to-face teaching in 'blended learning', through the use of new technology such as computer-based Virtual Learning Environments (VLE). The course (itself organized on this basis, with trainees participating to a large extent through the dedicated portal online, after an introduction to the distance learning method), offers theoretical content on the interpreting (cognitive) process and developing expertise, plus practical modules on teaching consecutive and simultaneous, curriculum design and class planning, voice training, evaluation and basic research methodology.

The effectiveness of remote training of conference interpreters has still to be validated, however. Instructors' recommendations to beginners to go at their own pace, and find the right match between modern and traditional, or online and face-to-face teaching, are well taken.

To date, only a minority of conference interpreter trainers have received substantial teacher training. Most pick up key principles and techniques in-house by study and example, and/or attend the intensive 1–2 day workshops that are regularly organized by the AIIC Training Committee and are usually tightly focused on one topic, such as giving feedback or introducing students to note-taking.

Today, short ToT courses with active trainer-trainee participation are filling a gap, but they can only complement, not replace proper training for all interpreter trainers. Only a fully-fledged course based in an interpreting school can really offer the necessary opportunities for observation and hands-on practice (and perhaps also theoretical lectures). This can be offered as a complete free-standing course (with an MA qualification, for example), or as a major module in a PhD in Interpreting Studies (thus significantly increasing its employment value: see TG-12.4.2.3).

The next section outlines content and methodology for a comprehensive training course for conference interpreter trainers, based on components from the successive chapters of these books.

14.5.1 A ToT syllabus: outline and components

A comprehensive qualifying course in interpreter training should ideally include all the following components:

1.   Short history of interpreting, professionalization and interpreter training to provide background.
2.   Course design and rationale: present and discuss
     a.   *Course design*: start from job analysis, definition of goals and intended profile of graduates, "work[ing] back from the reality of practice on the market" (Donovan 2006).

    b. *Rationale for key design principles* (admission criteria, progression, realism in materials and exercises); and for prioritizing (course duration limits, risk of overload);

    c. *Possible variations* in emphasis on different settings, sectors (private, government, international organization), modes, and languages (both combinations and directions), depending on market or region; implications for choice of course modules, exercises, balance of skills teaching and supporting courses;

    d. *Institutional or regulatory constraints*: minimum criteria for viable interpreter training; arguments for defending course design and resisting academic components and extras likely to cause course overload (vocational nature of training; differences from language teaching, and from written translation – live, first-pass performance, etc.) selected sections of TG-2 and TG-3 as required, TG-13.

3. Detailed course description:

    a. Selection criteria and baseline prerequisites (language, knowledge, personality…) (CC-3/TG-4);

    b. Building blocks and interacting components (L, K, S, P: CC-2.4, TG-3);

    c. Theoretical underpinning of course design and progression: cognitive skills acquisition, coordination/integration, experimentation, consolidation (TG-3.2).

4. Classroom practice

    a. Student profiles: what to expect (TG-4);

    b. Planning and preparing a class: locate class in the progression timeline, identify students' particular current difficulties; select and prepare materials and exercises, make sure equipment is available, announce topic and class objectives, assign speakers to prepare speeches or play different roles, etc. (TG-2);

    c. Use of different class designs and configurations; contribution of teachers with same and reverse combination (e.g. who do the same A into B, or whose A is the students' B); 'triangular' system for rare languages; etc. (TG-2.4);

    d. Choice of materials and exercises (TG-2.5.5);

    e. Class procedure: brainstorming, turns, role-play; encouraging mutual evaluation, critiques, comments (TG-2.5.6 – 2.5.8);

    f. Time management, avoiding getting sidetracked (TG-2.2.1–2.5.4);

    g. Giving feedback (TG-2.5.8);

    h. Teacher demonstrations (TG-2.5.11);

    i. Training into B: specificities (TG-7.3).

5. Encouraging and guiding students' extra-classroom study
   a. Language enhancement (advice, tips) (TG-2.6, TG-7);
   b. General knowledge enhancement (advice, tips) (TG-7.4);
   c. Students' group practice (when is intervention, structuring or supervision necessary) (CC-5).
6. Theory and Practice (mirror module for ToT): main sources; models, diagrams, metaphors; how much theory to use, when and how to use it; how to show relationship between Theory and Practice and move smoothly from one module to the next.
7. Testing and evaluation: admission, in-course, Midpoint and final exams (PECI)
   a. Basics of testing theory and practice: test design (validity and reliability, constructs and criteria, CRT, standard-setting, rater training, scoring and IRR) and implementation (feasibility, management): TG-4, TG-11 for general testing principles and PECI;
   b. In-course assessments, staff coordination (TG-2.2.8, TG-3.4);
   c. Recommendations and counselling to students, especially after tests (TG-2-5.8, etc.).
8. Simulations, mock conferences; internships, dumb-booth practice, other practica (selecting, organizing, briefing, debriefing) (TG-9.4).
9. Teaching professionalism (craft/conditions, ethics, service/business) (CC/TG-10, CC-11).
10. Career guidance and mentoring (TG-9.4).

