

УНИВЕРЗИТЕТ У БАЊОЈ ЛУЦИ
ФИЛОЛОШКИ ФАКУЛТЕТ

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TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR

Abstract: *The University of Maribor has been training translators and interpreters for about a decade. Initially, training was organised at the undergraduate level and took four years to complete. With the Bologna process, pre-Bologna study programmes were split into BA and MA levels and now take 5 years to complete. The first cycle provides students with general language, culture and translation competences, while in the second cycle graduates obtain specialised translation and interpreting competences and skills. Although not problem-free, the new Bologna programmes have improved translator and interpreter training.*

Key words: *translator and interpreter training, Bologna process, study programme, University of Maribor, Department of Translation Studies*

Introduction

In 2011/ 2012, the University of Maribor enrolled the first generation of students in the Master's degree programme entitled *Translation and Interpreting*. The new programme was a milestone in two respects: on the one hand, it marked the end of the introduction stage for the new Bologna first- and second-cycle study programmes; on the other, it symbolically rounded off the first decade of translator and interpreter (TI) training at the University of Maribor. Both the new MA *Translation and Interpretation* and the BA *Interlingual Studies* programmes build heavily on the experience accumulated with the pre-Bologna TI undergraduate programmes. At the same time, they follow contemporary trends in the field and comply with the general requirements of the Bologna Process. Compared to the old ones, the new programmes feature more specialised TI courses, greater compatibility with other universities, increased horizontal study stream transfer possibilities as well as more student and teaching staff

mobility opportunities. In addition, the new programmes are better adapted to the specific needs of the Slovene job market and higher education and aim to set the trends for TI training at the University of Maribor for the next decade, even though it is clear that they are "on-going projects" (Gadpaille et. al, 2011: 107).

Pre-Bologna study programmes

Even though the Bologna programmes were only introduced recently, the translator and interpreter training at the University of Maribor has a long history. The first specialised undergraduate programme in the field was introduced in 2001/ 2002. It was called *Translation and Interpreting (Prevajanje in tolmačenje)*. The programme (hereafter referred to as *pre-Bologna TI* to distinguish it from the current Bologna *Translation and Interpreting MA*) comprised 4 years (8 semesters) of instruction and totaled 120 ECTS points. It had two different versions: *pre-Bologna TI – English* for translation and interpreting between

Slovene and English; and *pre-Bologna TI – German*, which was its Slovene – German equivalent. Both were comprehensive, double-subject study programmes (*dvo-predmetni študijski program*). As such, they could be combined with any other double-subject study at the then Faculty of Education (*Pedagoška fakulteta*). Aside from the most common *pre-Bologna TI – English* and *pre-Bologna TI – German* combination, students often combined either of the two with other double-subject programmes in the Humanities and Social Sciences such as Slovene, Sociology, History, Philosophy, Pedagogy or others. One interesting feature of *pre-Bologna TI* study programmes was they could be combined with study programmes in the Natural Sciences such as Biology or Computer Science, which today at the MA level is no longer an option.

Even though the Department of English and American Studies and the Department of German Studies collaborated in their preparation, the two TI programmes featured several internal differences. Most of these were the result of the differing profiles and levels of experience among the available teaching staff. Thus *pre-Bologna TI – English*, for example, comprised a total of 38 courses, while *pre-Bologna TI – German* only had 34; the latter was the case owing to several courses run across two semesters instead of one. In addition, approximately 10% of courses in *pre-Bologna TI – English* were elective and a further 15% had internal electivity (e.g., in the Literary Translation cluster, students chose one out of the following courses: Prose Translation; Poetry Translation and Drama Translation); in *pre-Bologna TI – German*, on the other hand, approximately 15% of courses were elective and 15% featured internal electivity. Content-wise, both programmes comprised the same four clusters of courses: linguistics; literature; intercultural studies and specialised TI courses. However, *pre-Bologna TI – German* differed

from *pre-Bologna TI – English* in terms of the proportions and distribution of each cluster, in particular with respect to specialised TI courses. In *pre-Bologna TI – German*, students thus had at least one translation course per semester beginning with the first year. Of these, the majorities were in non-literary translation. In addition, TI-related courses accounted for almost 38% of all courses in the programme in terms of ECTS points. *Pre-Bologna TI – English*, on the other hand, featured no TI courses in the first four semesters at all. Students had to wait until 3rd year for the first three specialised translation-related courses (one in contrastive linguistics and two in literary translation), followed by three more in the final two semesters. Of the latter, one was in literary translation and one in conference interpreting. In contrast with *pre-Bologna TI – German*, overall, TI-related courses in *pre-Bologna TI – English* thus accounted for fewer than 25% of ECTS points in the programme.

