

**University of Pardubice  
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy**

**The Role of the Conference Interpreter in the Society**

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**Bachelor Paper  
2008**

Univerzita Pardubice  
Fakulta filozofická  
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky  
Akademický rok: 2006/2007

## ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Alžběta KOVAŘÍKOVÁ**  
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**  
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro hospodářskou praxi**

Název tématu: **The Role of the Conference Interpreter in the Society**

### Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Tato bakalářská práce bude zaměřena na zmapování postavení konferenčního tlumočnicka v současné společnosti.

V první části práce bude popsána historie a vývoj tlumočení a překládání, v další části práce bude autorka definovat znalosti a dovednosti, které by měl konferenční tlumočnick ovládat. Otázka profesně osobnostního profilu konferenčního tlumočnicka je předmětem třetí části bakalářské práce zaměřené na problematiku etiky tlumočení. Dále práce zkoumá postavení českého konferenčního tlumočnicka v rámci Evropské unie a zamýšlí se nad budoucností konferenčního tlumočnicka jako takového.

Autorka bude ve své práci využívat sekundární zdroje z oblasti překladatelství a tlumočení, teorie překlada, psychodiagnostiky a psychologie.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: tištěná/elektronická

Seznam odborné literatury:

Čeňková, Ivana. 2001. Teorie a didaktika tlumočení I. Praha: UK v Praze, Filozofická fakulta.

Levý, Jiří. 1996. České teorie překladu: vývoj překladatelských teorií a metod v české literatuře. 1. edited by J. Honzík. Praha: Ivo Železný.

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Obhájená diplomová práce: Postavení konferenčního tlumočnicka ve společnosti (ved. I Čeňková)

The Newsletter of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters: On Etics and the Role of the Interpreter (article onlline)

<[www.catiweb.org/cqfall2003/cqfall2003.pdf](http://www.catiweb.org/cqfall2003/cqfall2003.pdf)>

<http://evropa.eu/>

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

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Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

30. dubna 2007

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

31. března 2008



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vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2007

## ***Abstract***

The aim of this work is to map the role of the conference interpreter in the society. For better understanding of the core of this profession, a brief excursion into the history is offered. It is also necessary to define what exactly interpreting is, describe the interpreting process and distinguish the individual types of interpreting. Further, this paper reveals the factors influencing the interpreter's work and deals with the ethics of the profession. The final chapter of the theoretical part focuses on the position of the Czech interpreters in the European Union.

Practical part of this paper is based on the survey performed among interpreters with the method of questionnaires. The collected data basically prove the facts gathered in the theoretical part.

Key words: interpretation, conference interpreters, consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, the history of interpreting, ethics for interpreters

## ***Souhrn***

Cílem této práce je zmapovat postavení konferenčního tlumočnicka ve společnosti. K lepšímu pochopení podstaty tohoto povolání napomáhá návrat do historie; rovněž je zapotřebí si ujasnit, co přesně tlumočení je, popsat tlumočnický proces a definovat jednotlivé druhy tlumočení. Dále tato práce popisuje faktory ovlivňující profesi a výkon tlumočnicka a zabývá se tlumočnickou etikou. Závěr teoretické části se soustředí na postavení českého tlumočnicka v rámci Evropské Unie.

Praktická část této práce, založená na výzkumu zjišťujícím názory tlumočnicků pomocí dotazníků, z velké části potvrzuje poznatky z teoretické části.

**Klíčová slova:** tlumočení, konferenční tlumočníci, konsekutivní tlumočení, simultánní tlumočení, historie tlumočení, tlumočnická etika

## ***List of Abbreviations***

ASKOT – Asociace konferenčních tlumočnicků

(Association of Conference Interpreters)

CR – Czech Republic

DG Interpretation – Directorate General for Interpretation

EP – European Parliament

EU – European Union

JTP – Jednota tlumočnicků a překladatelů

(Union of Interpreters and Translators)

LN – Lidové Noviny

UN – United Nations (Organization)

## *Contents*

Introduction .....	1
1. The History of Interpreting .....	2
1.1. The Rise of Professional Conference Interpreting .....	4
1.2. Interpreting in Europe and the Czech Republic .....	5
2. Types of Interpreting .....	6
2.1. The Role of an Interpreter .....	6
2.2. The Interpreting Process .....	7
2.3. Consecutive Interpreting .....	9
2.4. Simultaneous Interpreting .....	11
3. Factors Influencing the Work of an Interpreter .....	13
3.1. Linguistic and Cultural Competence .....	13
3.2. Psychological Competence .....	14
3.3. Other Skills .....	16
4. Ethics for Interpreters .....	18
5. Czech Interpreters in the European Union .....	21
6. Practical Part .....	26
6.1. Linguistic and Cultural Competence .....	27
6.2. Qualification .....	28
6.3. Ethics .....	29
6.4. Job Offers, the EU .....	31
6.5. The Future of Interpreting .....	33
7. Conclusion .....	35
8. Resumé .....	36
9. Bibliography .....	41
10. Appendix – Questionnaire .....	43





## ***Introduction***

Expressed by the words of Phelan, “the general public is confused about what exactly interpreting is” (2001, p.xiii). Therefore it is necessary to provide a basic explanation of the interpreter’s profession right at the beginning of this paper.

Dozens of definitions of interpretation can be found in the literature on interpreting. In principle, however, they are all alike. Put simply, interpreting is about communication, both inter-lingual and inter-cultural, and can be defined as conveying understanding. Interpreting is here to help “people who wish to communicate with one another, and who are prevented from doing so by a barrier” (Jones 1998, p.3). Jones explains that this barrier is mainly linguistic (1998, p.3) but there is usually a cultural barrier as well. He mentions different background knowledge, education and intellectual approaches which people from different countries may have (1998, p.3). In order to achieve agreement without any misunderstandings, people from different countries hire for their meetings interpreters who help them to bridge these gaps. This should be the principal aim and purpose of interpretation.

The main focus of this paper is conference interpreting. Explained by Phelan, this term “refers to the use of consecutive or simultaneous interpreting at a conference or a meeting” (2001, p.6). She emphasizes *ibid.* that conference interpreting is the most prestigious form of interpreting (and, in addition, the most financially rewarding).

This paper provides a brief excursion into the history of interpreting, describes the interpreting process and the individual types of conference interpreting, explains the factors affecting the interpreter’s work, and describes the ethics for interpreting. The last chapter of the theoretical part focuses on Czech interpreters in the European Union. The practical part, based on questionnaires filled in by interpreters, is to confirm or negate the theory and to show what practising interpreters really think about their profession.

Before the interpreting as such can be described, and in order to better understand the role and position of the interpreter in the society, a brief expedition into the history of interpreting is essential.

## ***1. The History of Interpreting***

In regards to the history of interpreting, authors often disagree. While some say that interpreting as a profession occurred no sooner than after World War I, others argue that interpreting has existed for a very long time. Case in point, Riccardi et al. states that “interpreting is a young profession which has developed during this century” (1998, p.93) while Herbert claims that “the profession of interpreting is a very old one, which came into existence when the first contacts were established between human groups speaking different languages” (1968, p.vii).

As Phelan points out, there is very little evidence of the interpreters’ work because there are often no written records of the spoken word (2001, p.1). This might be the reason why some authors talk about interpreting after the World War I and not sooner. Phelan says that it is clear that the interpreter was present, but s/he is not mentioned in historical documents (2001, p.1). She continues that we can actually talk about interpreting whenever people met. In some historical moments, interpreting gained a very important role. She mentions the process of colonization of new continents, when communication was the key to power and control (Phelan, 2001, p.1). Herbert supports this idea. He describes how Christopher Columbus sent Indians, especially young people, to Spain to learn the language. He knew that “they will do more quickly in Spain than here, and they will thus become better interpreters.” Columbus was aware of the fact that if he wanted to win the confidence of the natives of the New World in order to instruct them in the Christian faith, he needed to be able to communicate with them (Herbert, 1968, p.viii). Phelan adds that this pattern repeated, for example by the French in Canada (2001, p.1).

Čeňková expresses a similar viewpoint on the history of interpreting. She agrees that there is little evidence of interpreters’ work and therefore it is hard to find materials which would help analyze the history and development of interpreting (2001, p.8). On the other hand she continues that we can find quite complex records about interpreters in the history of Egypt (around 3000 BC). There is evidence of people who were highly respected by the Pharaohs, people who are believed to have been the first interpreters, living in the bilingual area of South Egypt. The interpreter was viewed as some kind of superior being, who worked either for God or the King. After the Arabians took over Egypt in 640 AD, their language predominated and the rulers employed interpreters to

help them spread the new religion (Islam) together with the political and economical power. First references to problems rising in the process of interpreting appeared in this period. Arabians were discussing the age of the interpreter, education and the interpreter's attitude to the speaker. So as we can see, they were aware of the fact, that interpreting was not only about the knowledge of the language, but other prerequisites were very important as well (Čeňková, 2001, p.8-9).

Čeňková also says that we can find records about interpreters in Ancient Europe as well (2001, p.9). However, she explains that there was a big difference between Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. The Romans valued fully the importance of interpreting. The Greeks, however, were too proud of their own culture and language, and thus they did not appreciate the work of interpreters; they did not establish any institution supporting the interpreters and they expected the Barbarians to learn Greek (Čeňková, 2001, p. 9).

The period of the middle ages and the modern period are definitely worth mentioning, because as Čeňková points out, the expansion of Christianity required new interpreters as Latin and Greek coexisted together for a period of time. Interpreters were highly respected in those times (2001, p.10).

Čeňková further continues that after the fall of the Roman Empire (476 AD), interpreting spread among the Turks (2001, p.10). Interpreters were very important for them, because all of their economical transactions and political dealings were done solely by word of mouth. The need for interpreters was significantly lower in the Christian states, because here, Latin played the role of *lingua franca* until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This supremacy of Latin was broken by the making of the Vestfal peace and Latin was basically replaced with French. Logically, the use of French as a common working language lead to the stagnation of interpreting; diplomats all around Europe could speak French (Čeňková, 2001, p.10). Phelan adds, that "French was the international language of diplomacy until the peace talks in 1919" (2001, p.1). As Čeňková points out, this situation was characteristic only of Europe. As mentioned above, the situation in America was completely different (2001, p.10).

The nineteenth century introduced a growing importance of the national languages on the one hand, and a tendency to globalization, which led to the first international conferences on the other. English was introduced into the world of

international dealings and rapidly developing North America was winning recognition. New international organizations came into existence and interpreting flourished as a specific profession of its own (Čeňková, 2001, p.10).

### ***1.1. The Rise of Professional Conference Interpreting***

Phelan stresses that World War I was a turning point for interpreting (2001, p.2). US President Woodrow Wilson and Prime Minister Lloyd George of the United Kingdom for the first time did not speak French; they used English instead, and this has been considered to be the beginning of conference interpreting (Phelan, 2001, p.2).