14.5.2 Methodology

Teacher training can draw on a range of methods (several of which, however, will require the agreement of students and staff in the school where the training is based):

i.   Theoretical presentations (for relevant background science: theories of communication, cognitive science, research findings on memory, attention, processing capacity, multilingualism, expert performance etc.);
ii. Instructor demos and mentored hands-on practice with class of volunteer student 'guinea-pigs';
iii. Independent study and readings, with submission of précis, report or seminar paper;
iv. Trainees practise choosing appropriate input materials for all stages of training, from induction to professional exam, and test them themselves to hone their understanding of factors in difficulty;

v.   Formative assessment of student performance: participants watch videos of actual classes or exams featuring students at different stages in the course, doing different exercises, and are asked to analyse the performances, assess strengths and weaknesses, and advise on a pedagogical approach. (Some EMCI schools have used videos of actual admission interviews, comparing criteria and results of the original and trainee-teacher juries.)

vi.   Proficiency assessment of student performance. Participants practise applying explicit assessment criteria to score recorded student performances reliably (see TG-11.6.5 on rater training and pre-qualification);[3]

vii.   Experience-sharing, discussion of ideas, difficulties, solutions…

14.6   Training interpreters for non-conference settings

Because of the wide diversity of situations in which informal interpreting is done in the community, and the glacial pace of enfranchisement of linguistic minorities, the structured training of community, public-service, legal and healthcare (spoken and signed-language) interpreters has only recently begun. Initiatives have also begun to train interpreters for work in humanitarian and post-conflict settings. All such courses train a narrower skillset than conference interpreter training (no SI, and note-taking only in a few cases) and are therefore much shorter – but they must prepare trainees for more varied, unpredictable and psychologically and emotionally poignant situations than are commonly met in conference interpreting, putting the focus more squarely on the interpreter's role and issues of mediation. Indeed, this relative complexity of the Professionalism component (role, ethics, mediation) may partly explain the slowness of professionalization of interpreting in these settings. The greater use of role-playing is therefore a salient feature in this training (see e.g. Bancroft and Rubio-Fitzpatrick 2011b).

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3.   Note that this can only be done with the permission of the students concerned – who may since have become respected practising professionals and teachers. A possible workaround might be to use audio only, perhaps even *disguised* audio with software-altered voice quality that leaves intonation intact.

14.6.1 Community interpreting

Interpreting in non-conference settings – liaison interpreting, escort interpreting, business interpreting, court interpreting etc. – had always existed, but had traditionally accounted for only a fraction of the total volume of professional interpreting services, at least in Europe. These modes "carried no prestige and were simply considered as poor relations to 'the real thing' (i.e. conference interpreting), requiring no skills other than language proficiency. They were therefore thought to deserve neither specialist training nor specific research work" (Garzone and Viezzi 2002: 5).

Shlesinger (2007) observes that in community-based interpreting, "trained practitioners are still the exception to the rule, with most of it being performed by untrained, *ad hoc* bilinguals. Training in community-based interpreting […] is relatively new, if indeed it exists at all." Perhaps because of the fragmented nature of this market, and low expectations bred by long neglect, "the users of the service have, more often than not, been content with the status quo, and oblivious to the weaknesses of the existing 'solutions'" (2007: 148).

In many countries where community-based interpreter training does exist, it is confined to accelerated, concentrated certificate programs conducted in non-academic frameworks (Schweda Nicholson 1986, 1994; Lotriet 2002; Angelelli 2004: 91–95; Mizuno 2006), often as part of a continuing education course,[4] or even as part of a language enhancement programme (Sandrelli 2001), whereas elsewhere (e.g. Sweden) all community interpreter training is in an academic setting.

However, pressure for adequate training has been building for some time, and some isolated structured courses are beginning to emerge. Recognizing that the best that can be expected for the moment is a workable compromise that builds on the existing inadequate and makeshift solutions, Shlesinger (2007) describes a course taken by forty-seven BA students at an Israeli university, working between Hebrew and a total of seven minority languages, that combined basic theoretical grounding (60 hours) with extensive on-site volunteer work and subsequent discussion and debriefing. The course required no exams or term papers, but was "designed to foster social activism and political awareness, while maintaining acceptable standards" (147).

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4. e.g. NetworkOmni's flagship eight-hour training programme 'Caring with CLAS: cultural competence in healthcare', based on standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate services defined by the Office of Minority Health of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Community interpreter training course (Shlesinger 2007)

This course consisted of two classroom hours (90 minutes) per week for a full academic year (30 weeks), and four hours per week (for 25 weeks) of volunteer work as community-based interpreters.

A.   Theoretical: lectures on four themes:

1. *Language rights*: language and identity, politics, empowerment, prospects of equality, culture; migration as a psychosocial stressor; latent prejudices against language minorities
2. *Community interpreting*: types, settings, history; implications of intercultural differences; cultural competence
3. *Challenges faced by the interpreter*: role definition, 'neutrality' vs. 'involvement'; professional ethics; coping with stressful situations
4. *Settings*: NGOs, official bodies, interaction between professionals and volunteers.

B.   Practical (three components):

i.   *Role-plays, simulating interactions* in the settings
ii. *Note-taking techniques* and exercises on longer stretches of discourse
iii. Domain-specific *terminology*

Volunteer assignments were done in a wide range of settings (students could state a preference): hospitals, mental health clinics, special needs centres, kindergartens, police stations, human rights NGOs, social services, and visa or welfare offices dealing with immigrants and foreign workers.

As Shlesinger points out, "far more than in the case of conference interpreting, programs for the training of community-based interpreters require a close relationship between the training institution and the institutions where the participants render service" (ibid.: 153; cf. Gentile et al. 1996: 72).