Even though the German version had a higher proportion of specialised TI courses, today neither of the two would probably be regarded as a typical TI training programme. Instead, they were closer to typical philology programmes, in particular because of the high proportion of specialised linguistics and literature courses, most of which overlapped completely and were taught jointly with those in the *English Language and Literature* and *German Language and Literature* undergraduate study programmes. The similarity was not coincidental. On the one hand, it was a result of the fact that both TI programmes were originally developed out of the two philology programmes; on the other, of the teaching faculty in both language departments who had proposed the new courses, relatively few had experience with practical TI, and even fewer had any academic background in Translation Studies. Despite the deficiencies, both programmes marked the beginning of translator and in-

interpreter training at the University of Maribor and also produced graduates, some of whom work successfully at the highest level for EU institutions (Nuč, 2013: 60).

The Bologna process

In 2006, the old Faculty of Education split into three new faculties, the Faculty of Arts (*Filozofska fakulteta*) being one of them. The split coincided with the implementation of the Bologna process and a complete redesign of programmes in the Humanities and Social Sciences, which all had to comply with the 3-year BA + 2-year MA + 3-year PhD Bologna study programme model (e.g. Kukovec et. al, 2011; Onič et. al, 2010; Šabec et. al, 2007). This left the departments with little maneuvering space in terms of length and structure of the programmes. Study programmes for TI were once more prepared by the English and German departments. It was also decided that a third language stream, Hungarian¹, would be added to TI training. The Department of Hungarian took charge of its preparation.

The first decision of the three departments was that the study programmes at the BA level would continue to be comprehensive double-subject programmes. This meant that they would be compatible with other double-subject programmes at the Faculty of Arts. In line with the general requirements for the new undergraduate programmes, one notable difference was that they had to equal 90 ECTS in total (previously 120 ECTS). In contrast to the pre-Bologna programmes, preparation of the new BA programmes was better coordinated between the departments. As a result, the new programmes, which became

known as BA *Interlingual Studies* (i.e. *IS – English; IS – German; IS – Hungarian*), were more uniform in structure and content. Another important decision was that the new programmes would be better tailored to the needs of TI training, even though it was also decided that the first cycle alone was not meant to provide complete training for TI. Instead, its objective was to provide graduates with a sound knowledge of linguistics, literature, (inter) cultural studies and basic TI, which would either prepare them for specialised TI training at the MA level or allow them a horizontal shift into other similar streams. Consequently, the first three semesters (equal to 45 ECTS) of the new programme now mostly comprise general courses in linguistics, literature, composition and cultural studies, such as *Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Literature and Culture* and *Oral and Written Composition*. The remaining three semesters, on the other hand, mostly feature specialised TI courses. These include both theoretical courses such as the *Introduction to Professional Translation and Interpretation* and *Theoretical and Applied Translation Studies*, or more practical ones such as *Tutorial in Translation 1, 2, 3* or the *Introduction to Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting*. Another difference in comparison with *pre-Bologna TIs* is the different distribution of courses dedicated to Slovene, i.e. language A in *Interlingual Studies*. While *pre-Bologna TIs* featured Slovene only in the first and fourth semesters, the new BA mandated a course in Slovene in each year. The proportion of elective courses in the BA programme remains at 10%. It is notable, however, that the new list of elective courses comprises several courses tailored to the needs of TI students, such as *International Organisations* or the *Basics of Business Law*. Naturally, this list of elective courses is not definitive and changes from one academic year to another, depending on the needs of the students and the de-

¹ Hungarian is the language of one of the two officially recognised national minorities in Slovenia (the other being Italian). As such, it enjoys a special status and constitutional protection. The University of Maribor is the only higher education institution in Slovenia offering degree programmes in Hungarian.

partment; in addition, students can choose courses from other study programmes at the University of Maribor and have the credits recognised in the framework of elective courses.