Another milestone, Phelan points out, was reached in the 1920s when the equipment for simultaneous interpreting was invented. It was first used at the International Labor Organization Conference in Geneva in 1927. She continues that the interpreter's role changed from a "visible, high profile position as consecutive interpreter" into a "voice from a booth" (2001, p.2). Čeňková adds that simultaneous interpreting found quickly its supporters, because of the time savings, and on the other hand there were many antagonists who doubted the quality of this kind of interpreting (2001, p.11-12). They probably thought that the speed might put the quality of the performance at risk. Čeňková continues that the real boost of simultaneous interpreting started after World War II (2001, 11). The Nuremberg trial was the first prominent international event where simultaneous interpreting was used and helped significantly to the popularization of this kind of interpreting. The reason was that the interpreting did not serve only as a communication device between the court and the defendants, but it also helped to communicate with the press and the public and it served the judges to communicate with each other. Despite the fact that simultaneous interpreting was actually an experiment, the interpreters did not have any professional training and the equipment was very faulty and unreliable, the whole event meant an enormous success for the simultaneous interpreters. This event showed that this kind of interpretation is undoubtedly the most convenient way of communication during international multilingual dealings (Čeňková, 2001, p.11-12).

An interesting point is that the first conference interpreters became interpreters by coincidence. As Adamovská says, professional interpreters as we know them today did not exist in the times immediately after World War I. Conference interpreting became professionalized in the course of time (2002, p 23). First conference interpreters

were people with the knowledge of one or more foreign languages who “found themselves in the right place at the right time” (Phelan, 2001, p.2). She explains that as interpreting developed, universities began offering courses in the subject, which helped interpreters to obtain professional status. The first to be founded in 1940 (Čeňková states 1941) was the Geneva School of Interpreting, and many other interpreting schools followed after World War II. Another important moment for interpreters was the creation of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) in 1953, which became a proponent of better conditions for its members (Phelan, 2001, p.2).

Another turning point in the history of interpreting, pointed out by Čeňková, was the creation of the United Nations Organization in 1945 in San Francisco (2001, p.12). After the relocation of the organization to New York, permanent cabins were installed in the new UN building and a team of simultaneous interpreters who proved themselves skillful during the Nuremberg trial was invited. From that time, simultaneous interpreting proliferated into every international organization and became the most widespread type of conference interpreting (Čeňková, 2001, p.12-13).

From this short excursion into the history of interpreting, it is safe to say that interpreters have always played a very important role. Although we often lack sufficient evidence about their existence, it is obvious that they were there. It is obvious that they were crucial in forming the history of mankind. Expressed by the words of Herbert, “One could multiply examples, selected from the vast field of history, to prove that interpretation has been felt as a profound necessity in all ages, particularly in the periods of great revival” (1968, p.viii).

## ***1.2. Interpreting in Europe and the Czech Republic***

As for Europe and the Czech Republic, there is one moment in their history that should be mentioned, the year of 1989. Čeňková explains in her article that this year was not only a political turning point but she adds that it was also the beginning of the world society globalization, and the beginning of mixing of cultures and languages. Radical changes happened in the interpretation market; the demand for individual languages changed practically overnight (2007, p.1).

As Čeňková further describes, new professional interpreting and translating organizations were being established in former Czechoslovakia – Union of interpreters and translators (JTP), Association of conference interpreters (ASKOT) and others

(2007). Another important point is the rapid development of new interpreting and translating agencies. The influx of foreigners is noticeable and the interest of foreign investors in this region is rising. Interpreters have to work in areas which are completely new for them – marketing, management, accounting, banking, stock exchange. It is essential to provide contact between foreigners and local employees (Čeňková, 2007) because the employees did not speak foreign languages at that time. This implies that interpreters have been once again a very important element in the interpersonal relations and communication. Čeňková adds that a similar situation may be observed in other countries of Central and Western Europe (2007).

## ***2. Types of Interpreting***

The history of interpreting introduced the development of the two main types of conference interpretation – simultaneous and consecutive. As Jones points out, the interpreter must be able to work both consecutively and simultaneously (1998, p.5). Prior to examining the individual types of interpretation, the role of an interpreter and the interpreting process shall be described.

### ***2.1. The Role of an Interpreter***

Metivier defines the work of the interpreter very clearly and concisely in her article. She says that the basic role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication between two parties that do not speak the same language, in terms of language and culture, and “to convey the message accurately without adding, modifying, or deleting information” (2003, p.1). Taken from the viewpoint of linguistics, there is a good point in the article by Kondo, who says that because of the different cultural backgrounds, the interpreter has to first decode the message from the sender into its abstract form and then encode it for the receiver (1990, p.61). It is important to define the term “culture” here. Kondo defines culture as “all that is learned by the person after his birth in the process of socialization” and he continues that this involves language, customs, beliefs, ways of communication, ways of life and other products of a group of people, handed down from generation to generation (1990, p.62). And there is another fundamental circumstance for a good interpretation that has to be taken into account, and that is context. As Kondo points out, there is always more than one way of encoding and decoding a concept and thus all the participants of the interpretation process rely heavily

on the context in arriving at an appropriate interpretation (1990, p.62).

From what has just been said it is obvious that interpreting is not about simply translating words. As Jones says in her article, interpreters' work is to "relay concepts and ideas between languages" (2002). Therefore a word-to-word correspondence between the source and target language is not desirable at all and has no place in the work of an interpreter. How to achieve a good interpretation is described in the next chapter.

## ***2.2. The Interpreting Process***

The interpreting process is fundamentally similar with simultaneous and consecutive interpreting. Expressed briefly by the words of Phelan, "the interpreter has to process incoming information in one language and produce an interpretation in a second language" (2001, p.7). This seemingly easy process consists of a number of individual steps that need to be pieced together and mastered very well. Santiago names in his article all the activities needed for a successful accomplishment of the interpreter's task: attending to the message, concentrating on the task at hand, remembering the message, comprehending the meaning of the message, analyzing the message, visualizing it nonverbally, and reformulating the message in the target language (2004). The difference between simultaneous and consecutive interpreting is that the consecutive interpreter has a little more time to go through the whole process. As Jones notes, in simultaneous the interpreter begins resynthesizing the speech before actually having heard the whole speech to be analyzed (1998, p. 6).

Jones distinguishes three basic stages of the interpreter's work: understanding, analyzing and re-expressing (1998, p. x). Herbert calls these stages understanding, conversion and delivery (1969, p. 9) but both authors refer to the same meanings.

Understanding does not mean only understanding of words, but more importantly it means the understanding of ideas. Since, as Jones points out, "it is ideas that have to be interpreted" (1998, p.x). He continues that it is obvious that if you do not know the words the speaker is using, you cannot understand his ideas. And no doubt the interpreter has to be familiar with the grammar and syntax of the speaker's language as well. Quite often there comes a situation when the interpreter is perfectly capable to understand the speaker's meaning without actually understanding every single word and expression (Jones, 1998, p. x).

Understanding is of course dependent on hearing. Herbert says that a good interpreter must have remarkably acute hearing (1968, p.10). However, this would not be enough. He continues that the interpreter “must be assigned a seat from which s/he can satisfactorily hear the speeches which s/he will have to translate”. If this requirement is not fulfilled, the interpreter should ask for a correction (Herbert, 1968, p.11).

Conversion is according to Herbert “all that the interpreter has to do between the hearing of the original speech and the delivery of the translation” (1968, p.23). At this point the author points out once again that the interpreter should always be aware of the object of his work, which is to enable the audience to know exactly what the speaker intended to convey and to make on the audience the same impression which the speaker wishes to be made (Herbert, 1968, p.23). When talking about consecutive interpreting, important part of conversion is the taking of notes which is discussed thereafter.

The last part of the interpreting process is delivery. Herbert says that a good interpreter should be a trained public speaker (1968, p. 59). Basic rules for delivering the translation are that the interpreter manages his/her breath well, speaks in a voice pleasant to hear, speaks at a good pace (slightly more rapid than the speaker), uses enough but not too many gestures and usually uses an accent as neutral as possible. The interpreter is not an actor; therefore s/he cannot be expected to impersonate different characters all the time. The interpreter speaks in the first person singular because as Herbert points out the third person singular would make the whole translation clumsy and full of relative pronouns and conjunctions (1968, p. 63).

To manage breath and voice, good care of vocal organs and lungs is advised and breathing exercises are necessary at least at the beginning of the interpreter’s career. An interesting point about delivery made by Herbert is that under normal conditions the interpreter should deliver a better speech than the original (1968, p.60). The author states two reasons: firstly, as already mentioned, the interpreter should be a professional public speaker (which the original speaker does not necessarily have to be); and secondly, the interpreter should take full advantage of coming after the original speaker (the interpreter has time to organize the thoughts and ideas; there is no reason for hesitations and repetitions etc.). Herbert emphasizes that this of course applies to the consecutive interpreting only (1968, p.60).



The delivery can be considered perfect only if one “rule” is followed; it is often referred to as “dropping form” by interpreters. Santiago explains that by discarding the form (words, structure) of the source text, the interpreter is free to concentrate on the meaning of the text (2004). According to Santiago’s article, there is a very limited capacity of a person’s short-term memory. It is because of these limitations that “interpreters are required to drop form and concentrate on meaning” (Santiago, 2004). If they filled their memory with individual lexical items they would probably not be able to even compose a full sentence (Santiago, 2004). They should therefore concentrate on the meaning and use their long-term memory instead.

### ***2.3. Consecutive Interpreting***

As mentioned in the history of interpreting, consecutive was the first form of professional interpreting. Expressed by the words of Nolan, a consecutive interpreter “listens to the speaker, takes notes and then reproduces the speech in the target language” (2006, p.3). Phelan stresses that consecutive interpretation is not a summary but it should be a complete rendition of the original speech, only in another language (2001, p.9). On the other hand, Herbert points out that “the interpretation should never take more than 75% of the time used by the original speaker”. He suggests that to achieve this objective the interpreter should speak at a slightly more rapid pace. He further explains that there is actually no reason for the interpreter to hesitate; the speaker hesitates on the choice of words, sequence of ideas etc., but there is no need for the interpreter to do this. S/he can shorten the speech by leaving out most of the redundant sentences and unintentional repetitions (1968, p. 67). However, there is a difference between shortening the speech as stated above and making a summary of it.

Jones talks about the length of the speech which should be interpreted. He says that some speakers prefer to say just a few sentences and then let the interpreter make their translation. In this case the interpreter may work without notes. A conference interpreter must be prepared to cope with speeches of any length (1998, p. 5). That is why “the taking of notes is the crucial part in the technique of consecutive interpretation” (Herbert 1968, p.32). Phelan (2001, p.9) and Herbert (1968, p.33) complement each other when writing about note-taking. They say that the notes are essentially individual; each interpreter develops his/her own technique for note-taking. Therefore the notes of one interpreter mean nothing to any other; the interpreter taking

the notes is the only person capable of understanding and deciphering them. Some interpreters remember details while others tend to remember the sequence of ideas. Some interpreters use a great number of symbols while others hardly use any. Phelan adds that some interpreters manage to write down everything they hear; but this is generally not recommended.