The most fruitful dimension of this course came from the weekly class reports and class presentations after each assignment, followed by group discussion of tricky issues, issues of role definition, difficulties in interaction with staff and patients, status recognition and communication, etc.

These sessions confirmed a number of points for future course design – in particular, that ideological dilemmas, emotional stress, and issues of professional norms and ethics could not just be touched on theoretically in lectures, but must be confronted and prepared for. In some situations

> rules of behaviour laid down for the organization for good and proper reasons may contravene some aspect of the professional conduct of the interpreter […]; training programmes must equip people to deal with these situations and resolve these dilemmas.   (Gentile et al. 1996: 72, cited in Shlesinger 2007: 162)

The special challenge of community interpreter training is well captured by Tate and Turner ([1997]/2002, writing specifically on SLI:

> [we need to make clear to trainees that] grey goes with the territory, and that would-be professionals had better learn to live with it, and indeed to embrace it. Being able to act competently within the grey zone is an integral part of their professionalism. Enabling trainees to get to grips with this – including learning the underpinning values and reaching an understanding of the complexity and multi-dimensionality of their practical application – will take time and probably substantial periods of apprenticeship. (Tate and Turner 2002: 382)

Still, an abundant body of material is gradually accumulating on which to build effective courses in community training that are rich in case studies and simulations, such as Wadensjö's (1998) extended corpus and analysis of role and interaction in interpreted police interviews, or Tebble's (2011) analysis of the structure and recurring interactive features of interpreted medical consultations; and most recently, some complete video recordings of authentic events and cases (see e.g. Metzger and Roy 2011). For a sample of community interpreting training courses now being advertised, see references and links in Further reading.

14.6.2 Interpreting in conflict situations

The second Iraq war in particular drew attention to the especially difficult conditions in which interpreters work in conflict situations, isolated, mostly untrained, at best exposed to pressures making neutral and ethical practice all but impossible, at worst punished by death for serving occupying or enemy forces. Such personnel routinely face situations, decisions and personal risk to life and limb that courtroom, community and conference interpreters can only guess at, and unlike international agency or diplomatic officials, enjoy no special protection under international law.

Training may play some small part in protecting these interpreters and increasing the chances that their work furthers peace through understanding rather than conflict and injustice. This training should ideally address not only interpreters, but all those who work with and depend on them. Some peacekeeping, conflict resolution or refugee agencies (and even some armies) recognize the value of providing professional training for official or unofficial interpreters working in-theatre, with refugees or in other conflict situations. Humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross (CICR) have periodically worked with AIIC and schools (e.g. FTI at the University of Geneva) to run courses in such priority areas as ethics and consecutive skills, and a *Conflict Zone Field Guide for Civilian Translators/Interpreters and Users of Their Services* has been published in cooperation with Red T,[5] an organization with the mission of protecting interpreters in conflict situations.

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5. http://www.red-t.org/ (Accessed August 20, 2015).

14.7 Summary and recommendations

Short intensive courses can play a valuable role in interpreter training

a. to practise working in a new language pair-direction (adding a new C language, upgrading a B to a C or further 'activating' a Bcons language for SI as a Bsim) in a protected environment, ideally with feedback and coaching;

b. to sharpen up general competence, and gain confidence, on novel, unfamiliar or challenging material (perhaps in a specific genre, such as formal/written material, SI-text, UN or government jargon, technical reports, political oratory, ceremonial and ritual speeches, etc.);

c. to refresh or upgrade skills like consecutive (with note-taking);

d. to acquire useful ancillary competencies for freelancers, like personal accounting or negotiating skills;

e. to learn to use new technologies;

f. for initiation to a specialized knowledge domain and its terminology.

For most of these objectives to have any real impact, however – especially (a) and (b) – at least two weeks (say 30–40 hours) of intensive work will be necessary, ideally with coaching (especially for (b)) and deliberate practice (TG-2.6.2). For (d), (e) and (f), two day workshops may suffice (Table 14.3).

How much a short, intensive course can achieve will depend on the initial level of competence of each student (and their assiduity and the quality of instruction). A week or two can help acquire knowledge and vocabulary in a very narrow and specialized domain, but cannot make a significant difference to an interpreter's general knowledge of a language and its culture. For courses offered to help with language upgrades in particular, participants should be left in no doubt – and this should be announced in advertising and spelled out at the Welcome/Induction session – that the course

▸ DOES NOT aim to qualify them officially or unofficially for work in the new language pair-direction: this is left as always to their own conscience and peer evaluation in their institutions or on their markets.

▸ DOES aim

✓ to "provide an **opportunity for practice** in the new combination without endangering their professional reputation" (Mackintosh 1995);

✓ to give them **confidence**, and/or make them aware of weaknesses they still have to work on;

✓ to introduce them to a number of exercises which they can continue to do on their own.

As for initial training, although we have no reliable reports, aiming to train students from scratch (say, an undergraduate language degree) to 'journeyman' readiness for modern conference interpreting is probably unrealistic in less than 40–50 weeks (depending on ability) without the risk of frequent error or breakdown.