As soon as the first students enrolled in the new BA programmes, the Faculty of Arts started preparing new MA programmes (Teržan Kopecky et. al, 2010). This move coincided with the establishment of the Department of Translation Studies in 2008, which took over the implementation of the remaining three years of *pre-Bologna TI – English* and *pre-Bologna TI – German* and the first year of the new BA programmes. It also became solely responsible for the development of the new specialised MA programme, *Translation and Interpretation (Prevajanje in tolmačenje)*. The department originally prepared two versions of the programme: a single-subject (*enopredmetni*) and a double-subject (*dvopredmetni*) one. With the latter, it wanted to offer the students a possibility to combine translation or interpretation with another subject (History, Sociology, Pedagogy etc.) also at the MA level. However, the proposal for a double-subject programme was not approved by the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency or Higher Education, the institution in charge of accreditation of all higher education study programmes in Slovenia. As a result, the department decided to prepare only a single-subject programme.

The new MA programme became a combination of experience gained with the previous study programmes and that acquired by the analysis of comparable training programmes at various other European higher education institutions. One other

important factor considered in its design was the relatively small size of the department, which meant that for financial reasons translator and interpreter training would have to take place within one, not two separate programmes. In addition, it was clear from the beginning that the job market for graduates, too, would be wider if they could qualify for both translation and interpreting within one programme. In practice, this meant that at least a few courses would have to be shared by translation and interpreting trainees. Given these factors, the programme was structured along the lines of the following four sets of courses:

- joint general courses for both translators and interpreters;
- language-independent courses for translators and language-independent courses for interpreters;
- language-specific courses for translators and language-specific courses for interpreters;
- and elective courses.

Next, the relative weight of each set was determined in terms of ECTS points. Of the total 120 ECTS in the MA programme, the joint general courses were allocated 34; language-independent courses for translators and language-independent courses for interpreters 30; language-specific courses for translators and interpreters 44 and elective courses a total of 12 ECTS. After their proportions were set, the sets were assigned courses and the programme was structured into four tiers in line with the requirements mentioned above. In Diagram 1, its final version is presented:

Diagram 1: Single-subject Translation and Interpretation MA programme

JOINT COURSES IN TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING
<i>Seminar in Translation Studies – Selected Chapters</i>
<i>Slovene as the Language of the Profession I</i>
<i>Slovene as Language of the Profession II</i>