Phelan continues that most interpreters take notes in the target language because it “helps the interpreter to move away from the structures and expressions of the source language” (2001, p.9).

A good interpreter should, according to Herbert, make use of symbols, arrows, abbreviations, numbers, emphases and interrelations of ideas (1968, p.36).

The last thing that should be pointed out about consecutive interpreting is that the interpreter should start taking notes as soon as the speech begins (Herbert 1968, p.33). There is no need to wait until the speaker says more as is the case with the simultaneous interpreting.

#### ***Advantages of Consecutive Interpreting***

Among the most important advantages of consecutive interpreting is the fact that consecutive interpretations are more accurate, equivalent and complete (Santiago, 2004). This greater accuracy is a result of the process of interpreting; the consecutive interpreter has more time to think, organize his/her thoughts and to render the translation.

Secondly, consecutive “has the advantage of not requiring much equipment” (Nolan, 2006, p.4). Phelan explains that there are no booths or equipment needed between the speaker and the interpreter. She also points out another advantage in which if the interpreter is not sure of something which has been said, s/he can clarify with the speaker and ask him/her what exactly was meant (2001, p.9). As Herbert explains, the simultaneous interpreter does not have this chance of asking the speaker and therefore needs to “fill the gap” (1968, p.12). Herbert lists few possibilities of doing this: the interpreter can say something as vague as possible or repeat what s/he has just said, only in a slightly different way. If s/he thinks that s/he missed something really important s/he can say through the microphone that there is something s/he did not translate because s/he did not understand it (Herbert, 1968, p.12). It is sometimes better to acknowledge a mistake than to be accused of an omission of something important afterwards.

### ***Disadvantages of Consecutive Interpreting***

Herbert points out that conference interpreting is no easy job to start with as the beginners are expected from their very first meetings to reach the degree of perfection, which would never be expected in other profession (1968, p. 85). This applies to simultaneous interpreting as well.

The most notable disadvantage of the consecutive mode is undoubtedly the time-consuming aspect. Therefore this type of interpreting can be used only at conferences, where there are no more than two languages present.

### ***2.4. Simultaneous Interpreting***

The aforementioned disadvantage of consecutive interpreting is at the same time the main reason why simultaneous mode is much preferred nowadays at multilingual conferences.

Simultaneous interpreting has been defined many times already, thus there is no need to create a new definition. Nolan (2006, p.3) quotes:

A simultaneous interpreter, usually sitting in a soundproof booth, listens to the speaker through earphones and, speaking into a microphone, reproduces the speech in the target language as it is being delivered in the source language.

In simultaneous, the interpretation is made at the same time as the original speech and finishes near the same time as the original. Phelan draws attention to the high level of concentration which is required for simultaneous interpreting. She explains that for that reason, interpreters usually do not interpret for more than 30 minutes at a time (2001, p.7). Nolan adds that they work in teams of two or three people per booth, taking turns of about 30 minutes each for a maximum of about three hours at a time. This has been found to be the maximum time during which the necessary concentration can be sustained (Nolan, 2006, p.4).

A frequently asked question about simultaneous interpreting is “when exactly should the interpreter start talking?”. There is no exact answer to this question. For two reasons, the interpreter should start as soon as possible. Firstly, s/he should not get too behind the speaker, and secondly, it would sound strange if the speaker was talking and the interpreter remained silent. People who are not familiar with the work of the interpreter would gain an impression that the interpreter is missing something. As Jones says, the interpreter should say *something* almost immediately, in order to reassure the participants listening to him/her (1998, p.78-79). If a speaker begins and the interpreter

says absolutely nothing, the participants may become very nervous, turn round and complain there is no interpretation. Jones suggests that one of the safest things one can say is *Thank you* even if the speaker did not bother to be so polite (Jones, 1998, p.78-79). On the other hand, the interpreter cannot start speaking immediately; s/he needs to wait for at least some kind of hint, about how the speaker is going to continue.

### ***Advantages of Simultaneous Interpreting***

It is apparent that simultaneous interpreting takes up less time than consecutive and as Jones points out it is much more feasible to provide genuine multilingual interpreting, which is required e.g. by the UN or the EU, using simultaneous interpretation (1998, p.6). Nolan states that simultaneous interpreting “enables a multilingual conference, with participants speaking a number of languages, to proceed without interruption” (2006, p.4). Herbert adds that contrary to what many people think, simultaneous interpreting is considerably easier to learn and to practice than consecutive (1968, p.85).

### ***Disadvantages of Simultaneous Interpreting***

Herbert supports the idea that consecutive interpretations are more accurate and complete by saying that “the simultaneous interpreter is always faced with the dilemma of choosing between accuracy on the one hand, and good style and grammar on the other”. He suggests that the interpreter should always give priority to accuracy (1968, p.31).

Other disadvantages of simultaneous interpreting result from the technical aspects. The technical equipment is always needed, the booths are essential for the work of simultaneous interpreter. Working in the booth might cause various difficulties. Phelan describes that because the booth is a very confined space and the interpreters have to spend considerable time together, teamwork is an important aspect of simultaneous interpreting - it is very important for the interpreter to have colleagues with pleasant, helpful and sociable personality (2001, p.7). When an interpreter is not actually interpreting, s/he stays in the booth to be available and ready to help his/her colleague, should the need arise. When staying in the booth, s/he should be careful of making distracting noises such as water being poured or rustling of papers because all these sounds can be picked up by the microphone and transmitted to the audience (Phelan, 2001, p.7). These commonly unnoticed sounds might also distract the on duty interpreter’s already fragile attention.

Herbert adds that the interpreter who is not actually functioning should follow the discussion in his/her own interest as well; s/he will therefore understand his/her lot better. Then he stresses the importance of helping his/her colleague in every possible way as well. He mentions trying to find the right translation for unknown or highly technical words, getting the documents to which the speaker refers or writing down figures for his/her colleague (1968, p. 79-80).

### ***3. Factors Influencing the Work of an Interpreter***

If an interpreter wants to be considered a professional, an excellent interpreting performance is expected from him/her. Such a performance is based on many factors, including the interpreter's personal qualities, his/her abilities, skills, qualification, experience, ability to cope with the stress and others. Herbert adds that a good interpreter must also have intellectual gifts such as power of concentration, quickness of mind, a good memory; and moral attributes such as self-command and sense of responsibility etc. (1968, p. ix).

As the interpreting profession is highly demanding, there are very specific factors that influence the work of interpreters. Only the most specific ones are introduced here because to name all of them would be beyond the scope of this paper. Three areas shall be distinguished here: linguistic and cultural competence, psychological competence and other skills.

#### ***3.1. Linguistic and Cultural Competence***

The basic prerequisite for a professional interpreter is a thorough and excellent knowledge of both the source and target languages. The interpreter must be perfectly familiar with the vocabulary, grammar, sentence structures, nuances in meaning, idioms, collocations etc. As Trabing explains in her article, it is one thing to speak a language fluently when you are the one who chooses the grammar and vocabulary; and it is completely different to speak fluently when you have to use the exact same words, grammar and syntax of someone else. Moreover, you have to convey the exact message and tone expressed by the speaker (AO 6).<sup>1</sup>

Important thing, pointed out by Trabing, is that the knowledge and vocabulary cannot be only passive, but it must be very active. "Your knowledge of terminology

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper the electronic sources are referred to as AO 1 – AO 6 (AO = article online). The full reference to the source is to be found in the bibliography.

must be immediately available in your mind, because you only have a split second in which to come up with the appropriate word” (AO 6).

The knowledge of the language is of course not enough, which is also the reason why bilingual people are not automatically good interpreters. As Trabing says, “having two languages does not make you an interpreter any more than having two hands makes you a pianist” (AO 6). Nolan explains that actually only few people are truly bilingual. He says that to be truly bilingual, the person needs to be “thoroughly conversant with both languages, sensitive to the differences between them, and able to use both equally well as a medium of expression” (2006, p.6).

Apart from the knowledge of the language, the interpreter also needs to have a very good knowledge of the given culture. As Nolan implies, no interpretation is ever perfect because of the cultural differences (2006, p.3). The well prepared interpreter with the knowledge of the cultures can make the interpretation as close to the original as possible.

### ***3.2. Psychological Competence***

An interpreter needs to have an exceptionally good memory, must be able to cope with stress perfectly and when interpreting simultaneously, must be able to manage the requirement for a split attention.

#### ***Memory***

The ability to concentrate fully, as well as the ability to analyze and process what is heard is very important. This is connected with the need for a good short-term memory - so the interpreter can retain what s/he has just heard, plus a long-term memory - to put the information into a context (Phelan, 2001, p.4-5).

Herbert (1968, p. 5) describes three things which are expected of the interpreter’s memory:

1. it should store up permanently an exceptionally large vocabulary in various languages and supply instantly the required word or phrase
2. it should retain for the duration of a given conference the highly technical terms that are used by specialists
3. it should retain for a very brief period a picture as full, detailed and accurate as possible of what has just been said (and then the interpreter must wash his/her mind clear)

It is important for beginning interpreters to do memory exercises because the brain can be trained like any other “muscle” in the human body.

## ***Stress***

The previous paragraphs have shown that interpreting, not only simultaneous but consecutive as well, is a very demanding and therefore stressful occupation. To perform this job well, sustained alertness and concentration is required and Nolan says that these requirements can be compared to the job of an air-traffic controller (2006, p.7). Fortunately, interpreters' associations have developed "standards governing workload, team strength, and equipment based on medical studies, which are intended to keep the workload and cumulative stress within reasonable limits" (Nolan, 2006, p.7).

It is important to be aware of the fact that everything goes in the mind; no instruments can be of help to the interpreter (Riccardi et al., 1998, p.97). The authors explain that even the most experienced and skilled interpreter will feel a certain amount of tension at the beginning of a conference. S/he knows that there may be some difficulties s/he will have to cope with, such as technical words, difficult accent or pronunciation of the speaker, technical defects with the equipment and others. These factors cannot be eliminated, but training and experience will help the interpreter to adopt the right strategy quickly. "The more unknown factors the interpreter is confronted with, the higher the mental load and stress will be" (Riccardi et al., 1998, p.97).

Riccardi et al. also explains why no stress studies have been carried out on interpreters while working. It is because anything like something falling in the booth, a sneeze, a cough or somebody talking behind the booth may cause a loss of concentration or attention. Interpreters are thus not very keen to be observed and studied while performing their activities (1998, p.97).