Shorter and intensive initial or upgrade courses might be designed, however, to train candidates with strong language proficiency and knowledge to provide reliable dialogue or short consecutive (4–6 weeks), or subsequently to further upgrade a trainee with these skills to full consecutive with notes (8–10 weeks), especially if in a limited domain (for example in a business area or institution with which s/he was familiar). Similarly, students with strong language proficiency, relevant knowledge and skills and some in-house interpreting experience might be trained in SI if only for a limited domain or a single institution, within 3–4 months (Table 14.3).

General tips on delivering a short course

The key to the success of any course is to achieve a match between candidates' expectations and results.

Some basic principles:

- begin with needs analysis;
- check applicants' qualifications and expectations (now done quite systematically in AIIC ToT series) and determine realistic goals; be selective in admission if necessary to preserve value for the majority;
- check that the enrolled participants either form a homogeneous group in terms of background, level and aims, or can be streamed into different groups;
- find an appropriate content mix between theory and practice, lectures and exercises;
- make a structured plan and schedule that provides for some rational progression, and ensures variety and continuity without risk of boredom or overload;
- take the pulse of the group regularly throughout the course. Check for comprehension and assimilation of material as you go – start each morning with a debrief of the previous day, feelings about progress, wishes for adjusting the balance – and be prepared to adjust on the fly (which means over-preparing up front);
- leave trainees with good materials and further readings;
- establish a network (now sometimes called a 'learning community'): circulate an email list.

In an institution like an interpreting school, a short course can usually be delivered by a small core group of instructors for skills training, plus one or two more dropping in occasionally (and for variety) as guest lecturers or speakers. The course coordinator must ensure that the instructors coordinate closely session by session,

and are all 'on the same page' with regard to the role of their module in the progression, intermediate and final objectives, and arrangements for debriefing, collecting feedback from participants and if appropriate, assessment.

In skill and language upgrades in particular, the trainees' readiness to face shortcomings and accept feedback will be a key factor in the course's success, and should be carefully managed and balanced against their natural instinct (as working professionals, especially of freelancers) to defend their reputation. Ideally, trainees must feel that they are helped without being judged, or at least that they are in a 'protected environment'. Even a not-for-profit course requires trust between the 'service providers' and the 'clients'.

Further reading

(see References for full publication details)

Examples of further training courses relevant to interpreters

http://aiic.net/search/tags/further-training (Accessed November 27, 2015)

Community interpreter training (initial and complementary, including legal, welfare and ToT):
Bancroft and Rubio-Fitzpatrick 2011a, 2011b: The Community Interpreter ('A Comprehensive Training Manual' and 'Exercises and Role Plays' (2 vols.)
Bancroft, et al. 2015: The Community Interpreter: An International Textbook
Downing and Helms-Tillery 1992: Professional Training for Community Interpreters

Court interpreter training
Carr 1990: Multilingual Court Interpreting Training: Certificate Program
Chandler and Colin 1992: Training for Court Interpreters
See also AIIC bibliography of court and legal interpreting at http://aiic.net/page/235. (Accessed December 15, 2015)

Interpreting in zones of crisis and war
http://www.aiic.net/viewpage.cfm/article2201.htm (Accessed February 13, 2016)
Conflict Zone Field Guide for Civilian Translators/Interpreters and Users of Their Services
http://aiic.net/page/3853/aiic-red-t-and-fit-introduce-the-first-conflict-zone-field-guide/lang/1
http://red-t.org/guidelines.html (Accessed December 15, 2015)
University of Geneva Centre for Interpreting in Conflict Zones: InZone Virtual Institute
http://inzone.fti.unige.ch/ (Accessed February 13, 2016)

Sign(ed) Language Interpreting (SLI)
http://efsli.org/info-block/trainers/ (Accessed November 27, 2015)
http://www.rid.org/continuing-education/ (Accessed November 27, 2015)

Medical Interpreting
International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA):
　　　http://www.imiaweb.org/education/details.asp?id=361 (Accessed November 27, 2015)

Conclusions and future prospects

In making these proposals for training interpreters we have described a profession that is still highly stimulating (despite the odd utterly numbing experience) – as reflected in high job satisfaction – but also very challenging. Conference interpreters are still in high demand, ubiquitous in their domain but discreet, traditionally taking no part in policy or decision-making, but expected to do only one thing very well: enable and facilitate communication. Their status, position and reputation necessarily vary with historical and cultural context; collective expectations on them are relatively stable, but include dealing with the unexpected more than their clients often realize.

The present age poses its own challenges to the ethos, conditions of practice or even, as many believe, the very existence of 'language interpretation' as a human activity: from technology (notably the prospect of automatic translation) and the spread of English as a global *lingua franca*. But if human interpreting survives these, it may even blossom with globalization, thanks to improved access to information and language learning opportunities for motivated young world citizens, and, hopefully, the ongoing linguistic enfranchisement of new groups, from emerging nations and regional minorities to litigants, welfare or asylum applicants and the deaf community. At the same time, as the pendulum swings back from multilateralism to a more bilateral, corporate and possibly conflicted world, we may see a profession more diversified in terms of ethos, working conditions, and the skills and services required of it, and a return to the historical norm of affiliated rather than neutral, independent interpreters.

