

Fluency in another language means being able to comprehend, speak, read, and write in that language at the level of an educated native speaker. Being fluent is only the first step in becoming a professional translator or interpreter. Like any other profession, it requires practice, experience, and training. Would you like to become a T/I specialist? Think about it well, and “Ten Concepts Students Should Understand Prior to Enrolling in a University *Translation or Interpretation Class*” by Brian G. Rubrecht, Ph.D. might be helpful. Here is the link to the paper in full: <http://translationjournal.net/journal/32edu.htm>

In short you should think about the following:

1. *Students should not expect to become proficient at T/I while still at university.*
2. *Translators and interpreters need to be strong in body and mind.*
3. *Knowing another language is necessary but not sufficient for conducting T/I.*
4. *Conducting T/I is part, rather than the result, of the process of language learning.*
5. *The ultimate aim for T/I students should be to make others understand.*
6. *Not all T/I assignments will be interesting to every student.*
7. *Always keep the purpose behind the T/I assignment in mind.*
8. *T/I ability requires more than comprehension of word level meanings.*
9. *A finished translation or interpretation is never really finished.*
10. *Above all, T/I requires discipline.*

I like Cordero's (1984) explanation of translation courses very much:

[T]he various activities taken up in translation courses are designed to develop practical and marketable skills for the foreign language student. However, the benefits of such courses are not limited exclusively to the development of translation skills. In the process the student has acquired knowledge and competence in other areas of the foreign language as well: he has practiced pronunciation, built up his passive and active vocabulary, deepened his comprehension, and perfected his writing ability. It all adds up to learning to communicate, and that is, after all, what lies at the heart of foreign language learning. (p. 355)

“To communicate” was always my first goal, and fluency in English and Chinese came out from that.

Chinese language students who want to become brilliant translators or interpreters on the global level should consider the possibility of training abroad. There are training programs for both translation and interpretation that help you to sharpen your linguistic tools for the challenges of the job. At this point the question is “Where?” Unfortunately those training programs are not to be found in Belgrade, or anywhere in the southeast

Europe. It is the most likely that the choice boils down to China and America, and only a few institutes that will give you the chance to work for the world's biggest and most influential international institutions. I spent two years in USA and got interested in Monterey Institute. Here is what it has to offer to prospective students:

## **Monterey Institute**

Located in Monterey, California, the Monterey Institute of International Studies was founded in 1955 as a multilingual, globally focused graduate institute and research center, which, since 2005, is affiliated with Middlebury College. With enrollment around 800 students (all in graduate programs), the Monterey Institute boasts a close-knit, globally focused community.

The Monterey Institute offers a M.A. in Translation, a M.A. in Translation & Localization Management, a M.A. in Translation & Interpretation, and a M.A. in Conference Interpretation. The M.A. in Translation offers students the opportunity to work in a broad range of areas — medical, legal, conference, etc. — and provides the necessary computer and on-the-job training necessary to function as a translator.

The M.A. in Translation & Localization Management, on the other hand, centers around three axes of training: translation, technology, and business management. This translation track develops students' translation skills, as well as their language and cultural proficiency, through core courses offered, as well as elective courses from the other schools at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. The technical courses developed at the Monterey Institute will cover translation technology, software and web site localization, translation automation, processes standardization, IT/workflow strategies, and project management tools. Tools used in class include Alchemy Catalyst, Passolo, SDLX and TRADOS, Star Transit and Workflow. Finally, the business track will cover key business management areas, such as principles of project management, multilingual marketing, managerial economics, product development, and international business strategy in courses offered by the School of International Policy and Management.

The M.A. in Translation & Interpretation program reinforces mastery of the written and oral aspects of the students' working languages by performing both translation and interpretation of related texts. Recent technological innovations blur the distinction between the two. More than 60 percent of students choose to pursue an MATI degree. Graduates have found that being able to provide both translation and interpretation services give them a significant edge in today's competitive job market.

The M.A. in Conference Interpretation prepares students to work as both simultaneous and consecutive interpreters at conferences. In simultaneous interpretation, interpreters sit in soundproof booths (one booth for each language), where they listen to the speech from the meeting room through headsets. As the speaker talks, each interpreter interprets at the same time into his or her native or A language. The interpreter's words are spoken into a microphone and transmitted via headset to meeting participants. In this manner, the same speech can be

interpreted into several languages at once with very little time lag. In each booth, interpreters work as a team, sharing the workload at regular intervals. In consecutive interpretation, the interpreter usually sits with conference delegates while a speech is being made, listens to the speech, and takes notes. When the speaker pauses or finishes, the interpreter renders the speech in the first person in the target language. Speech and interpretation generally occur in segments no longer than 10-15 minutes. Most graduates of the MACI program work as freelance interpreters, although some do work with larger organizations like the United Nations and the U.S. State Department.

Top Translation Graduate Schools (USA): <http://www.altalang.com/beyond-words/2009/09/23/top-10-us-translation-schools/>

Let's go back to Serbia. Whenever I watch the news broadcasting some important meeting between Serbian and Chinese top officials, and recently there was the one on the level of Prime Ministers, I tend to imagine myself mastering the interpreting part of the work. But what a surprise, there will always be a Chinese lady or gentlemen on that interpreter's chair (probably thanks to Beiwai), instead of some well talented and highly trained Serbian lady or gentleman with a sharp look and good sense of humor. At that point, I have to ask myself "Could I possibly be a professional conference interpreter without proper training?"

Perhaps: some have managed it, some still do...the interpreters who provided the first simultaneous interpretation at the post-World War II trials had to sink or swim: they had no choice but to train themselves, *but we don't have to reinvent the wheel!*

### **What will a conference interpretation training program teach us?**

To interpret ... or more specifically

- to understand what the speaker wants to say
- to grasp what lies behind the speaker's words
- to keep the message in context
- to convey it consecutively or simultaneously
- to learn a special note-taking technique
- to practice concentration, discourse analysis and fast reaction
- to build useful glossaries
- to develop public speaking skills
- to prepare for different types of assignments
- to manage stressful situations
- to observe a code of conduct
- to prepare for entry into the profession

These are some of the key skills that interpreters make use of at one time or another:

- a polished command of their own native language over a range of registers and domains
- a complete mastery of their non-native languages
- a familiarity with the cultures in the countries where their working languages are spoken

- a commitment to helping others communicate
- an interest in and understanding of current affairs, plus an insatiable curiosity
- world experience away from home and school and a broad general education
- good training (and usually at least an undergraduate university degree)
- the ability to concentrate and focus as a discussion unfolds
- a pleasant speaking voice
- a friendly, collegial attitude
- calm nerves, tact, judgment and a sense of humor
- a willingness to adhere to [rules of conduct](#) (e.g. confidentiality)

Here is some practical help for the beginners:

“The advancements in technology have made it possible for people of different languages, traditions and customs to come into contact. As was expected, translators and interpreters quickly became essential for society, because they are the only ones who can make conversations between foreign individuals possible. Every translator in the twenty-first century will tell you **that it is impossible to get the job done without appropriate tools** for time management, productivity, organization and even translation.”

Check out some free internet tools on the following link: <http://inboxtranslation.com/blog/tools-translators-might-not-know-you-need/>

Future T/i specialists, wish you a good luck!

Sanja Plavša,

Chinese-English bilingual; Court interpreter for Chinese-Serbian; Communication Manager for Chinese state owned company; blogger;