To understand stress it is essential to define it. A good definition is provided by Riccardi et al.: "Stress is what occurs when an individual feels that environmental requirements clearly exceed the resources available to him for coping with them." They add that stress level depends on the perception of the consequences of failure to fulfill a request (1998, p.96).

This implies that the interpreter should only take such assignments that s/he is able to manage. Interpreters must be aware of the fact that they cannot be qualified in every possible area and thus they must be able to reject work which they know they cannot complete (Adamovská, 2002. p.23-24). This should minimize the risk of stress.

### ***Split Attention in Simultaneous Interpreting***

People normally concentrate on one thing at a time; they either speak or listen. A simultaneous interpreter must be able to listen to the speaker, speak and listen to himself at the same time, which is absolutely not natural. Jones poses the question “how does one deal with this?” (1998, p. 74).

He explains that it is important to recognize the need to listen consciously and critically to oneself when interpreting. This is another difference from “normal” speech, where one talks automatically because s/he knows what s/he wants to say. Interpreters have to monitor not only the content and correctness of their interpretation, but also their grammar, pronunciation, sentence structure (1998, p. 74-76); they have to monitor whether what they are saying makes sense and is understandable.

Jones further points out that with this split concentration the risk of error in at least one of those areas is increasing. To minimize the chances of error, the interpreter’s level of concentration must be at its maximum. They simply cannot let their mind stray to anything else such as visual details in the room, the weather outside, the speaker’s accent etc. (1998, p. 74-75).

A dangerous situation for simultaneous interpreters occurs when in the original speech they encounter a word they do not know or when they are not sure how to render it best in the target language. There are more ways how to handle this problem, but the important thing here is that “the simultaneous interpreter must not get ‘hung up’ on the words” (Jones, 1998, p. 75).

### ***3.3. Other Skills***

#### ***Preparation for Conference***

Undoubtedly, it is much easier to interpret with a good understanding of the subject of the conference. Therefore one part of the interpreter’s work is a thorough preparation for the conference. Nolan talks about usual practice among conference interpreters: they should obtain background materials and study them to gain a basic understanding of the subject and the specialized vocabulary (2006, p.5). Unfortunately, this practice is not always adhered to, because the conference organizers do not realize its importance.

Nolan emphasizes that “it is not possible to be an expert in every field in which there is a demand for translation”. Therefore most interpreters are generalists. However, some specialize e.g. in medical, technical, business or legal translation (2006. p.4). With



this advantage, enough work and higher fees are guaranteed for them.

### ***Lifelong Learning***

Conference interpreters must be knowledgeable of current topics and affairs. Phelan states that “intellectual curiosity is essential for conference interpreters in particular” (2001, p.4) because at a conference or meeting participants may talk about things such as current affairs, etc. Subjects which arise frequently at all sorts of meetings are contemporary history, political and economic geography, commercial law, economics, international trade and others. Herbert explains that interpreters are regularly in contact with political, economic, juridical and social problems of the hour; interpreters need to be familiar with all these subjects. Herbert continues to state that knowing the current events is still not enough; interpreters must know diplomatic history and be familiar with everything that concerns international organization (1968, p. ix-x).

This knowledge is also useful for the interpreters themselves. If they are familiar with all these topics, it is consequently easier to interpret because they can imagine the situation the speaker is talking about and they can sometimes predict what will follow or deduce something they missed in the speech.

The world and the situation in the world are changing constantly, it is necessary for the interpreters to update their knowledge, to follow the news and to be familiar with the emerging issues. Herbert suggests that “the ideal interpreter would be a living complete encyclopedia constantly kept up-to-date with all that is said and done in all kinds of human activity” (1968, p.21). This means that s/he should be able to speak on any subject at any time. This is of course impossible, but the interpreter should work towards this goal (Herbert, 1968, p.21).

### ***Qualification***

As Nolan writes, there is no universal form of accreditation process to become an interpreter; each employer has different standards and requirements (2006, p. 5). Adamovská adds, that the profession of conference interpreter can be practiced by both the university graduates and people with different education. However, the first group is preferred nowadays (2002, p.30).

Most employers will require at least a certificate from a translation school or retraining course. An entrance test will be administered (Nolan, 2006, p.6). Experience is often essential for most employers.

As will be discussed later on, the standards for interpreters in the EU are much higher. As Nolan explains, “the European Union administers a competitive general knowledge exam as well as language tests” (2006, p.6).

Phelan draws attention to the fact that interpreting is a very demanding job and an interpreter cannot afford to have a bad day. “One bad interpreter can ruin the conference” (2001, p.4). Trabing explains what interpreters can and should do to stay in a good condition: they should stay healthy, get enough rest, and exercise regularly. If the interpreter is tired, stressed out or feeling unwell, s/he “will have trouble concentrating and producing clear and concise thoughts” (AO 6). Thus it is very important for the interpreters to clear their minds before and after every interpreting session.

#### ***4. Ethics for Interpreters***

“Ethical issues affect an interpreter’s performance whether he or she is aware of it or not” (Metivier, 2003, p.1). She continues that it is important for every professional in the field of interpreting to act according to what is good not only for himself or herself, but also for the people they serve and the profession itself. The challenge for interpreters is to face their social responsibilities and make the right decisions for all involved (2003, p.1).

As Phelan says, it is vital to be explicit about what is acceptable in a profession and what is not. Therefore most professions have their own code of ethics (2001, p. 39). Different interpreting organizations have different professional guidelines or ethical codes, but they are similar in a lot of ways and they fundamentally contain the same information. The guidelines can be broken down into two parts: one concentrates on what the interpreter is expected to know and do, the second part specifies what should be done for the interpreter.

##### ***Ethical Code***

It is even more important with the profession of interpreting to have all the conditions clearly defined because, as Phelan points out, interpreters are in a very privileged situation and clients must be able to trust them. Interpreters have the access to confidential information, such as new products of a company, marketing strategies and others (2001, p. 39). This implies the basic rule for interpreters, which is defined in the

Ethical Code of JTP as: “interpreters shall always be fully bound by professional secrecy, whereby they must not reveal to anyone anything that they may learn during their activities of interpreting.” This is connected with another item from the JTP Ethical Code which says that “interpreters must never misuse or take advantage of confidential information”. It appears to be obvious, but interpreters really have to realize how crucial it is to keep to themselves all the information they hear in the course of their work.

The above mentioned rule for interpreting should be reaffirmed here. It says that interpreters shall always interpret truly and faithfully what is said, without adding, changing or omitting anything (Phelan, 2001, p.44).

Another essential rule for interpreters is that they:

Shall on principle only take on commitments that correspond to their abilities and state of preparedness; they shall bear full moral responsibility for the results of their work (JTP Ethical Code).

Adamovská explains that the interpreter cannot have the same knowledge and qualification in all subject fields and thus s/he must be able to exclude those areas which s/he is not acquainted with to a sufficient degree (2002, p.24). By taking on assignments which s/he is not able to accomplish, the interpreter would discredit the whole interpreting profession. As the JTP Ethical Code states: “Interpreters shall refuse to carry out such activity ... that might do harm to the dignity of their profession” and “Interpreters shall on principle demonstrate solidarity with their colleagues”. Interpreters are a community which should stick together and they should help each other and try to improve the profession (e.g. by sharing professional knowledge) whenever possible. As Phelan says, they should be punctual and behave professionally at all times (2001, p.39). In failing to do so, they would harm the whole profession. Helping each other also means that they “shall always arrange interpreting for other interpreters without charge” (JTP Ethical Code).

Next, the JTP Ethical Code mentions that “The practice of their profession shall not curtail interpreters’ personal human and civic rights and must not be to the detriment of their dignity”. The assignments taken on should not violate the interpreter’s personal or religious beliefs; if they take on such assignment, the interpretation will be biased. Worth mentioning is that interpreters shall not discriminate against parties on the grounds of race, color, ethnic origin, age, nationality, religion, gender or disability. Both direct and indirect discrimination is forbidden (Phelan, 2001, p. 45).

### ***What Should Be Done for the Interpreter?***

There is of course the flip side of the coin. The interpreter may be aware of all the rules stated above. However, there are steps which must be taken in order to make the working conditions for the interpreter as favorable as possible. Unfortunately, the organizers often fail to realize how important it is to provide the best possible working conditions for the interpreter.

Phelan lists the working conditions which interpreters should be provided with: satisfactory conditions of sound, visibility and comfort; direct view of the speaker and the conference room; interpreters should never work alone simultaneously; all the possible documents and background materials should be sent to the interpreter in advance; all engagements should be covered by a written contract stipulating the fee, the duration of the appointment, the working languages, the hours of work etc. (2001, p. 41-42). It is also important that the interpreter takes regular breaks whenever working for an extended period of time.

### ***Speaker's Mistake***

While dealing with the ethics for interpreters, it should be mentioned what happens when the speaker makes a mistake. Herbert gives three possibilities of handling the situation for the interpreter (1968, p. 26-27). The first possibility results from when the speaker makes an obvious mistake. If the speaker says Sweden instead of Switzerland or 18 instead of 80 and the interpreter notices the mistake and knows the correct word, s/he should unobtrusively correct it. If the interpreter is not certain, s/he should abide strictly to what the speaker said; the speaker will probably notice the mistake himself/herself and correct it. The third possibility of handling the situation is to pretend that s/he has not heard and ask the speaker to repeat (Herbert, 1968, p. 26-27). This is of course possible only when interpreting consecutively. When working simultaneously, the interpreter has probably no other chance than to follow what the speaker says because there is no time for such corrections.

### ***Blaming the Interpreter***

As mentioned in the chapter on qualities, interpreters must be very good at self-command. The interpreter might be blamed for something that is not true (incorrect interpretation) or something that is not his/her fault (the speaker said something which should have not been said and realized it too late). No matter if the person blaming the interpreter is right or wrong, as Herbert emphasizes, the interpreter must accept the

correction gracefully and even apologize. After all, his/her task is to bring together individuals and groups. As Herbert continues, most delegates and most of the speakers who made the mistake the interpreter is blamed for will realize perfectly well what has happened, and will be grateful to the interpreter. Herbert refers to the interpreter as a “scapegoat” (1968, p. 81).

## ***5. Czech Interpreters in the European Union***

The European Union employs more interpreters than any other organization in the world. Unlike most other organizations, however, the EU has decided to treat all languages equally (Phelan, 2001, p. 59). The EU made this political decision at the very beginning of its existence: it shall be possible for all EU citizens, their elected representative in the European Parliament and all the EU representatives to communicate in their mother tongue during all kinds of conferences and meetings. They shall have the access to the legal regulations and all essential information in their mother tongue as well (Čeňková, 2007). “Giving everyone at the table a voice in their own language is a fundamental requirement of the democratic legitimacy of the EU.” The legal acts resulting from discussions have very often an immediate and direct effect on people’s lives and thus there should be no obstacle in understanding. Moreover, “the citizens of Europe should not have to be represented in Brussels by their best linguists: they can send their best experts” (AO 4). The best experts can be sent to the meetings, no matter what their language skills are. Interpreters make sure that everyone can express themselves in their mother tongue, they do not have to care about the language aspect and therefore everyone can fully concentrate on the meeting.