But let us first weigh the alleged threats to our survival: technology and a global *lingua franca*. The forces working to eliminate or neutralize the function of translation should not be underestimated. A monolingual and primarily techno-commercial culture will naturally see multilingualism as an unnecessary and inefficient proliferation of codes obstructing communication and business, rather than as a repository of cultural diversity, and if real benefits and alternatives can be demonstrated, can probably count on general public acquiescence in the relegation of this diversity to the sidelines, leaving just enough token activity to meet the needs of local ethnic pride, tourism and entertainment (polyglots, hilarious mistranslations, quaint expressions, exotic forms of writing, etc.). Some ancient schemas can also be tapped (the Babel trope, kept alive by the media) and perhaps

most importantly, the latent irritation, reflected in ambivalent attitudes to interpreters through the ages, of having to go through another personality to talk to a fellow human. Surely a machine, in the end, could guarantee less (or at least more clinical, 'objective') distortion?

But could it? Is technology poised to replace human translation, or must it be content to complement it?

The spectre of automatic translation

Machine translation (of text, MT) has been operational for such material as weather data since the 1970s, and after several cycles of hype and disappointment, has leapt forward, essentially since 1988, by switching from laborious parsing-based, then hybrid systems to a new 'brute force' approach based on massive statistical pattern-matching, thanks to Big Data (in this case, billions of words of bilingual corpora originally and painstakingly produced, lest we forget, by human translators). The most successful new system, Google Translate, is now used over a billion times a day, by more than 500 million people a month who need a translation that is usable at some level. Meanwhile, machine interpreting (MI) of simple Skype conversations has also been demonstrated in the last two years (Lanchester 2015).

Hype or not, the enthusiasm has infected the highest levels: the White House has listed as a 'near-term priority' for innovation the development of "'automatic, highly accurate and real-time translation' [i.e. both text and speech] to 'dismantle all barriers to international commerce and cooperation'"… despite the fact that "nobody in machine translation thinks we are anywhere close to that goal" (Lewis-Kraus 2015).

For text-to-text translation, even the value of a programme that tells you (more or less immediately) what a text is generally *about*, however unreliable it may be in other respects, is already widely acknowledged. As for MI, media reaction to the recent demonstrations has been upbeat and indulgent, downplaying the simplicity of the dialogue and the garble when it strays from predictable parameters. For now it seems that even elementary and unreliable MT and MI are enjoying a honeymoon, with expectations generously lowered, in the excitement of having some tool where previously there was none.

In the recent Microsoft Skype demonstrations, both the nature of the input (speed, density, technicality, formality) and the expectations of the output are so far from what is expected of a conference interpreter (see TG/CC-9 in particular) that we can still scoff at the suggestion that we might soon be replaced by these systems. To project how much further their performance can improve on the current technological 'roll' would take an excursion into mathematics, linguistics and cognitive science well beyond the scope of this chapter, not to mention the competence of

the author (but probably also of the best machine translation experts today). But our reasons for doubting that MT/MI can replace human interpreting of interesting and meaningful exchanges (or the translation of many kinds of texts) in the foreseeable future are not technical; they are based on our understanding of the nature of human language and communication.

First, automatic translation by statistical matching to an existing corpus has an inbuilt bias against original formulation (rather as a search engine biases results to previous searches, thus infallibly narrowing the range of serendipitous intellectual exploration) – not to mention original translation. At the risk of seeming cynical, we will leave aside the wider Orwellian implications of this and hope that on the upside, this might leave a window for human translation and interpreting, if they were allowed to survive as an expensive alternative. (As an advertisement for a Gulf airline once put it, 'personal service is the last true luxury'.)

Second, while technological advances are notoriously difficult to predict, it is hard to see how a mathematically-based system, even with superb voice recognition and synthesis, or even unambiguous language conversion in context, could replace the relational component of the human interpreter's job, which includes, for example, judging when ambiguities are intentional and should be preserved (TG-3.2.3.3) and many other *interpreting* operations that are inseparable from the act of translation (TG-10.4).

In short, any assessment of the chances that interpreters will be replaced by machines depends on our understanding of what interpreting is. In a recent study (and ranking) of jobs at risk, Frey and Osborne (2013) rank 702 professions in ascending order of vulnerability. 'Interpreters and translators' are ranked 207th. (Among the least vulnerable, at the top of the list, are recreational therapists, social workers, and crisis managers.) The authors note that robots are much better than we are at certain cognitive, perceptual or motor tasks, but very poor in relational, interpersonal functions. Thus, "legal writing and truck driving will soon be automated, while persuading, for instance, will not" (2013: 4) or, as a reviewer puts it, "the theme is clear: human-to-human interaction and judgment is in demand, routine tasks are not" (Lanchester, ibid.). These authors do not say how they perceive interpreting – and we are unlikely to be the only profession to protest that we should be higher on the list – but if most experts on interpreting are right, this means we will survive at least as long as our profession involves persuasion (CC- 4.5.1, 4.8.2 etc.) or an interpersonal and relational component (TG-3.2.3.2–3).

All this, of course, speaks only to whether machines can replace or improve on human interpreting *as we know it*. It might be objected that a new kind of clean, purely semantic machine translation, that explicitly rejects any such pesky notions

as ambiguity,[1] 'interpreting' (or worse, 'persuasion'), would be an improvement on the present messy human kind. The illusion that this could work is a throwback to the mid-20th century positivists' quest for a transparent, unambiguous language. As explained in TG-12.2.2, linguistic pragmatics (Relevance Theory in particular) has abundantly demonstrated that in human verbal communication, not only there is no identifiable cut-off point between semantic transcoding and pragmatic interpretation, but that this is inherent to the very nature of the languages we use.[2] If that is the case, moving to global English may well be a better bet than MT/MI for eliminating the need for translation.

