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## ***Some Dilemmas and Challenges in Academic Translation/Interpretation Teaching***

### **Extended summary**

The paper presents the introduction of new master translation courses at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade. It describes the curricula for the translation courses in Translatology in the main study programme *Language, Literature, Culture*, as well as for a specialised translation and interpretation-oriented study programme *Master in Conference Interpreting and Translation* (MCIT). Both programmes have been conceived in line with the contemporary theories of translation and abide by the best translation teaching strategies of top European universities. Their aim is not only to develop students' translational competencies to adequately convey words and their meanings from the source language to the target language, but also to get thorough background knowledge of the subject matter along with the knowledge of cultural and social factors which can influence possible meanings, especially when it comes to community translation. The paper also tries to show how such a transformation of the traditional approach to translation teaching can consequently lead to the transformation of a notion of translator from someone who converts words from one language to another to an intellectual worker with academic professional training.

There are a series of dilemmas that need to be solved before the curricula for translation/interpretation studies are "tailored": whether a translator/interpreter is born or made – a dilemma as old as translation itself; should translation/interpretation studies be theory-based studies, and if yes – to what degree; whether translation/interpretation training should be carried out on the bachelor or master level; should the training itself be conceived as the specialist's studies or more general studies; to what degree language teaching should be present at the translation/interpretation studies; which criteria for translation/interpretation aptitude and

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prior experience should be set as a prerequisite for enrolling in these studies and which criteria should be used for candidate selection in the aptitude test; what should be the proportion of language classes to translation/interpretation classes; based on which professional qualifications should the translation/interpretation trainers be selected; what exactly should be tested in the course of studies and in what way; finally, what do we ultimately want to achieve – academic, professional or expert competences?

Contemporary translation/interpretation studies underline the need for including the theoretical input in the translation/interpretation training (Hatim 2001: 163). The nature and volume of such an input can vary from one university to another, but what seems to be a common ground since the 1920s is that comprehension and translation must be taught and exercised within the context. What has become a golden rule, and a rule of thumb, is that the context makes the meaning.

Modern translatology decisively encourages culture-based syllabus compared to the earlier grammar-based syllabus (Hatim 2001: 174), which means that the students should be trained to recognize the differences between two cultures (societies) and become aware of their implications on translation/interpretation. Students should additionally be taught to bridge the cultural gap or explain a cultural vacuum should such phenomena arise in the contact between cultures. Teaching material should, thus, include introduction to cultural studies in addition to the introduction to translation/interpretation studies. The analysis of each language situation in which the cultural contact becomes visible can be an excellent translation/interpretation exercise – loan-words analysis, etymology of names of historical figures, research of cultural references in historical or literary texts etc. Indeed, cultural hybridization can by no means be disregarded in the advanced translation/interpretation studies.

The paper presents the way the translation/interpretation teaching has been advanced at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade where translation/interpretation studies have been introduced both to the bachelor and master studies. Since the beginning of the academic 2017/18 the master study programme *Master in Conference Interpreting and Translation* (MCIT) has begun with the support of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Interpretation.

**Keywords:** translatology, translation/interpretation teaching, translation/interpretation master studies.

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