This commitment of treating all languages equally brings an enormous need for a sufficient number of interpreters and translators. Čeňková explains that to retain this multilingual arrangement, with everyone understanding each other at the same time, it is necessary to provide interpretations and translations to and from each official EU language (2007). With 23 of them (since January 2007) it makes nearly 500 different language combinations.

There is a rule in the EU institutions, that the conference interpreter should always interpret into his/her mother tongue from as many passive languages as possible. In practice this means that the three interpreters in the booth should cover all the 23 EU

official languages, which is impossible. Phelan states that it was obvious before the enlargement that there would have to be some kind of rationalization; it was obvious that there would be far greater reliance on *relay*. Huge investments in terms of interpretation were taken into account as well (2001, p. 60).

Especially after Finland joined the EU, it was necessary to interpret with the help of the so called *relay* or *two-step* (Čeňková, 2007). Another possibility of solving this situation is to use *retour* interpreting.

*Relay* is defined as listening to an interpreter from another booth and interpreting what is being interpreted; it can of course slightly affect the quality of the interpretation (Phelan, 2001, p. 7). Since all the EU interpreters are the best professionals, this effect is insignificant. A similar situation occurred with languages such as Greek, Portuguese and Swedish and then after the enlargement on 1 May 2004, when ten Central and Eastern European countries joined the EU. Conference interpreters in these countries have to work both ways. They know that they would not get enough employment if they insist on working into their mother tongue only (Čeňková, 2007). When an interpreter works from his/her mother tongue to a foreign language that s/he has mastered perfectly, it is called *retour*. It is evidently more demanding and stressful for interpreters, but it is one of the two ways how to ensure a smooth run of the multilingual meetings (AO 1).

### ***Interpreter Recruitment***

For many languages there are still a considerable number of new interpreters needed. Interpreters working for the EU are the most skilled and the highly qualified professionals in this field. Consequently, to become an EU interpreter, the candidate must meet all the demanding requirements. Phelan lists the usual requirements for EU interpreters (2001, p. 61):

- EU national
- Perfect command of mother tongue
- Thorough command of a specified EU language and two other official EU languages; plus knowledge of a fifth EU language is desirable
- University degree in conference interpreting *or* university degree and experience of conference interpreting (200 days during the past three years) *or* certified training as an interpreter and experience of conference interpreting (100 days during the last two years) *or* experience of conference interpreting 500 days during the past five years

If the candidates meet these requirements, they have to undergo tests containing a series

of elements: tests in consecutive and simultaneous interpretation, test in a return language if relevant, and tests in various non-linguistic matters (AO 4). The whole process of recruitment is very lengthy. An interview to assess general and EU knowledge and motivation follows (Phelan, 2001, p.63).

Phelan points out that freelance interpreters are a special category since they do not have to be EU nationals. Moreover, they do not have to interpret just the official EU languages; any languages worldwide are welcome. However, they will need to be able to interpret into a widely used EU language (2001, p.63).

After the enlargement in 2004, problems with recruiting qualified staff occurred. Some of the added countries have small populations and their languages are not spoken anywhere else. Clearly, there are problems when representatives of these states speak – interpreters have to work in and out of their mother tongue. As a consequence, knowledge of East European languages is an asset when it comes to recruitment of new interpreters (Phelan, 2001, p. 60-61).

### ***Interpreting Services in the EU, DG Interpretation***

There are three interpreting services functioning in the EU: The Directorate General for Interpretation (DG Interpretation) – also known as the Joint Interpreting and Conference Service (JICS) or by its French title Service Commun Interprétation-Conférences (SCIC), and separate interpreting service for the European Parliament (the Interpretation Directorate at the European Parliament) and the Interpretation Division at the European Court of Justice. All these services collaborate very closely (AO 2).

DG Interpretation is the largest interpreting service in the world. It is part of the European Commission and it makes multi-lingual communication possible. DG Interpretation provides interpretation in meetings arranged by the Commission and other institutions such as The Council of the Union, The Committee of the Regions, the European Investment Bank and others. It provides interpreting services for 50 to 60 meetings per day. The main objectives of DG Interpretation are to ensure interpretation and to keep at the leading edge of new technologies for conference interpreting (AO 4).

Czech interpreters are fully aware of the fact that by doing their work well they will strengthen good relations of the Czech Republic with foreign countries. In addition, they will contribute to good reputation of their country abroad and enable closer cross-border contacts (AO 5).

When the Czech language was used at the EU institutions for the first time during the accession negotiations in the 1990s, the task of interpretation was accomplished by freelance interpreters. They had to pass an accreditation test only. As early as 2003, i.e. a year before the enlargement, first interpreters were employed by the EU authorities. In 2004, the first selection process for Czech conference interpreters took place, creating the present core of the Czech interpreters. This core has been further complemented by interpreters working temporarily on the basis of a fixed-term contract and by accredited freelance interpreters (AO 2).

There are seven permanent Czech interpreters working for DG Interpretation nowadays. Three of them passed the selection procedures in 2004 successfully and they have been contracted for an indefinite period of time. The other four passed demanding accreditation tests and they are employed temporarily on the basis of a fixed-term contract. DG Interpretation also cooperates with freelance interpreters. They must first pass the accreditation test, and are then added to a list of interpreters, shared by all EU institutions (AO 3).

The meetings arranged by DG Interpretation may differ significantly: from bilateral meetings where only two languages are spoken, to European Council sessions where interpretation from and to each official EU language is needed. This requires that the Czech interpreters have excellent language skills; they must concentrate on constant self-improvement and add another EU language to their original language combination to make their work as efficient as possible. Due to working on political and specialist meetings daily, interpreters are required to absorb knowledge in various fields: ranging from different systems of taxation, to fishing policy to zoopharmacy (AO 1).

In the EP, there are eight interpreters working in the Czech booth, which is not a sufficient number, and therefore the assistance of freelance interpreters might be requested. Interpreters in this institution work at all kinds of meetings – committee dealings, summit meetings or faction meetings (AO 1).

EP has three workplaces: in Brussels, Luxemburg and Strasbourg. Most of the interpreted meetings take place in Brussels, but twelve times a year interpreters go to Strasbourg to work at summit meetings. If needed, interpreters accompany the Members



of Parliament on their foreign missions. Nevertheless, interpreters are not assigned to a particular committee, political party or to an individual Member of Parliament (AO 1).

With the forthcoming EU Presidency of the Czech Republic in 2009, the need for Czech interpreters has been increasing significantly. According to an article in the daily *Lidové noviny* (LN), the Czech government has been warned by European institutions that there will be not enough interpreters to translate the instructions of Czech politicians when the CR takes over the lead of EU. As a consequence, the Presidency will be paralyzed. The article cites Olga Cosmidou, chief of interpreting service in EP, who says that there are currently eight interpreters for the EP, but at least twice as many would be needed. Cosmidou continues that the situation of the CR is not confined to that of the Czech Republic, Slovakia or Hungary are in a similar situation, but neither Slovaks nor Hungarians will take over the Presidency. Cosmidou points out that the situation cannot be resolved by external interpreters – although their number in Brussels is sufficient, it is their option where and when they will work and thus there is no guarantee that the demand for them will be covered at all occasions (LN article, 2007).

The LN article presents the reason for the shortage of Czech interpreters in the EU. It is definitely not because there are not enough applicants for this well-paid job; the reason is that the candidates are not sufficiently qualified and therefore they do not pass the entrance tests. The problem is undoubtedly the size of the country; the larger the country, the more people to choose from. Brussels also thinks that the Czech government underestimates the motivation of young Czechs to try the profession of an interpreter (LN article, 2007) which is, as mentioned before, very well paid.

According to the article, the Czech government denies this lack of interpreters and says that no problem has been identified; Czech interpreters are recruited continually (LN article, 2007).

Whether the Czech government has coped with the situation will be apparent by the year 2009. The EU Presidency of CR is being awaited with great expectations but with certain amount of uneasiness as well. If there were enough interpreters there could definitely be a little less of the uneasiness.

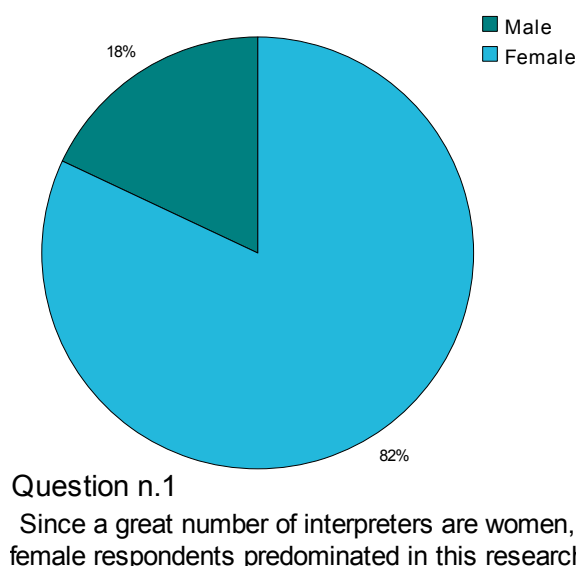
## 6. Practical Part

In order to find out relevant information about the profession of a conference interpreter, a research has been carried out among practising interpreters. As the research method, a questionnaire compiled with the help of a sociologist was used. The questionnaire contained two types of questions: the answers for six questions were formulated by the author and the respondents got to choose the right answer (multiple-choice questions), the remaining five questions were open, which gave the respondents more space to express their own opinions. The respondents were encouraged to comment on any question if they felt they had anything important to add.

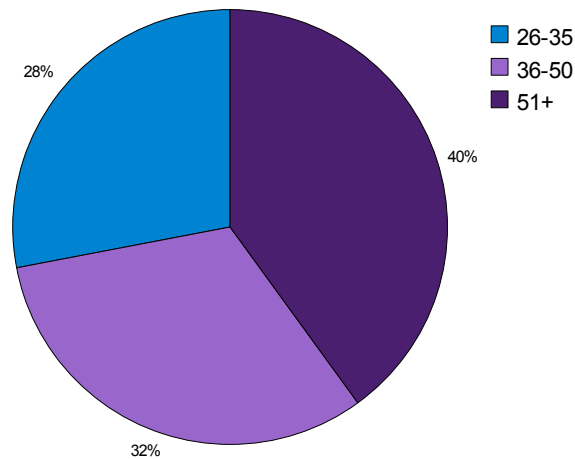
The questionnaire was to map the qualification of the interpreters, their satisfaction with their present role, the most striking problems and possible suggestions on how to solve them, their attitude towards the EU, and their views of the future both of conference interpreting in general and Czech interpreting.