<i>Slovene as Language of the Profession III</i>					
<i>Intercultural Communication</i>					
<i>Language and Culture from the Point of View of Cognitive and Other Modern Theories</i>					
<i>MA Seminar I</i>					
<i>MA Seminar II</i>					
LANGUAGE-INDEPENDENT TRANSLATION AND LANGUAGE-INDEPENDENT INTERPRETING COURSES					
TRANSLATION			INTERPRETING		
<i>Literary Translation Theory I</i>			<i>Interpreting – Theoretical and Applied Aspects I</i>		
<i>Literary Translation Theory II</i>			<i>Interpreting – Theoretical and Applied Aspects II</i>		
<i>Professional Communication I</i>			<i>Note-taking Technique I</i>		
<i>Professional Communication II</i>			<i>Note-taking Technique II</i>		
<i>Translation of Specialized Texts – Theoretical Aspects I</i>			<i>Interpreting and Memory I</i>		
<i>Translation of Specialised Texts – Theoretical Aspects II</i>			<i>Interpreting and Memory II</i>		
<i>Translation Practice I/1</i>			<i>Interpreting Practice I/1</i>		
<i>Translation Practice I/2</i>			<i>Interpreting Practice I/2</i>		
<i>Translation Practice II/1</i>			<i>Interpreting Practice II/1</i>		
<i>Translation Practice II/2</i>			<i>Interpreting Practice II/2</i>		
LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC TRANSLATION COURSES AND LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC INTERPRETING COURSES					
TRANSLATION			INTERPRETING		
ENGLISH	GERMAN	HUNGARIAN	ENGLISH	GERMAN	HUNGARIAN
<i>Translation of Humanist Texts</i>	<i>Translation of Humanist Texts</i>	<i>Translation of Humanist Texts</i>	<i>Simultaneous Interpreting I</i>	<i>Simultaneous Interpreting I</i>	<i>Simultaneous Interpreting I</i>
<i>Translation of Literary Texts</i>	<i>Translation of Literary Texts</i>	<i>Translation of Literary Texts</i>	<i>Consecutive Interpreting I</i>	<i>Consecutive Interpreting I</i>	<i>Consecutive Interpreting I</i>
<i>Subtitling</i>	<i>Subtitling</i>	<i>Subtitling</i>	<i>Simultaneous Interpreting II</i>	<i>Simultaneous Interpreting II</i>	<i>Simultaneous Interpreting II</i>
<i>Translation of Technical Texts</i>	<i>Translation of Technical Texts</i>	<i>Translation of Technical Texts</i>	<i>Consecutive Interpreting II</i>	<i>Consecutive Interpreting II</i>	<i>Consecutive Interpreting II</i>
<i>Translation of Legal and Political Texts</i>	<i>Translation of Legal and Political Texts</i>	<i>Translation of Legal and Political Texts</i>	<i>Simultaneous interpreting III</i>	<i>Simultaneous interpreting III</i>	<i>Simultaneous interpreting III</i>
<i>Style as a Translation Category</i>	<i>Style as a Translation Category</i>	<i>Style as a Translation Category</i>	<i>Consecutive Interpreting III</i>	<i>Consecutive Interpreting III</i>	<i>Consecutive Interpreting III</i>

<i>Translation of More Complex Professional Texts</i>	<i>Translation of More Complex Professional Texts</i>	<i>Translation of More Complex Professional Texts</i>	<i>Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting</i>	<i>Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting</i>	<i>Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting</i>
ELECTIVE COURSES					
TRANSLATION			INTERPRETING		
ENGLISH	GERMAN	HUNGARIAN	ENGLISH	GERMAN	HUNGARIAN
<i>Elective course 1</i>	<i>Elective course 1</i>	<i>Elective course 1</i>	<i>Elective course 1</i>	<i>Elective course 1</i>	<i>Elective course 1</i>
<i>Elective course 2</i>	<i>Elective course 2</i>	<i>Elective course 2</i>	<i>Elective course 2</i>	<i>Elective course 2</i>	<i>Elective course 2</i>
<i>Elective course 3</i>	<i>Elective course 3</i>	<i>Elective course 3</i>	<i>Elective course 3</i>	<i>Elective course 3</i>	<i>Elective course 3</i>
<i>Elective course 4</i>	<i>Elective course 4</i>	<i>Elective course 4</i>	<i>Elective course 4</i>	<i>Elective course 4</i>	<i>Elective course 4</i>

As can be seen, the first tier comprises eight courses (*Seminar in Translation Studies – Selected Chapters; Slovene as the Language of the Profession I, II, III; Intercultural Communication; Language and Culture from the Point of View of Cognitive and Other Modern Theories* and *MA Seminar I and II*). The courses are general and have to be taken by all students, regardless of their study orientation (translation or interpreting) or language. They provide students with advanced knowledge of Slovene, Translation Studies and intercultural communication from the point of view of various modern theories. The term “general” does not mean that students would have to take all of the courses at the beginning of their studies. On the contrary, the courses are dispersed across four semesters. It should also be noted that the programme features two *MA Seminars*. This happened for two reasons: the first

was that one of the seminars aimed at students of translation and the other at students of interpretation (e.g., to make a distinction for students who decide to study both). Besides this, the single-subject programme is designed in a way that makes it compatible with its possible double-subject version², where the seminar for translators would necessarily have to differ from the one for interpreters.