Assuming that conference interpreters are not about to be replaced by machines, a more likely outcome in the near future is that interpreters will be assisted by (and possibly dependent on) technology. Electronic dictionaries had already made terminology searches possible on-mike for the most agile, and the internet has now completely revolutionized document and meeting preparation. However, as we have seen with the digital pen (TG-6.6.4) and remote and tele-interpreting (CC-2, CC/TG-9), each new technology has the potential to be either enabling or disruptive.

Remote interpreting
According to AIIC statistics (Luccarelli 2012), use of remote interpreting increased by 50% from 2005 to 2010, when almost 40% of respondents reported having worked with remote speakers, and somewhat over 25% with a remote audience.

Research on VCI (videoconference interpreting) and RI (remote interpreting) (discussed in CC-2.3.1.9 and CC-9.4.2, TG-9.6.2.6), has been inconclusive, and its attempted introduction in legal settings somewhat fraught (see e.g. Braun 2013), but development of training material is in progress.[3] In our professional practice, we will almost certainly have no choice but to adapt to this technology (exerting what pressure we can on designers and installers) and try to make it work to improve performance.

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1. A computational linguist interviewed by Lewis-Kraus (2015) observed ("with a knowing leer") that "there is a reason we have more than twenty translations in English of 'Don Quixote'. It must be because nobody ever gets it right"; and suggested getting rid of "the whole antiquated notion of fidelity".

2. Note that cognitive pragmatics and Relevance Theory have little or no traction in the USA, currently the powerhouse of research into machine translation (see previous note); nor do MT/MI researchers typically consult experts in translation or interpreting (see previous note).

3. See Avidicus project: http://www.videoconference-interpreting.net/?page_id=154 (Accessed June 5, 2015).

In training, videoconferencing technology and digital media in general can more easily be adapted selectively to our needs. It may soon be possible, for example, to do a full aptitude test remotely, with an entire panel of examiners and range of tasks. Online speech repositories are now widely used for practice, and trainees can record and submit their performances for assessment by experienced judges, just as students have traditionally submitted term papers. Virtual learning environments and 'blended learning' are being used for the online component in further training, including teacher training (TG-14.5), and are being piloted even for interpreter training, as well as for multipoint video 'mock conferences' and master classes bringing together students, instructors and participants from international organizations. Experts have warned, however, against entirely replacing the traditional classroom with a virtual experience that can never simulate actual co-presence. Mouzourakis (2008) suggests that instead of passively accepting the limitations of present videoconferencing systems, we should find ways of improving the sense of presence with new forms of visual interaction between interpreter and audience, such as online chat, or even a channel for sensing and displaying the emotional state of the remote participants….

English as *lingua franca*

The second and no doubt more justified reason to fear for our profession's future is the tsunami-like spread of global English as a lingua franca. The last few decades have seen a suite of sectors, businesses, publishers, international conferences and even educational programmes in non-English speaking countries moving to an all-English regime. However, multiple forces are at work that make it very difficult to predict whether and to what extent this will affect the interpreting profession (or which of its sub-segments) in the near, medium or long term. Let us examine these forces and try to settle on a reasonable prediction.

First, demand for conference interpreting has held up well worldwide (allowing for the peaks and troughs of the business cycle) for longer than many had expected despite the spread of English/Globish,[4] and has even continued to grow in regions like the Americas and Asia-Pacific. However, some clouds on the horizon at the time of writing may be warning signs: demand for freelance interpreting in Europe has not (yet) recovered from the financial crisis; the European institutions have recently announced a major fall (16%) in interpreter days since the beginning of 2015; and the world average of work days for freelance interpreters in 2012 was

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4. All data from AIIC statistical reports for 2005–2009 and 2012. http://aiic.net/page/3585/a-statistical-portrait-2005-2009/lang/1; http://aiic.net/page/6878/aiic-statistics-summary-of-the-2012-report/lang/1 (Accessed November 27, 2015).

the lowest recorded in the previous 15 years. (Work for staff interpreters in organizations usually increases during a recession as freelance work drops).

As is usual with such statistics, however, looking beyond the aggregates reveals some interesting trends. According to chief interpreters and major recruiters[5]:

- while English is readily used as a *lingua franca*, demand for more languages is still growing;
- the most common requirement worldwide is now for two-way interpreting between English and the national language;
- the EU institutions are now requiring C into B for some languages (66% of respondents to the 2012 AIIC statistical survey worked into a B language, and SI is nearly 90% of all work [Neff 2014]); and
- serious shortages of interpreters are expected in major languages from 2010–2025, as the present generation of baby-boomers retires.

The more optimistic observers have explained the ongoing demand for conference interpreting despite the spread of English/Globish as an effect of the continuing momentum of globalization, which means more contacts and meetings overall, including those using interpretation, more activity in the international organizations that regulate and coordinate this increased global activity, and (perhaps as a reaction against standardization), the reaffirmation of national and minority languages and cultures, reflected on the internet, where the use of other languages is growing much faster than English (Donovan 2011: 9–12).