Consisting of just eleven questions, the questionnaire was rather short and consequently, people readily agreed to fill it in.

The interpreters were contacted via e-mail. JTP sent the questionnaire to its members via collective e-mail, and the publicly available e-mail addresses of ASKOT interpreters were used. Several other interpreters were contacted via e-mail thanks to personal contacts. The rate of return cannot be judged because the number of interpreters addressed by collective e-mail is not known exactly.



A hundred questionnaires were collected all together. In the beginning, only a few copies were sent to interpreters as a pilot study in order to test the intelligibility of the questionnaires.



Question n.2  
Respondents at the age over 51 slightly predominated.

The cooperation with the responding interpreters turned out to be a very pleasant experience; they were sincerely willing to help and showed that interpreters are a friendly community.

### ***6.1. Linguistic and Cultural competence***

Replies to the question about interpreter's qualities and abilities varied from one-word answers to very extensive ones. The responses confirmed the findings presented in the theoretical part, and in addition, supplied further interesting remarks on this topic.

Talking of indispensable prerequisites, the respondents surprisingly did not mention the perfect knowledge of the language explicitly. When they did, the answer was introduced by "Apart from the excellent language knowledge..." (8% of respondents), 12% of respondents pointed out that a good interpreter should have language promptness and an exceptional feeling for his/her mother tongue. Also a rich wordage is essential but it is necessary to use it actively; the interpreter needs to be familiar with all the possible variants of the word in the language.

According to the questionnaires, excellent language knowledge must be accompanied by a very good general knowledge (18%). The interpreter must have wide and profound knowledge and education; know the life and institutions of the given countries and perfect this knowledge constantly; be inquisitive; have the willingness to

learn new things constantly; be aware of his/her knowledge limits and try to overcome them all the time. One respondent says that it is really important to read all kinds of various texts, even if they are not particularly interesting for the interpreter. S/he simply has to get accustomed to the vocabulary and phrases from all possible and impossible fields of human activity. All these answers emphasize the importance of lifelong learning.

Most of the qualities and abilities the respondents mentioned seem obvious. However, it is important to put them down to realize how many properties interpreters have to possess. Therefore here is a list of the qualities, abilities and skills the respondents noted in their questionnaires: promptness, observation, accuracy, talent, enthusiasm, analytical and logical thinking, exceptional memory, communication skills, rhetorical competence, rhetorical basics, empathy, professional and nice performance, pleasant voice, communicativeness, diplomacy, flexibility, creativity, balance of mind, ability to remain calm in difficult situations, well-trained technique (when not enough work, practise at home), ability to improvise, ability to do more things at one time, humility, reliability, fellowship, ability to deal with people, at least basic knowledge of psychology, extrovert nature, ability to concentrate fully, self-confidence, ability to analyze the original speech well, ability to express fully and accurately the speaker's idea, ability to forget about oneself for the benefit of the interpreting.

## ***6.2. Qualification***

The questionnaires confirmed that for becoming an interpreter, university degree is not a necessity. The respondents presented a range of ways how to become an interpreter. Some respondents had one qualification (46%) for being an interpreter, others had two (28%) but quite often even more than that (16%). 10% of respondents stated as their only qualification their working experience and practice.

The most frequent answer to the question on qualification was university degree taken at the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy (53%). However, not all these respondents graduated at the Department of Translation and Interpretation (28%). 25% studied other subjects, usually philology. There were also many people who were originally engaged in a completely different field of study, such as law (8%), economics (7%) or business

(3%). No doubt that the knowledge acquired in the course of such studies is worthwhile.

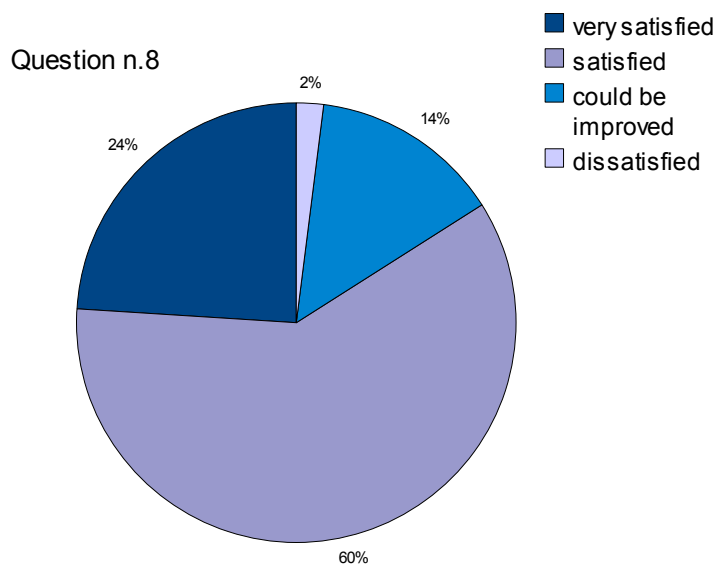
The graduates with different university education or people without a university degree usually decided to become interpreters later and therefore they achieved the needed qualification and preparation in a different way. They attended various translating and interpreting courses and seminars (16%), language schools (6%) or special interpreting trainings. As these special trainings were named interpreting course in EP in Brussels (2%), legal English language course at Charles University in Prague (3) and a course for court interpreters at the Law Faculty ibid (4%). 14 respondents passed a Czech state language exam in interpreting and 8 respondents passed a state general language exam. A significant number of respondents name studying and/or living abroad as the best qualification for being an interpreter (9%).

As mentioned above, more people even state that it is experience and practice only that is needed for their work. An interesting fact is that these interpreters do not have problems finding work, even abroad. This shows that many employers are still more interested in the interpreter's real skills, than in the pile of his/her diplomas and certificates.

### **6.3. Ethics**

One of the main purposes of the questionnaire was to find out to what extent the interpreters were content with their working conditions, and in addition, to learn what can be done to improve the interpreters' work. As stated in the theoretical part, the ethics of the interpreting profession includes not only the responsibilities of the interpreter but also his/her rights.

Answers to these questions were surprisingly resembling one another. Most respondents agreed that the working conditions were satisfactory (60%); 24% agreed that they were very satisfactory when speaking about the EU. If the respondents said that the conditions could be better, they usually added that this applied to the CR (14%). And when they were not satisfied at all, which was the case of two responses only, they were talking about the developing countries.



Most of the practising interpreters are satisfied with their working conditions.

Speaking of what can be improved, only a few requirements were repeated. The most striking problem for interpreters, stated by 32% of the respondents, appeared to be the lack of background materials provided in advance by conference organizers. The respondents stressed several times how this aspect of their work was important. Many of them said that the clients and agencies have to realize that a well-prepared interpreter is the basic prerequisite for a successful meeting. They should give the interpreter all the possible materials in advance: program of the meeting, list of speakers (their names and positions) and their papers.

Another thing to be improved is the quality and technical standards of the booths, especially in the CR. According to the questionnaires, there is not enough space in the booths (mentioned 11 times), they are not aired and soundproof enough (4), the doors are noisy (2), the audio in the headphones is not always clear (2), the view of the speakers is not guaranteed (6). One answer, saying that the technicians operating in the booths should learn to use deodorant, might seem humorous. But the fact that the interpreter spends considerable time in the booth, makes the remark relevant.

As 6 respondents agreed, the interpreter should be able to negotiate the conditions; it is an integral part of his/her work. If s/he is not satisfied, s/he should say it and insist on improvement.

Two respondents expressed their wish for some kind of regulation of the profession; anybody can become an interpreter nowadays, which derogates the prestige

of this profession. The requirement for better pay was mentioned 5 times. High quality interpreting should be appreciated; the profession of interpreting should be more respected (9). Regular breaks should go without saying; two interpreters should be present to take turns when the job is intensive or lengthy; interpreter is not a robot (12).

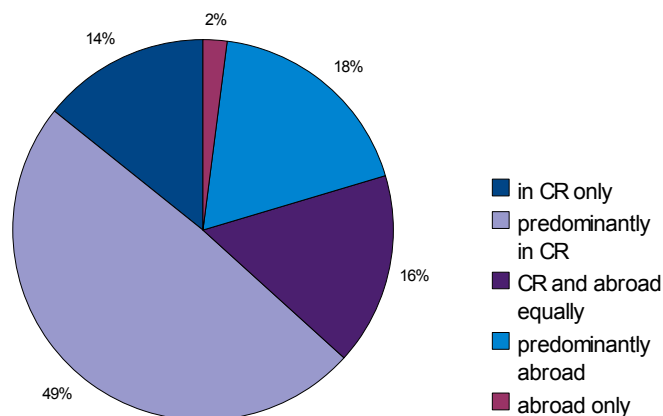
As 3 respondents described, when you are interpreting at a meeting or conference, there are always people who think “I learned the language as well, I would interpret better than the interpreter”. They think that anyone can do it, it is not so difficult, the interpreter does not need breaks, s/he must know absolutely everything. This is a serious problem resulting from the lack of information about the interpreting profession. People need to realize that not everybody can become a good interpreter and they should have more respect for them. This would consequently lead to the improvement of the interpreters’ working conditions.

#### 6.4. Job Offers, the EU

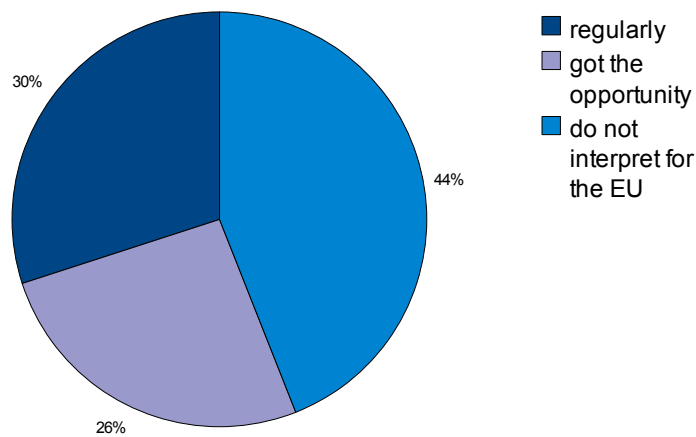
The questionnaires basically showed that neither age nor qualification and education are important for job offers. No logical pattern, which would help to trace the reasons for employing interpreters abroad, was found. Presumptions that younger people are more ambitious and that interpreters with higher qualification get more offers to work abroad were disproved.

The majority of respondents (49%) work predominantly in CR. Nevertheless, some of them are offered to work abroad at least a few times a year. Most of them accept these offers but there are also people who are not interested in them. Reason for the refusal are mainly connected with the family.

Question n.5  
Most interpreters work predominantly in the CR, but a significant number prefer to work abroad.