The second tier features 10 language-independent specialised translation and interpreting courses. These aim to provide students with theoretical (the first six) and practical (the last four) knowledge in translation and interpreting, ranging from literary translation and professional communication, on the one hand, to the theory of interpreting and note-taking technique, on the other. The exact choice of courses students have to complete depends on their study orienta-

² Besides the comprehensive single-subject programme, the department originally planned to also develop its double-subject counterpart, which would allow either of the two study orientations (translation or interpreting) to be combined with other compatible double-subject programmes. However, after the original proposal of a double-subject programme was rejected, its development was put on hold.

tion. If they decide to study both translation and interpreting into one language (e.g., to obtain an MA in *Translation and Interpreting – English*), it means that they

have to take half of the courses from the Translation column and the other half from the Interpreting column as indicated in the following diagram:

LANGUAGE-INDEPENDENT TRANSLATION AND LANGUAGE-INDEPENDENT INTERPRETING COURSES	
TRANSLATION	INTERPRETING
<i>Literary Translation Theory I</i>	<i>Interpreting – Theoretical and Applied Aspects I</i>
X	X
<i>Professional Communication I</i>	<i>Note-taking Technique I</i>
X	X
<i>Translation of Specialised Texts – Theoretical Aspects I</i>	<i>Interpreting and Memory I</i>
X	X
<i>Translation Practice I/1</i>	<i>Interpreting Practice I/1</i>
X	X
<i>Translation Practice II/1</i>	<i>Interpreting Practice II/1</i>
X	X

As can be seen, the students must take all the courses marked with the number “1” (e.g., *Literary Translation I* and *Interpreting – Theoretical and Applied Aspects I* etc.). The choice of these courses will provide them with the required theoretical and practical competences in both transla-

tion and interpreting as well as guarantee them a sufficient number of ECTS points. If, however, a student decides to study translation between two different languages (e.g. for an MA in *Translation – English and German*), their mandatory courses from the two tiers would be as follows:

LANGUAGE-INDEPENDENT TRANSLATION AND LANGUAGE-INDEPENDENT INTERPRETING COURSES	
TRANSLATION	INTERPRETING
<i>Literary Translation Theory I</i>	X
<i>Literary Translation Theory II</i>	X
<i>Professional Communication I</i>	X
<i>Professional Communication II</i>	X
<i>Translation of Specialised Texts – Theoretical Aspects I</i>	X
<i>Translation of Specialised Texts – Theoretical Aspects II</i>	X
<i>Translation Practice I/1</i>	X
<i>Translation Practice I/2</i>	X
<i>Translation Practice II/1</i>	X
<i>Translation Practice II/2</i>	X

As indicated in the diagram, students would have to complete all the courses marked with “I” as well as those marked with “II” in the Translation column. The latter upgrade the former and provide students with additional, in-depth competences in the field of translation. As can also be seen, both columns feature four practical courses. These are designed as a combination of in-class assignments and practical translation experience that students acquire by working for real TI companies and customers in the market. Students take them in the second and third semesters. Since the orientation of the students from the diagram is solely translation, they will have to complete four practical courses from the Translation column, compared to students of translation and interpreting, who must take two from each.

With the third tier, the programme splits into language-specific translation or interpreting courses. These aim to provide students with specialised knowledge in various subfields ranging from translation of humanist, literary and technical texts in the Translation column, on the one hand, to courses at various levels in simultaneous and consecutive interpreting, on the other. The exact list of courses to be completed again depends on students’ study orientation and choice of languages. If they, for example, decide to qualify as interpreters and translators for English, they will have to complete seven language-specific interpreting courses from the English section as well as seven language-specific translation courses in the English section, as indicated in the following diagram:

LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC TRANSLATION COURSES AND LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC INTERPRETING COURSES					
TRANSLATION			INTERPRETING		
ENGLISH	GERMAN	HUNGARIAN	ENGLISH	GERMAN	HUNGARIAN
<i>Translation of Humanist Texts</i>	X	X	<i>Simultaneous Interpreting I</i>	X	X
<i>Translation of Literary Texts</i>	X	X	<i>Consecutive Interpreting I</i>	X	X
<i>Subtitling</i>	X	X	<i>Simultaneous Interpreting II</i>	X	X
<i>Translation of Technical Texts</i>	X	X	<i>Consecutive Interpreting II</i>	X	X
<i>Translation of Legal and Political Texts</i>	X	X	<i>Simultaneous interpreting III</i>	X	X
<i>Style as a Translation Category</i>	X	X	<i>Consecutive Interpreting III</i>	X	X
<i>Translation of More Complex Professional Texts</i>	X	X	<i>Simultaneous and Consecutive Interpreting</i>	X	X