The current high demand for training is partly explained by the twin challenge of catering for emerging languages, and replacing retiring baby-boomers (a temporary phenomenon). The demand for highly-skilled conference interpreting, however, may well become more selective: on the one hand, recent trends (and studies like Reithofer's) suggest that interpreters may increasingly be dispensed with where Globish is believed to suffice; on the other, they will be more urgently needed for the most intricate meetings, such as those now being generated by a rise in trade conflicts at a time when legal systems are not harmonised.[6]

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5. Round Table discussion on the Future of Conference Interpreting, University of Westminster, 2006. http://aiic.net/page/2469/the-future-of-conference-interpreting-round-table-discussion/lang/1#authors_bio (Accessed November 27, 2015).

6. With thanks to Lise Rosembaum for this observation.

Responses

How should interpreter training respond to this array of changes and new challenges? The logical response would be, first, to strengthen the existing skillset, but there are suggestions and pressures in favour of going further to *adapt*, by multiskilling for new technologies and forms of communication and/or by offering a wider range of helpful services around and in addition to the core linguistic and mediating function.

A stronger and more flexible (traditional) skillset
As a first countermeasure to adapt to these trends, we could strengthen the relevant aspects of the conference interpreter's traditional basic skillset in the following areas:

▶ *Language Enhancement*, to meet a heightened demand on English proficiency, both passive (deeper and broader, in the sense of understanding that is both fast and intuitive, and can handle a wider range of native and non-native accents and styles, as well as jargon and technolects), and active: an interpreter's active English must, at a minimum, be demonstrably better than the Globish that would be the alternative to interpretation. This will mean providing and maintaining a good AV library and organising more visits to real meetings (TG/CC-9.3–9.4);

▶ *More systematic into-B training;* two-way SI (retour) is now generally expected on the market, particularly into English. Since students are now aware of this, and many 'upgrade' their English Bcons or even C to a Bsim almost immediately under market pressure, schools might do better to face this reality squarely and provide B-sim training for qualified students (Donovan 2011: 9–12);

▶ In the *Professionalism* class, and in 'mock conferences' and simulations, a strong emphasis should be placed on *client relations and client education*, notably to counter demotivating situations in which interpretation is seen as merely a token add-on to communication, and participants are afraid to or apologise for using a foreign language.

Multiskilling
If the demand for interpreting declines even despite training in this reinforced skillset, a further step may be necessary, specifically to meet the new complexities of the *media* used for cross-language communication. Interpreters in the United States are being told they will need to broaden their skillset to take up new job opportunities, including acquiring written proficiency in all their working languages, to handle multimodal and hybrid forms of interpreting. 'Multimodal' refers to interpreters who can work "across all delivery modalities: onsite, over the phone

(OPI), video remote interpreting (VRI), and translation".[7] Hybrid communication forms include real-time text messaging, live captioning (transcribing and translating oral content in real time), website communication, quick-turn email translation, and 'live' chat-room translation.

More and more conference interpreters (30% of AIIC survey respondents in 2012) are working in mainstream media like television, where a range of additional skills are already appreciated, and may soon be expected, including subtitling, respeaking, audio description (Mouzourakis 2008), or even journalistic skills, acting, localization, media marketing and some 'techie' competence (CC-2.3.1.8; Buck and Tsuruta 2012).

More generally, some have suggested that interpreters may also consider rebranding themselves as more generalist 'communicators'[8] – or it may even be necessary, if Globish does threaten to (partially or tentatively) displace interpreting, to advertise ourselves *primarily* as cultural intermediaries, with linguistic skills as a back-up when a participant's Globish falters – an extension of code-switching as a coping tactic as described in TG-9.6.2.2.[9] This may reflect the belief that many people are more willing to accept their communication problems as being cultural than linguistic, and see translation mostly as a problem, as suggested by an EIU[10] (2012) survey of top business executives.

Diversification and 'full service'

Yet another step will be taken if newcomers to the profession take the advice given in Westminster in 2006[11] to "broaden the range of the services they provide [to include] translation work, escort interpreting, guiding, teaching, subtitling." Speakers at this event stressed the need to market interpreting better and more innovatively as a communication service; to offer a wider range of services, including, for example, coaching those who choose to (or are forced to) give papers in English, helping to edit the webcast of the meeting and/or doing translation work associated with the meeting, and generally "evince community of interest with the meeting organizer [and] put the client first".

This diversification may well lead to a wider variety of skillsets and competencies – hence to more competition on the skills and services offered, and on price,

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7.   http://www.interpretamerica.com/interpret-america-blog/have-we-reached-the-tipping-point-change-has-arrived (Accessed November 27, 2015).

8.   'Future of Interpreting' conference: see note 7.

9.   Swiss Cheese exercise.

10. Economist Intelligence Unit (2012) Competing across borders: How cultural and communication barriers affect business. (A survey of 572 international corporate executives.)

11. 'Future of Interpreting' conference: see note 7.

and a resulting drift away from the relatively homogeneous (and egalitarian, and 'unionised') traditions of the early profession to a more diverse, competitive, hierarchical and business-oriented stance – but with the possible risk of a concomitant decline in ethical standards and strictures (see discussion in TG-10.3.2.).

Conference interpreters might also accept more assignments in community and PSI (public-service) interpreting, where demand is also growing, due to the surge in migration and the extension of interpreting services to various minorities. This may seem more motivating than the option envisaged by Reithofer (2010, 2013), whose research suggests that interpreters might in future only be able to persuade clients of the superiority of their service for monologic, unidirectional communication, since English-as-lingua-franca (ELF) seemed to work well for the more dialogic kind (2013: 73). (But see also TG-10.5.2 on 'judging our usefulness'.).