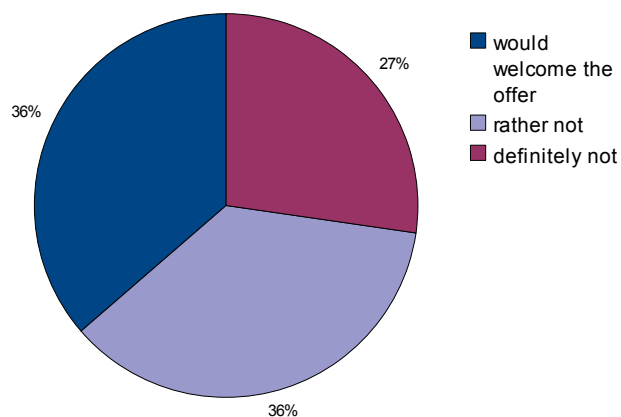


The EU turned out to be a very attractive employer for interpreters. 30% of respondents interpret for the EU regularly, and a similar number of people had the opportunity to interpret for the EU, however, 3 of them turned the offer down. 44% of the respondents do not interpret for the EU – 16 of these respondents would be very interested in that job offer, same number is rather not interested and 12 respondents are not interested at all.



Question n.6: Do you work for the EU?  
The EU employs almost one third of the questioned interpreters.

As stated in the theoretical part, working for the EU is highly demanding. However, the interpreters are guaranteed the best working conditions and adequate pay.



Question n.7: Would you welcome the opportunity to work for the EU?



### ***6.5. The Future of Interpreting***

The future of interpreting seems to be an interesting issue as it is very unpredictable; and the responses of the interpreters are good evidence. Both the future of interpreters in general and the future of Czech interpreters are very difficult to foretell. This issue was not discussed in the theoretical part at all, as no sources dealing with this matter could be found. Therefore the participants of the survey are the only ones to comment on it.

Part of the respondents (39%) are afraid that the demand for both interpreters in general and Czech interpreters will be decreasing. Although the decrease is not likely to start right now, they think that this trend is inevitable. Nine respondents even say that it is already happening. The reason for this decline is, according to the questionnaires, more and more people learning foreign languages. As a consequence, they will be able to come to an understanding with each other without the help of an interpreter.

The respondents add that the type of interpreting and the language combination will be an important factor. The demand for Chinese and other Asian languages might be increasing, but the demand for English and European languages will be rather decreasing.

Another interesting remark was that the profession of interpreting will profile differently. And probably only the best interpreters with more active and passive languages will be requested.

The other part of the respondents (45%) think that the need for interpreting will be the same or it will be even increasing. Reasons mentioned in the questionnaires were as follows:

- even people who can speak the language very well use the service of an interpreter because they get more time to think
- it is not possible for everybody to know the language so perfectly that they would understand everything in the situations when every single word matters
- international relations and contacts are more intensive; and globalization is another reason for an increasing demand for interpreting
- EU needs interpreters because of its multilingual policy; EU does not want to replace national languages
- the high quality interpreters cannot be replaced; communicative knowledge of the

language cannot be compared to the language competence of interpreters

According to one respondent, many people still think that their language competence is sufficient and thus they do not need an interpreter. They consider the services of good interpreters too expensive and therefore they prefer to manage with their own knowledge or very often with the service of lower-quality interpreters. The demand for interpreting is therefore dependent on enlightenment; both the public and private sector will have to realize that investments into interpreting are worth it.

As far as the future of Czech interpreters is concerned, the most frequent answer (23%) was that with the EU Presidency the demand will increase (it is actually already happening), but then it will start decreasing. The reasons for the decrease were that Czech is spoken only by a small number of people and that Czechs are becoming more and more language competent and therefore they can communicate without an intermediary.

No doubt, that it will be interesting to observe the development of interpreting and find out which one of the two “opinion camps” was closer to the truth.

One of the main purposes of the practical part was to confirm or refute the theory. Since the findings in the theoretical part were more or less confirmed, there was no need to deal with the obtained data in greater detail.

## **7. Conclusion**

The conference interpreter has undoubtedly one of the most interesting professions of our times (Herbert, 1968, p.84). Herbert supports this statement by saying that the interpreter is “given the opportunity of making personal contacts with the most outstanding personalities in all fields of activity and in all countries.” The interpreter travels to every part of the world under the best possible conditions and s/he gets the chance to visit places to which the general public is not admitted (1968, p. 84).

Jones states in her article that many interpreters find their work rewarding and educationally enriching because they provide a valuable service and, at the same time, gain valuable knowledge (2002). Herbert adds that interpretation is one of the finest professions because its aim is to “draw men together and enable them to establish a closer understanding of one another” (1968, p. xvii). He emphasizes that the interpreter should always be aware of this mission of his/her profession, and his/her main purpose should never be to earn money or anything else (1968, p. 3).

On the other hand, as this paper has shown, the work of an interpreter is very demanding. The interpreter must be endowed with specific, outstanding qualities both on a personal and professional level which enable him/her to meet all the high requirements of the profession, and overcome the difficulties and drawbacks.

There is also a strong ethical aspect needed to be respected in the interpreting profession. In addition, there are many factors, enumerated in this paper, influencing the interpreter’s work.

The future of interpreting is very unpredictable. There are two equally strong camps in the interpreting community; one is awaiting an increasing demand for the interpreting services, while the other one is expecting the opposite. Both attitudes are supported by credible arguments and therefore we can do nothing but wait to find out how the interpreting profession is going to develop.

The significance of a good interpreter has been apparent since ancient times. Both the history of interpreting and the current practice indicate that interpreting has always been an indispensable profession. It is useful to realize that, apart from business, no peace talks and treaties, no mutual assistance, no international cooperation, no UN, no EU would exist without interpreters.

## 8. *Resumé*

Tato bakalářská práce pojednává o postavení konferenčního tlumočnicka v dnešní společnosti. Ve snaze tuto roli zmapovat se nejprve věnuje pestré historii tlumočení, kterou je bohužel málo dokumentována. Někteří autoři z nedostatku záznamů vyvozují, že tlumočnická profese je velice mladá a vyvinula se teprve během minulého století. Jiní naopak uvádějí, že má své počátky už v dobách, kdy lidé odlišných kultur a jazyků začali navazovat první kontakty. Tlumočníci byli přítomni mnoha historickým okamžikům v dějinách lidstva, jako bylo např. objevení Ameriky a její kolonizace.

Podrobné záznamy o tlumočnických najdeme ve starověkém Egyptě, kde byla tato profese vysoce ceněna. V Evropě nalezneme doklady o přítomnosti tlumočnicka v období antiky – ve starém Řecku a starém Římě. Poptávka po tlumočnických značně vzrostla ve středověku, kdy s rozvojem křesťanství vedle sebe existovaly latina a řečtina.

Po pádu východořímské říše roku 1453 zažívalo tlumočení svůj rozkvět mezi Turky. Tlumočníci znamenali nepostradatelné prostředníky, protože Turci většinu obchodních transakcí a státnických jednání uzavírali pouze ústně. V křesťanských státech taková poptávka po tlumočení neexistovala. Ústředním jazykem zde totiž byla latina, kterou pak v 17. století nahradila francouzština. Ta zůstala jednacím jazykem diplomacie až do mírových jednání roku 1919 a tlumočení v této době stagnovalo, neboť diplomaté se po celé Evropě domluvili francouzsky.

Zásadním okamžikem pro tlumočení se stala první světová válka; jednání mezi americkým prezidentem W. Wilsonem a britským předsedou vlády L. Georgem je považováno za počátek konferenčního tlumočení. K dalšímu zlomovému okamžiku došlo ve 20. letech 20. století, kdy byla vynalezena technika pro simultánní tlumočení. Rozvoj tohoto typu tlumočení nastal po druhé světové válce a simultánní tlumočení bylo poprvé úspěšně použito při Norimberských procesech, jež ukázaly jeho vysokou efektivnost při mezinárodních mnohojazyčných konferencích. Další událostí v historii tlumočení bylo založení Organizace spojených národů; simultánní tlumočení se brzy stalo nejpoužívanějším typem konferenčního tlumočení.

Z hlediska tlumočení v Evropě a České republice je podstatné zmínit rok 1989, kdy dochází k radikálním změnám na trhu tlumočení. V bývalém Československu začaly vznikat profesionální tlumočnické a překladatelské organizace a agentury. Nastal velký příliv zahraničních investorů a bylo třeba zajistit kontakt mezi těmito cizinci a

místními zaměstnanci, kteří ještě cizí jazyky neovládali.

Lze říci s poměrně velkou jistotou, že tlumočníci byli přítomni u mnoha významných okamžiků v dějinách lidstva a k mnoha událostem by bez nich ani nemohlo dojít.

V průběhu dějin se vyvinuly dva základní typy konferenčního tlumočení: konsekutivní a simultánní. Máme-li je podrobněji popsat, je nezbytné nejprve zmínit, co je úkolem tlumočnicka a jak probíhá tlumočnický proces.

Základní rolí tlumočnicka by mělo být usnadnění komunikace mezi dvěma stranami, které nemluví stejným jazykem, a to jak na úrovni jazykové, tak kulturní. Důležité je vzít v potaz kulturní odlišnosti jednotlivých zemí a také kontext tlumočené situace.

Fáze tlumočnického procesu jsou totožné pro konsekutivní i simultánní tlumočení – porozumění, analýza a znovuvyjádření. Tlumočnick musí zpracovat informaci sdělovanou řečníkem v jednom jazyce a vyjádřit ji v jazyce druhém. Při konsekutivním tlumočením má tlumočnick na tento proces více času než při procesu simultánním.

Jak již bylo řečeno, existují dva základní typy konferenčního tlumočení. Historicky první bylo tlumočení konsekutivní. To označuje proces, kdy tlumočnick poslouchá řečníka, dělá si tzv. tlumočnický zápis a poté přednese tutéž řeč v cílovém jazyce. Délka tlumočeného projevu se může pohybovat od jedné věty po mnohavětné úseky. Pro tyto delší projevy je nutné dokonale ovládat techniku tlumočnického zápisu. Mezi výhody konsekutivního tlumočení patří jeho větší přesnost a menší náročnost na technické vybavení. Konsekutivní tlumočnick má také možnost si u řečníka ověřit informaci, které nerozuměl nebo kterou si není jistý. Nevýhodou konsekutivního tlumočení je jednoznačně jeho časová náročnost, která v praxi vylučuje možnost tlumočení do více jazyků.

S výše uvedeným nedostatkem se konference vypořádaly zavedením simultánního tlumočení. Při něm tlumočnick sedí ve zvukotěsné kabině, ve sluchátkách poslouchá řečníkův projev a současně tento projev do mikrofonu tlumočí. Při simultánním tlumočení je nezbytná velmi vysoká míra koncentrace, a proto jsou v kabině vždy dva až tři tlumočnicki, kteří se střídají po maximálně třiceti minutách. Jak již

bylo řečeno, výhodou simultánního tlumočení je výrazná časová úspora, díky níž se mohou uskutečňovat vícejazyčné konference. Mezi jeho nevýhody patří, že simultánní tlumočník většinou musí volit mezi přesností svého projevu a vhodnými gramatickými vazbami a stylem. Vždy by měl dát přednost prvnímu. Další nevýhody plynou z technických požadavků na tento typ tlumočení. Tlumočnická kabina je velmi malý prostor, ve kterém spolu tlumočníci tráví mnoho hodin. Je tedy důležité, aby tlumočníci byli nekonfliktní, vstřícní a měli smysl pro týmovou práci.