If the same student wanted to obtain an MA IN *Translation – German and Hungarian*, however, they would have to complete fourteen courses from the corresponding German and Hungarian sections in the Translation column. On completion, these choices provide the candidates with the required special translation or interpreting (or both) skills in each of the chosen languages.

Finally, the programme also comprises elective courses, which represent 10% of the programme. Students can choose between two different categories of elective courses: first, those that are part of the accredited programme and are run by the department; and, second, courses that are offered by the University of Maribor outside the Department of Translation Studies. The former feature courses that range from *Legal Terminology* and *Translation of Prose Texts*, on the one hand, to *Communication Science, Social and Political Philosophy* and many others, on the other. As is the case with elective courses at the BA level, the list of available courses changes from one academic year to the other, depending on students' preferences and the available teaching staff.

Conclusion

The first generation of students enrolled in the new MA programme in 2011/2012. Therefore, the first candidates (as of April 2013) are yet to complete translator and interpreter training from a Bologna programme at the University of Maribor. Nevertheless, it is possible to make a few early observations. The first signs, if anecdotal, are promising. In comparison with pre-Bologna programmes, which by many students were considered too theoretical and lacking in practical courses in both translation and interpreting, the new programmes elicit less critique. Indeed, upon completion of 1st year, some MA students even complained that the amount of practical work was greater than expected. They

also praised the hands-on practical experience they received working for translation agencies or interpreting in a real-life work environment. Another positive trend is an increase in the number of outgoing exchange students. While seven years ago, among pre-Bologna students, only a handful of them used to spend a semester or two abroad, today (BA and MA students combined) the number is considerably higher. Something similar applies to the teaching staff. While a decade ago study trips abroad among teaching staff were only sporadic, they have become much more common in recent years. Even though other factors have contributed to this, the Bologna reform probably has also facilitated both student and teacher mobility.

Clearly, Bologna is not entirely problem-free. One considerable problem is an increase in the number of courses per programme. Whereas in the old double-subject programmes, students typically graduated after completing around 50 courses in four years, today they often have to take around 60 courses in three years. This, of course, means not only additional coursework, exams and stress for students but also extra work for the faculty. It comes as no surprise that a competence overload for instructors with the new Bologna programmes has already been observed (cf. Gadpaille). In addition, after a financial crisis hit public universities and austerity measures were introduced, many departments had to cut back on their study programmes and reduce the number of contact hours. *Interlingual Studies* and *Translation and Interpreting* programmes, unfortunately, were among them. As a result, some of their original segments have shrunk considerably in comparison with the original versions. Nevertheless, it is believed that the new programmes were a step in the right direction, even though it is clear that it will take several generations of graduates before a sound judgment about them can be made.

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ŠKOLOVANJE PREVODILACA I TUMAČA NA UNIVERZITETU U MARIBORU

Rezime

Već deset godina na Univerzitetu u Mariboru školuju se prevodioci i tumači. U početku se ovaj proces odvijao na osnovnom studiju, koji je trajao četiri godine. S uvođenjem principa Bolonjske deklaracije u visoko obrazovanje, postojeći dodiplomski studij dijeli se na osnovni i master nivo, čime se trajanje stu-

dija produžava na pet godina. Prvi ciklus studija omogućava sticanje opštih kompetencija na polju jezika, kulture i prevođenja, dok se na drugom ciklusu radi o specijalizovanim kompetencijama i vještinama u oblasti prevođenja i tumačenja. Iako novi studijski programi, ustrojeni prema pravilima Bolonjske deklaracije, nisu oslobođeni poteškoća, poboljšali su obuku i nastavni proces u ovim disciplinama.

simon.zupan@um.si