In short, the outlook seems to be for a more demanding profession in terms of skills, accuracy, precision, fluency, speed, flexibility and use of or adaptability to technology, at the highest pay grades; a blurring of the distinction between conference and other forms of interpreting; and possibly, a move to more client- (or agency-)affiliated, and less diverse, independent or even neutral practice.

Futurology and interpreter training

To summarize, we can tentatively list some possible (combinable sub-)scenarios over the medium to long term, and consider how we might prepare for them:

a. Conference interpreting survives, dominated by retour interpreting between a national language and English (or, depending on geopolitical developments, a regional *lingua franca*). New linguistic groups occasionally emerge as economic players and need interpreters (but possibly only until a English-speaking elite emerges among them).

b. Conference interpreting is increasingly intermediated by agencies, and bundled with other meeting and possibly travel and catering services, with keen competition on price and conditions.

c. Interpreting survives, but simultaneous interpreters typically work from home, in a dedicated room that is a virtual reality suite custom-built for remote SI. They log onto the system, see what meetings are scheduled in which time zones, and enter a bid to service a particular meeting (i.e. an online auction); an automated system evaluates bids and match interpreters to meetings based on price, qualifications, experience, and perhaps, known past performance based on listener ratings systematically captured and tabulated for each interpreter at every meeting…).[12]

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12. With thanks to Andrew Dawrant for this vision of a possible future.

d. The multilateral organizations drop multilingual conference interpreting except for a few rare ceremonial or official events.

e. Only a select business/tech elite can afford multilingual interpreting, but doesn't need it, having made English mandatory for admission.

f. Much improved translation software provides 'good enough', culturally sterilized translation, written and oral (after a brief speech training session) for the exchange of necessary technical information.

In scenarios (d) to (f), almost all conference interpreters and their trainers will have to re-skill for interpreting in other settings or for entirely different occupations.[13] In scenarios (a) to (c), interpreter training will still be needed, but will have to be strengthened, updated and re-organized in several ways, including:

i.   still more rigorous attention to quality, to ensure that the service that graduates can offer is demonstrably superior to muddling through with ELF – entailing rigorous selection, detailed feedback, personalized coaching and assessment throughout the course, culminating in a reliable and valid certifying diploma that clients can depend on;

ii. more and better targeted (active and passive) language enhancement, especially in English;

iii. a *realistic initiation to professional practice*, more visits to real meetings (with briefing and debriefing), as well as mock conferences, simulations, and case studies;

iv. more resolute and better *training for interpreting into B*;

and possibly,

v.   access to more optional courses (though avoiding overload) in *add-on skills* including written translation and possibly subtitling, captioning and other multimodal and hybrid forms of translation/interpreting, so that interpreters can successfully reskill and survive in the event of a collapse in the core conference interpreting market;

vi. *short courses for* upgrading and adding languages, specialized knowledge and *reskilling*.

It seems unlikely that interpreters can do anything to prevent either the drift – if it does gain momentum – to a world of monolingual international meetings, or the cultural impoverishment resulting from dwindling linguistic diversity. However,

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13. A study by García (2014) suggests that task-specific cognitive skills developed by professional interpreters may readily generalize to more efficient linguistic and executive abilities in non-interpreting tasks.

even in scenarios (d) to (f), however, interpreting in various forms will always be needed, albeit as a more local, or regional, and much less well-paid activity. The challenge will then be to regroup as a broader-based profession that remains credible in terms of both quality (i.e. with facilities for training and credentialling) and ethics, which requires collective clarity and consistency on the extent, nature of the service, agreed working conditions and the dignity of the profession. In particular, in an age of eroding or vanishing privacy and data protection,[14] the oath of confidentiality, which may still be meaningful for some oral exchanges, will have to be convincingly upheld and demonstrated by interpreters to maintain trust.

Having said all this, each generation finds its own accommodation with the conditions of the age. The authors of this book represent two successive generations, twenty years apart and the next one is already here. Today, some older interpreters may feel like an endangered species (we are not alone in this), but it is cheering to know that younger colleagues are more sanguine, and report fairly high job satisfaction. Let us try to leave them with vibrant training programmes, a solid sense of history and ethics, and professional institutions that are inspiring, welcoming and effective.

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ROBIN SETTON
Paris 2015

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14. Confidentiality was seen as the cornerstone of a new professional ethics at the founding of the modern conference interpreting profession in the 1950s. Its importance to the trust placed in interpreters may once again become critical in what *The Economist* (August 1st, 2015) has recently called a "new golden age of espionage".

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Name index

CC-TG subject index

CC refers to the Complete Course. Page numbers in bold type refer to main entries and definitions.

This companion volume to *Conference Interpreting: A Complete Course* provides additional recommendations and theoretical and practical discussion for instructors, course designers and administrators. Chapters mirroring the Complete Course offer supplementary exercises, tips on materials selection, classroom practice, feedback and class morale, realistic case studies from professional practice, and a detailed rationale for each stage supported by critical reviews of the literature. Dedicated chapters address the role of theory and research in interpreter training, with outline syllabi for further qualification in interpreting studies at MA or PhD level; the current state of testing and professional certification, with proposals for an overhaul; the institutional and administrative challenges of running a high-quality training course; and designs and opportunities for further and teacher training, closing with a brief speculative look at future prospects for the profession.

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