Práci tlumočnicka ovlivňuje řada faktorů. Vzhledem k rozsahu práce se zde soustředíme pouze na ty nejtypičtější, o nichž pojednáváme v rámci jazykové a kulturní kompetence, psychických předpokladů a souhrnně pak ostatních faktorů.

Dokonalá znalost jazyků je zcela bezpochyby základním předpokladem pro práci tlumočnicka. Kromě jazyků však musí tlumočnick dokonale znát i kulturu daných zemí.

Psychické předpoklady, jimiž musí být každý tlumočnick vybaven, jsou následující: musí mít výjimečně dobrou krátkodobou i dlouhodobou paměť; musí perfektně zvládat stres, neboť tato profese vyžaduje takovou míru soustředění a zodpovědnosti jako málokterá jiná; velmi specifický požadavek je kladen na simultánního tlumočnicka, který musí poslouchat řečnicka, mluvit a poslouchat sám sebe, a to vše najednou. Tato rozpolcená pozornost může být příčinou mnoha chyb, a je tedy důležité, aby se tlumočnick soustředil opravdu jen na svou práci a nenechal se rozptylovat něčím jiným.

Mezi ostatní faktory ovlivňující práci tlumočnicka řadíme přípravu na konferenci, celoživotní vzdělávání a kvalifikaci. Pokud tlumočnick předem zná téma konference a vlastní podklady a případně seznam specifických pojmů, jeho práce je o mnoho snazší. Někteří tlumočnicki se specializují na konkrétní oblasti (právo, medicína, technika, obchod), ale není možné být odborníkem na všechno, a mnoho tlumočnicků tudíž má všeobecný záběr. Tlumočnicki se ve vlastním zájmu musí celoživotně vzdělávat a aktualizovat své znalosti o dění ve světě. Pro konferenční tlumočnicky je „intelektuální zvědavost“ jedním ze základních předpokladů pro jejich práci. Co se týče kvalifikace tlumočnicků, nemají zaměstnavatelé jednotné požadavky. Profesi tlumočnicka mohou zastávat jak lidé vystudovaní v tomto oboru, tak lidé s jiným vzděláním. Často také stačí dostatečná praxe nebo certifikát.

Každá profese by měla mít jasně vymezeno, co je eticky přijatelné a co ne. Pro tlumočnickou profesi toto pravidlo platí ještě naléhavěji, protože tlumočnické se při své práci často setkává s velmi důvěrnými informacemi a je nezbytné, aby mu mohli zadavatel i zákazník plně důvěřovat. Tlumočnické musí jednat nejen ve vlastním zájmu, ale hlavně v zájmu svých zákazníků a též v zájmu celé tlumočnické profese. Jednotlivé organizace si vytvořily své vlastní etické kodexy, které v zásadě obsahují stejné informace a zaměřují se na povinnosti a práva tlumočnické. Mezi povinnosti patří v první řadě zachování mlčenlivosti o tom, co je předmětem tlumočnické; tedy jistá loajalita vůči zákazníkovi. Informace získané v průběhu tlumočnické nesmí být za žádných okolností zneužity. Dále platí, že tlumočnické musí vždy přesně tlumočnit, co je řečeno, neměl by nic nevynechat, měnit ani dodávat. Neměl by přijímat zakázky, které není schopen splnit, které jsou proti jeho osobnímu či náboženskému přesvědčení a rovněž ty, jež by omezovaly jeho lidská a občanská práva. Tlumočnické také nesmí diskriminovat žádnou ze stran, až již na základě rasy, náboženství, etnického původu apod.

Tlumočnická etika má však i druhou stranu mince, která říká, jaké podmínky by pro tlumočnické měly být zajištěny: nezávadné technické vybavení, výhled do sálu na řečníka, dostatek přestávek, předem zasláné podkladové materiály atd.

Do etiky tlumočnické patří i schopnost tlumočnické poradit si v situaci, kdy řečník udělá chybu, nebo z ní nespravedlivě nařkne tlumočnické.

Evropská unie (EU) zastává názor, že každý její občan nebo jeho volený zástupce by měl mít možnost vyjadřovat se na zasedáních v mateřském jazyce a měl by mít možnost rozumět mluvenému slovu. EU se rozhodla zachovat rovnocenný přístup ke všem jazykům; je tedy nutno zajistit tlumočnické do a z každého jazyka zemí EU, což přináší potřebu velkého množství tlumočnické. Ti zajišťují, aby se každý mohl soustředit na průběh jednání bez starosti o jeho jazykovou stránku.

Noví tlumočnické pro některé jazyky jsou v EU stále zapotřebí. Požadavky na tlumočnické EU jsou velmi vysoké a uchazeči musí splnit mnoho náročných požadavků, což ale poté zaručuje vysokou úroveň jejich práce.

V orgánech EU fungují tři tlumočnické služby: Generální ředitelství pro tlumočnické Evropské komise (SCIC), které zajišťuje tlumočnické pro Komisi, Radu ministrů, Výbor regionů a další instituce, dále pak samostatná tlumočnická oddělení

Evropského parlamentu (EP) a Evropského soudního dvora. Všechny tři tlumočnické služby spolu úzce spolupracují. SCIC je největší tlumočnickou službou na světě. Její české oddělení má v současné době sedm stálých zaměstnanců. Kromě nich využívá též služeb tlumočnicků na volné noze, kteří jsou vedeni v seznamech společných pro všechny instituce EU. V české kabině EP pracuje osm tlumočnicků, což k pokrytí potřeb poslanců nestačí, a proto se i zde využívá služeb externistů. Většina tlumočených jednání EP se odehrává v Bruselu, ale tlumočníci jezdí také dvanáctkrát ročně do Štrasburku na plenární zasedání nebo v případě potřeby doprovází poslance do zahraničí. Nikdo však není přidělen k určitému výboru, politické skupině či poslanci.

Českých tlumočnicků není v EU dostatek a s nadcházejícím předsednictvím České republiky v roce 2009 jejich potřeba značně stoupá. Evropské instituce již varovali českou vládu, že instrukce jejích politiků nebude mít kdo překládat a předsednictví tak bude paralyzováno. Situace České republiky není ojedinělá; podobně je na tom i Slovensko nebo Maďarsko. Jenže tyto země, na rozdíl od České republiky, nečeká příští rok předsednictví. Problém nedostatku tlumočnicků nespočívá v nezájmu Čechů o tuto práci, ale v nedostatku kvalitních zájemců. Jak již bylo zmíněno, nároky na tlumočnicka EU jsou vysoké a testy, jimiž musí budoucí tlumočníci projít, velmi těžké. Brusel také tvrdí, že česká vláda podceňuje motivaci mladých lidí, aby se na tlumočení zaměřili. Vláda s tím však nesouhlasí a tvrdí, že příprava na předsednictví probíhá bez problémů a nábor nových tlumočnicků úspěšně pokračuje. Jak česká vláda situaci zvládla se ukáže již velmi brzy.

Budoucnost tlumočení nelze s jistotou předvídat. V tlumočnické komunitě existují dva početně vyvážené názorové tábory; jeden očekává nárůst zájmu o tlumočení, druhý pravý opak. Obě stanoviska jsou podložena věrohodnými argumenty.

Práce konferenčního tlumočnicka nepochybně patří mezi nejzajímavější profese dnešní doby. Tlumočnick se seznamuje s významnými lidmi z nejrůznějších oborů, může cestovat po celém světě a dostane se do míst, kam se jiní běžně nedostanou. Mnozí tlumočníci na své práci také oceňují, že je vzdělává a obohacuje.



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## 10. Appendix - Questionnaire

Vážení tlumočníci a tlumočnice,  
píšu bakalářskou práci na téma „Role konferenčního tlumočnicka ve společnosti“ a v zájmu získání potřebných a relevantních informací Vás chci poprosit o vyplnění krátkého dotazníku. U některých otázek prosím odpověď vyberte, u některých odpovíte slovy. Jakýkoli komentář k jakékoli otázce bude více než vítán ☺  
Předem moc děkuji  
Alžběta Kovaříková  
(studentka 3.ročníku na FF Univerzity Pardubice, obor Angličtina pro hospodářskou praxi)

1. Jste a) muž  
b) žena
2. Jste ve věku  
a) do 25 let  
b) 26 – 35 let  
c) 36 – 50 let  
d) 51 let a více
3. Jakou máte tlumočnickou kvalifikaci (škola, certifikát, praxe...): .....
4. Napište prosím, jaké jazyky tlumočíte:  
Aktivně:  
Pasivně:
5. Tlumočíte převážně v České republice, nebo máte pracovní nabídky i do zahraničí?  
a) jen ČR  
b) spíše v ČR  
c) ČR a zahraničí nastejno  
d) spíše v zahraničí  
e) jen v zahraničí  
f) jiná odpověď: .....
- Pokud tlumočíte v zahraničí, v jakých zemích pracujete?: .....
6. Tlumočíte pro EU?  
a) pro EU pravidelně tlumočím  
b) už jsem tuto příležitost dostal/a  
c) pro EU netlumočím
7. Pokud pro EU netlumočíte, měli byste o to zájem?  
a) určitě bych tuto příležitost uvítal/a  
b) nevím, nepřemýšlel/a jsem o tom  
c) spíše ne  
d) určitě ne
8. Jste spokojen/a s podmínkami dnešního tlumočnicka? (plat, technické vybavení při

tlumočení apod.)

- a) velmi spokojen/a
- b) spíše spokojena
- c) mohlo by to být lepší
- d) nespokojen/a

At' už jste spokojen/a nebo nespokojen/a, můžete uvést, co byste si přál/a zlepšit:

.....

9. Napište prosím, jaké jsou podle Vás nejdůležitější vlastnosti/dovednosti, které by měl dobrý tlumočník/tlumočnice mít: .....

10. Myslíte si, že bude zájem o tlumočníky/tlumočnice jako takové spíše stoupat či klesat?

.....

11. Myslíte si, že potřeba českých tlumočnicků/tlumočnic bude klesat či stoupat?

.....

Ještě jednou děkuji za Váš čas.

Bakalářskou práci bych měla mít hotovou na konci června. Případným zájemcům ji ráda v elektronické podobě zašlu. Jen malé upozornění: bude v angličtině.

Vyplněný dotazník prosím zašlete na adresu **albeta.kovarikova@centrum.cz**.